Language Learning & Language Teaching

Language in Language Teacher Education

Edited by
Hugh Trappes-Lomax
and Gibson Ferguson

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Introduction

Language in language teacher education: a discourse perspective*

Hugh Trappes-Lomax

It is unlikely that any book in the extensive literature on education for language teachers does or could ignore language entirely. What makes this one different is its total concentration on the language aspect. The gap that this book seeks to fill is therefore easily apparent: between, on the one hand, books about language (e.g. for students, teachers and linguists) which do not deal specifically with teacher education and, on the other, books about language teacher education which do not deal extensively with language.

Behind the practical concerns of language teacher educators working to develop trainees' metalinguistic awareness, target language proficiency and pedagogic skills lie some fundamental but often unexamined, or insufficiently examined, language concepts: language as social institution, as verbal practice, as reflexive practice, as medium of classroom communication, as school subject. A principal purpose of the book is to direct attention separately towards the underlying concepts and the ongoing practice, and to do so in such a way as to facilitate reflection on the nature of the links between the two.

To this end the chapters[1] are grouped in two parts. The first part explores and problematises prevalent ideas about language and language instruction, and thereby aims to invite (or provoke) teacher educators to reflect on current practice. It also draws attention to areas of language — for example the social component — sometimes neglected in language teacher education curricula but which are nevertheless important in enabling language teacher educators to design appropriately context-sensitive programmes for development of language awareness.

The second part opens a window on the world of the language teacher educator and his or her trainees working with language in the teacher education classroom. Brought into view are the practices, along with their underpinning rationale, of teacher educators working in a range of institutional and

geographical contexts and toward a variety of goals. The chapters illustrate how teacher educators and trainees reflect on and research their practice, and they throw light on the beliefs and concerns that guide decision-making. For some readers this vicarious extension of experience will suggest new possibilities for action; for others it may bring the reassuring realisation that teacher educators elsewhere are struggling with similar problems.

The book as a whole reflects the particular preoccupations of its contributors, which tend to be with English as the target language, adults as the target learners and in-service as the training context, often with teachers attending courses outside their home context (for example in the UK). Exceptions to this pattern however are numerous, with other languages, younger learners, pre-service contexts and different countries around the world featuring prominently in many of the chapters. The issues addressed have, moreover, a very general relevance and are not constrained within any particular categories of language, geography, target learner or training situation. It is hoped therefore that the book will be of interest to language teacher educators and other applied linguists teaching, studying or researching in a wide variety of linguistic and institutional contexts, as well as to language teachers who may be planning to develop their career in the direction of language teacher education.

Language in language teacher education: three worlds

The topic of language in language teacher education (henceforth LTE) suggests itself as worthy of enquiry precisely because we are coming out of a period in which the traditional centrality of language — and in particular the conception of it as a system of knowledge capturable, teachable and learnable as 'grammar' — has been downplayed. The anti-grammar reaction was long in developing, having roots as deep as the 'direct' methods of the late 19th century (see also the quote from Sweet below), and blossoming with the 'communicative' turn of the late 1970s and 1980s. The counter-trend back towards overt teaching about language structure is often credited to Richards (1990) (see e.g. Celce-Murcia et al. 1997), and throughout the 1990s the field witnessed a gradual swing of the pendulum in this direction.

The reason is that 'communicative' language teaching, for all its virtues, tended to ignore the crucial and productive role that consciousness of language plays in the language learning process (which had been excessively marginalised in favour of unconscious 'acquisition'), and indeed its value as an end in itself.

Today our task is to reintegrate language more fully into LTE, in a form compatible with the evolved view of language teaching as involving *both* communicative proficiency and consciousness of language, without these being played off against each other as mutually exclusive goals; and compatible as well with the more functionally-oriented approaches that have come to redefine the mainstream within the study of language and discourse.

In approaching this task, we are faced with the fact that the horizons of linguistic knowledge are being constantly pushed back, extending and deepening our understanding not only of language as an abstract system but also of how language functions in actual use. For those who would chart these discoveries and assess their utility for language teaching it is undoubtedly a challenge to keep up. A cartoon in David Crystal's *Who cares about English usage?*[2] shows a pair of middle-aged cave-persons sharing their discontents over the consequences of modernity. One says to the other: 'I miss the good old days when all we had to worry about was nouns and verbs.' Those currently working in the field of language teacher education do not need reminding that nouns and verbs have (long since) become mere islets in an ocean of complexities, from relevance theory to reflexive language, from corpus linguistics to critical discourse analysis. Such developments, as the contributions to this book abundantly illustrate, confront another set of complexities: the nexus of purposes, people, processes and institutions that defines the domain of language teacher education. This domain connects in complex ways with precisely that world which is the object of interest of investigators of language in use — the so-called 'real' world in which people of various backgrounds use language in particular contexts for specific and diverse purposes. (The 'so-called' and the inverted commas are not, of course, intended to suggest that the real world is not completely real but to challenge the implication that the other worlds with which we are concerned are somehow less so.)

Between the two is the classroom, which is directly oriented to the language behaviour of the 'real world' and which affords the main rationale for the nature of, indeed existence of, the world of LTE.

Any understanding of the many roles of language in LTE, and of the dynamics of their interrelationships, must take account of all three of these worlds in their many different aspects. These may conveniently be grouped into three main modes of action/experience in relation to language:

– language use
– language acquisition
– language objectification.

The first of these subsumes both communicating and thinking — 'speech and thought' in Joseph's discussion of 'languaging'. The second — for which use is a necessary condition (cf. the chapters by Davies, Grundy and Thornbury) — is potentially subject to intervention in various forms of teaching/learning. The third — consciousness of language as something that can be thought about, talked about and written about — is manifested both in the innate curiosity of ordinary language users and in the behaviour of professionals: linguists, of course, and also teachers and teacher educators who recognise it as a prerequisite for planning, implementing and evaluating the work that they do. In the guise of 'language awareness' it has become a feature of educational practice in a variety of contexts — L1 and L2 teaching as well as LTE.

The table below summarises and exemplifies these points.

Table 1. Worlds and modes: language in LTE

Mode of experience/ action	Worlds		
	-1- *'real world'*	-2- *'classroom world'*	-3- *'LTE world'*
language use	■ language in thinking ■ language in communication ■ language variation by user and use ■ reflexive language	■ transactional classroom discourse (classroom management, task organisation, etc) ■ 'conversational' classroom discourse	■ lecture/seminar/tutorial discourse ■ supervisory discourse ■ other study activities (e.g. reading/writing)
language acquisition	■ L1 acquisition ■ untutored/'natural' L2/FL acquisition	■ L2/FL teaching/learning ■ learner input/output	■ trainees' language improvement/ maintenance ■ gaining understanding of how languages are learnt/taught
language objectification	■ instinctive noticing ■ language play and commentary ■ reflexive language ■ linguistic research and description	■ the 'subject' (e.g. English/French as a foreign language) ■ cross-linguistic and cross-cultural factors ■ focus on form, raising awareness of features of system and use (metacognition) ■ pedagogical description (syllabus, materials, textbooks, reference resources, etc)	■ knowledge about language in general ■ knowledge about the target FL and (in some contexts) the learners' L1 ■ awareness of features of own output ■ awareness of features of learner output ■ awareness of features of classroom interaction

The categories are of course highly permeable, as signified by the dotted lines. The lines between the different modes of 'classroom world' language are more loosely dotted than the others, since the roles of, respectively, objectification

('consciousness raising') and use ('real communication') are key areas of debate on second language acquisition and teaching methodology.

An advantage of this diagram is that the discussion in the chapters that follow, and indeed elsewhere in the literature, can easily be mapped on to it. For example, the central column (the classroom) reflects the view (cf. the chapter by Wright, amongst others) that the skills that a teacher needs are essentially of three kinds: *user* (having the proficiency required to fulfil the teaching role), *teacher*[3] or *method-expert* (having knowledge of how to use and present language in accordance with an appropriate methodology), and *analyst* (understanding how the language works).

Wright's chapter looks at the operation of language awareness in relation to each of these modes. The appropriateness of 'real language' (language as used in the 'real world' domain) as material for the pedagogic subject (in the classroom domain) is the main focus of the chapter by Widdowson, but is referred to in several of the chapters. The relationship between language as action (use) and language as object (objectification) is the focus of much of the discussion in Joseph's chapter. Reflexive language (cf. the chapter by Grundy) appears in Table 1 in the real-world domain as an aspect of both use and objectification, since it clearly is both. Grundy's paper makes the case that it is also a crucial, and under-recognised, aspect of second language acquisition. Understanding the connection between language improvement and language awareness, on the one hand, and language teaching methods, on the other, is a central concern in the chapters by Barnes and Wright.

Towards a 'syllabus' for language in LTE

Surveying the contributions to the present volume in the light of this categorisation discloses an implicit syllabus for language in LTE somewhat as follows:

Use

This tends to be the most taken for granted part of the LTE language syllabus but from the point of view of trainees it may well be highly significant, with implications for both the language improvement and methodology components of a course (cf. the chapter by Lavender).

As in the 'classroom world', language use in LTE serves both transactional (professional and study) and interactional (interpersonal) purposes. Whether or not the medium of instruction of a particular course is the L1 of the participants, trainees will become familiarised with the language of teaching and learning, including both professional terminology and professional modes of discourse.

The modes of discourse (lecture, language awareness workshop, etc) experienced by trainees on their course will, clearly, be determined in large part by the predominant model of LTE — e.g. 'transmission', 'apprenticeship', 'craft' (Wallace 1993) — in accordance with which the course is conducted (see the chapter by O'Donoghue and Hales for an instance of this).

Acquisition

The specific context of an LTE course will determine the extent to which its lectures, tutorials, etc are opportunities for language improvement. (In the UK PGCE context described by Barnes, for example, 'this might be difficult at present as most sessions are taught in mixed language groups with three languages represented'.)

Language improvement may focus on personal language skills or professional language skills. The former may involve social survival skills in a context in which trainees are attending an LTE course overseas (see the chapter by Lavender), the latter classroom skills ranging from development of appropriate classroom language (Barnes) to practice in questioning techniques. Somewhere between the two are the skills needed to cope with the linguistic demands of the LTE course itself.

The link between personal/professional language improvement and development of methodological expertise is a recurrent theme, with attention both to opportunities (Barnes, Cullen, Ferguson, Wright) and to potential difficulties (Ferguson, O'Donoghue & Hales, Lavender).

Objectification

Language awareness activity should involve *doing* rather than just expert input (Wright), working with examples of *authentic* language, including corpus data (O'Donoghue & Hales), and going beyond *knowledge already in mind to the development of* ***new knowledge****, or more refined knowledge* (Wright). The range of such awareness activity is very wide indeed, embracing language in general

as well as particular languages, both learner language and teacher language, and teaching materials. The following Table gives some examples

Table 2. Range of language awareness activities in LTE

Language in general	– overall 'sensitivity to language'; the maintenance and refinement of basic curiosity about language use (Wright); understanding the nature of language (Widdowson); the reflexive nature of language (Grundy); – sensitivity to issues of power, gender, and 'linguistic imperialism' (Wright); – basic cultural awareness (Barnes); awareness of the socio-cultural context of language use (Wright); – the inherent variability of language (Davies, Ferguson); the 'ongoing debate about norms and prescription' (Davies; see also Joseph's observations on English in Hong Kong).
Particular languages	– the TL as a foreign language (Widdowson); problematic aspects of each of the languages studied by the trainees (Barnes); – understanding of the forms and functions of language systems — grammar, vocabulary and phonology; an awareness of the social and pragmatic norms which underlie appropriate use (Wright); the facts as revealed by corpus linguistics (Widdowson); – the process of discourse-creation and the contribution of lexis and grammar to that process (Ferguson); – exploration of attitudes towards different varieties of language and how these are used, and an awareness of the spectrum of opinion, particularly when working in multilingual or multicultural contexts (Wright); – language variation in ESP: improved understanding of the distinctive language of particular professions; register and genre (Ferguson).
Learner language	– 'the student's struggle with language' (Wright); – sensitivity to errors and other interlanguage features (Wright); ability to detect and classify language learners' errors (Murray); – awareness of strategies for repair and reformulation (Wright); the reflexive qualities of learners' language (Grundy).
Teacher language	– awareness of their own and their students' language use in the classroom (Pennington); awareness of 'the discourse features of supportive, scaffolding teacher talk' (Thornbury); – classroom interaction; exposure of teachers to classroom talk data (Wright); classroom discourse frames (Pennington); awareness of different kinds of questions and their different pedagogical purposes (Cullen); – teachers' awareness of themselves as language learners (Lavender).

Table 2. Continued

Teaching materials	– the complexities of authentic language and 'how it does not always match the neat grammar presentations of course books and reference works'; teachers needing to be 'confident users of pedagogical reference grammars' (O'Donoghue & Hales); 'the language of normal user occurrence has to be pedagogically processed so as to make it appropriate for learning' (Widdowson); – 'examination of teaching materials to see how linguistic content is handled — the authenticity and range of the data samples, for example' (Wright); – ability to 'spot opportunities to generate discussion and exploration of language, for example by noticing features of texts which suggest a particular language learning activity' (Wright); – alertness to opportunities to 'take instructional detours (which assumes sophisticated language awareness and error analysis skills)' (Thornbury).

The last few points in this list are reminders of the link between language awareness and methodology. The relationship between the LTE and classroom worlds (columns 3 and 2 in Table 1) exercises, not surprisingly, several authors, notably Ferguson and Wright, both of whom see the issue as one of transfer. Wright sees this as 'problematic for both trainers and trainees'. He identifies a required shift: from thinking about language to thinking about the practical side of working with language for teaching purposes.

The 'main foundation'

Accomplishing this shift has never been straightforward and has become increasingly complex as our understanding of how language works in use, and how language is learnt through use, has become more sophisticated. It is not, of course, entirely true (to recall our cave-persons) that in the good old days all there was to worry about was 'nouns and verbs', even if this expression is understood as a metonym for lexico-grammar as a whole. The critique of the 'nouns and verbs' view of what learners have to learn goes back a long way. Just over a century ago, Henry Sweet, in his *Practical Study of Languages* (Sweet 1899/1964: 99–100), put forward what we would now regard as a discourse view of language and of language learning:

> … we speak in sentences. But we do not generally speak in detached sentences; we speak in concatenations of sentences. … The relations between sentences and texts are analogous to those between words and sentences: both are relations of context. … the meanings of words are brought out more clearly in connected texts than in detached sentences.
>
> These considerations point clearly to the conclusion that the main foundation of the practical study of language should be connected texts, whose study must of course be accompanied by grammatical analysis.

There is much here that we would recognise as part of the stock-in-trade of today's practical-study-of-language professional: text, context, cohesion, contextual meaning. We also have Sweet appearing to anticipate a very late 20th century position on the proper place for focus on form — arising out of meaning-focused task work, not preceding it — and on the relation between discourse and grammar, close to the integrative view of McCarthy and Carter (1994: 180) wherein

> the over-arching perspective of language-as-discourse will affect every part of the syllabus, including any conventional 'system' components and functional/speech act components, however they are treated, whether as a series of layers of language, or as realisations within general specifications of discourse strategies.

Pennycook (1994) contrasts two positions on the discourse/system relationship. The first 'emphasises language as a system and then looks to discourse analysis to explain how various contextual factors affect language in use'; the second 'looks at how meanings are a product of social and cultural relationships and then turns to see how these may be realised in language'. Though, according to Pennycook, the first of these is predominant in applied linguistics, it is not difficult to find applied linguists who take the other view. Widdowson (1978) saw 'use' as inclusive of 'usage'; for Lewis (1993) sociolinguistic competence precedes grammatical; and McCarthy and Carter (op. cit.) consider language *as* discourse, not discourse as a layer of language.

It is this understanding of discourse that shows us how far we have come since Sweet. For Sweet, connected text meant connections *within* text. Context meant co-text. What was of practical value was the study of language with these internal connections intact. Since then, however, much of the story of exploration of language in use has been one of enrichment of our understanding of the scope and complexity of connections between texts and factors *external* to them, including other texts and, by abstraction, text types (or genres). Our construction of the concept of text has been *sociologised* by Firthian-Hallidayan

constructs of register, context, meaning potential and genre, and by the concepts and techniques of conversation analysis; *psychologised* by schema theory, by interactivist theories of reading and by interactionist theories of second language acquisition; and *politicised* by critical approaches to the analysis of the relationship between discourse/genre and power. Our concept of discourse is no longer (simply) that of the text as 'concatenation' of sentences and pattern of meanings but that of 'the condition by which language as a structure or system exists'. Discourse (in this view) is 'bigger' than language; and it is 'coming to be seen as what language teaching is all about' (Pennycook op. cit.). This is particularly the case in the teaching of languages for specific purposes (see the chapter by Ferguson) but seems increasingly to be taken for granted in general-purpose language teaching as well.

Language teaching is 'all about' discourse, and discourse, it appears, is all about everything. Its data 'cut close from the marrow of human life', the work of discourse analysis is a part of that humanistic sociology which 'helps to illuminate man's social existence' (Berger 1963: 186). As such, it has been perhaps the most potent influence shifting the concerns of applied linguistics from the linguistic to the socio-political, from the study of language to the study of language practices.

Contexts of LTE practices

To the superstructure that has arisen on Sweet's 'main foundation' of connected text many changes, other than those related to the enrichment of our understanding of the nature and meaning of discourse, have, of course, contributed. They can be considered in relation to each of the three worlds with which we are concerned.

'Real' world

As Pennycook (quoted in Davies 1999: 28) observes, 'all education is political, … all schools are sites of cultural politics'. Members of today's teaching profession are highly sensitised, perhaps more so than ever before, to the social, cultural and political implications of their professional choices, and to the ways in which these do, or should, take account of change in the environment of LTE, both global and local. This kind of awareness may be presumed to include some or all of the following.

– Cultural shifts, mainly but not only in the West, from behaviour norms reflecting hierarchy, deference and exclusion towards those marking equality, solidarity and inclusiveness continue to have a profound effect on language behaviour. The discourse of public domains is increasingly conversationalised, that of institutional domains is personalised, that of power domains is democratised (see for example Fairclough 1995, 1996). The euphemistic instinct has become associated less with the human body and its (dis-)functions and more with society and its (dis-)contents. Our use of language is, paradoxically, at the same time less formal and more considered. Politeness has shed its connection with polish and formed a new association with politics.
– It is in relation to public discourses that change is most noticeable. As public services — health, education, transport, etc — have become increasingly commodified, so has its discourse become marketised. As the means of gathering and processing information have become technologised, so has the language used to communicate it.
– The world is, indeed, being 'Englishised', as the use of English as international lingua franca continues to spread; and English, in consequence, is being not only globalised, becoming part of the global economy and culture, but also localised, taking on a variety of new, or newly recognised, forms ('new Englishes') as it is appropriated by nations and individuals to fulfil communicative needs and to mark emerging identities. Among the consequences of this process of appropriation are changed perceptions of the status, indeed the very distinctness, of native and non-native speaker, and of the status of standard vis-à-vis non-standard varieties (cf. the chapters by Davies and Joseph).

In attempting to understand and describe these and other aspects of language variation and change in the context of modernity and post-modernity, linguistics has drawn strength from a renewed confidence in empirical methods rooted in the analysis of actual language use. Easy access to text corpora, large and small, representative and specialist, and the joining of quantitative and qualitative forces in the development of methods for analysing and describing such data, has greatly increased the sum total of what is available to know, while making it more practically possible than ever before for researchers (including teachers and learners) to undertake small-scale studies at the local level. And it is not simply that we know more, we know it differently: not just what is possible but what is probable, and not just what is done but what is

done by what sorts of people in what sorts of circumstances — as witness, for example, the corpus-based descriptions in the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (Biber et al. 1999).

This is not without its problems. We now face the burdens of data overload — an 'explosion which we must suppose will continue to grow exponentially' — and information overload — the 'plethora of information now available from every remotely relevant subject area' in the form of books, journals, websites and papers at conferences (Brown 2000: 8–11).

Classroom world

The classroom world is of course just as real as the real one — a social situation in its own right, as Allwright (1998: 120) reminds us — except in one crucial respect, namely the nature of much of the communication that takes place within it. Classroom communication is of course real in the trivial sense that it occurs, but in the sense of being 'not artificial or simulated; genuine'[4] it is only very imperfectly so. It is, furthermore, not normally an end in itself but a means to an end: a preparation for the real thing, and the classroom in which it occurs 'a rehearsal room for life outside it' (ibid.).

The tendency in recent methodology has been to argue that the more classroom communication can be made actually, or *as if it were*, an end in itself the more effective it will be as a means of language acquisition. The chapter by Thornbury addresses this issue directly, contrasting form-driven classroom communication — 'not so much discourse as metadiscourse' — with 'instructional *conversation*': a type of classroom discourse for which, he argues, teachers in training need to be specifically prepared.

The issue of 'real' vs artificial communication is one kind of *discourse* issue that confronts language teachers and language teacher educators — the macro one, we might call it, since it addresses the global question of what kind of communication can or should take place in the language classroom. Another is the 'real' vs 'tidied-up' (O'Donoghue and Hales) or 'reassembled' (Widdowson) language issue. This is also a discourse issue since, as Widdowson argues in his chapter, it is the discourse reality of 'real' English texts — their attachment to particular contexts and sets of expectations in the 'real' world — that makes them problematic for learners in classrooms. This we may call the micro issue, since it addresses the components of discourse — words, phrases, the building blocks of texts — and how best these can be manipulated for language learning

purposes. The 'classroom world' is in part constructed on the kinds of choices that teachers make on these inescapable issues.

We should, however, be wary of talking of 'the' classroom world. Classroom cultures vary according to the regional, national and local cultures of which they are part and according to the institutional norms which define and constrain them. Is it possible to make reliable general statements about global changes, or tendencies, affecting the classroom world? Apart from the fairly obvious effects of changing technologies, and in the absence of comprehensive data, this seems unlikely. How can we know, how could we measure, whether and to what extent the language behaviour in classrooms across the globe, in Africa, South America, the Far East, northern Europe, is more (or less) genuinely communicative, the input data more (or less) authentic, the methodology more (or less) learner-centred?[5] Consciousness of the forces and effects of globalisation seems, perhaps paradoxically, to have increased the conviction of teacher educators that the key to success is sensitivity to local conditions (see Holliday 1994).

LTE world

In so far as the classroom world provides the rationale for the world of LTE, we may expect that the prevailing educational culture and the perceived language needs of the classroom will influence teacher education — but will not wholly determine it.

There are a number of reasons for this; among them:

- There are different kinds of context in which LTE can take place: in the same environment within which the trainees' work is normally located, for example, or elsewhere, perhaps in the context of some overseas university (cf. the chapters by Lavender and Ferguson). In the latter situation, trainees are frequently exposed to ideas about teaching and learning, and about the roles of teachers and learners, which are not wholly congruent with the cultures of the classrooms to which they will eventually return.
- Since the scope of education (in contrast with training)[6] extends to the development of the whole person, the motivation for language improvement may be personal as well as professional (see the chapter by Lavender), and the teacher educator may see it as an obligation to meet this felt need, even though it may not be a stated objective of a particular course.
- Time constraints on LTE courses make comprehensive coverage of all the

language topics of a target syllabus impossible. Trainees need to be given the skills and the confidence to operate in all relevant areas of the language so as to cope with decisions about lesson planning, task design, learner queries, assessment, etc. Experience in working with authentic texts is widely held to promote language awareness, which as Wright points out relates to all aspects of teacher proficiency, and to build motivation and confidence (cf. the chapters by Grundy, Pennington and Cullen). Independence in improving language skills, both personal and professional, is desirable for the same reason (cf. the chapter by Barnes).

– Teacher educators are not merely products of their environment but, as decision makers with particular convictions, values and experiences, shapers of it.

One set of choices that contributes significantly to this shaping process relates to the balance between and relationship between 'input' and 'discovery'. An 'input' emphasis will be more direct and perhaps more economical of time and effort; a 'discovery' emphasis will be more indirect, more time and energy consuming, with the possible downside of trainees endlessly 'reinventing the wheel' (Ur 1996: 6–7). It is important to keep in mind that these choices are not (necessarily) antithetical. An approach which accommodates both is found in Ur's (op. cit.) 'enriched reflection' model, in which sources of knowledge may be either personal experience and thought or input from outside, but either way will be 'incorporated into the trainees' own reflective cycle so that effective learning can take place'.

As Smyth (1987) points out, much of the knowledge needed by trainees is not of an instrumental kind to be applied to practice — it is embedded in practice and inseparable from it. 'Often we cannot say what it is that we know … our knowing is in the action.' This kind of knowledge cannot easily be taught; it must be discovered through a process of exploration. 'As [the trainee] tries to make sense of it, he also reflects on the understandings that have been implicit in his action, understandings which he surfaces, criticises, restructures, and embodies in further action.' Such a view is particularly appropriate in relation to language knowledge, where what we know and what we can do is often not easily stated. It seems fair to say that it is the predominant view in this book, especially the chapters in Part 2 (to which see Introduction).

Pedagogical description for LTE

Given this fact, and given the range and complexity of knowledge about language that is now available to teachers, we may reasonably ask what kind of description of language is appropriate to LTE.

There is, of course, no shortage of examples of LTE pedagogical descriptions, in the form of syllabuses (e.g. for the UCLES/RSA courses), course or resource books offering descriptions of and practice in language for use in the LTE context (e.g. Thornbury 1997, Sprat 1994, Wright 1994), and numerous articles on specific topics. But it is difficult to detect any consensus on what, in principle, a pedagogical description for LTE should be like, or how we might set about constructing one.

The sheer complexity of the task might be one reason why this is so: we have to take into account all three inter-related worlds ('real', classroom, LTE), and all three inter-related modes (use, acquisition, objectification). Another reason might be to do with the very nature of this particular educational enterprise. To guide, without unduly constraining; to foster an explorative culture of LTE, without being either manipulative or ineffectual; such aims, self-evidently, cannot be achieved without a high degree of mutual understanding on the part of course providers and course participants. Indeed, it might reasonably be argued that pedagogical description in LTE is not so much a *thing* in need of delivery as a *process of communication* in need of satisfactory accomplishment. If so, it may be appropriate to focus less on desiderata for content and more on desiderata for communication.

Pedagogical description as a cooperative enterprise

It is, for example, clearly crucial that there be a good level of mutual understanding on questions of *belief* and *evidence* concerning both the nature of language in general and the facts of the particular languages involved. Where do such beliefs come from (intuition, observation, and knowledge of published sources are involved here)? What is the right balance to strike between criteria of validity (a *plausible* account of the language facts) and applicability (a *useful* or *practical* account). Where should evidence be sought (locally sourced texts; corpus data)?

To considerations of *quality* — as above — we need to add considerations of *quantity*: trainees need to feel that the information they are acquiring takes

account of their current state of knowledge and experience and meets, but does not exceed, their needs.

Each of the three worlds produces its own particular problems of *relevance*: relevance of language work to, for example, trainees' language needs here and now, especially in terms of language improvement or refreshment (the LTE world); relevance to professional skills of interpersonal management, interpretation of learners' errors, responsiveness to learners' queries (the classroom world); and relevance to learners' aspirations to communicate effectively outside the classroom (the real world). Relevance as a criterion should not, however, be applied unduly strictly. An excessively utilitarian approach may fail to address the affective aspect of language study, or may miss out on ideas about the nature of language in general on which trainees could usefully build their own observations of language in the future (cf. Wright's comments on this issue).

Finally, successful communication depends on cooperative work in relation to *manner*. In the LTE context this is likely to involve, for example, judgements on appropriate use of linguistic terminology and appropriate ways of presenting new information.[7]

How much reality can we bear?[8]

Let us now briefly consider how such criteria for cooperative description might apply to some of those aspects of LTE in which discourse 'reality' is a key issue, as it is in many of the chapters in this book: real vs artificial communication in the classroom; real vs 'tidied-up' language in coursebook and reference materials; data of real classroom interaction in LTE tasks.

In looking at classroom data, for example, there is the question of 'what is to be considered *data* and what is to be considered *context* or *analysis* of that data'; a question that is 'sometimes phrased as a question of the distinction between fact and interpretation, or reality and theory' (see Pennington). This is clearly a 'quality' issue. As Pennington notes, 'Access to real contexts of language use does not, in and of itself, guarantee an enlightened perspective on the dynamics of interaction in those contexts.'

In considering an appropriate methodology for working on real language data, a decision may need to be made on the suitability of 'input' vs 'discovery' approaches, as discussed above. The latter may be

> particularly effective when participants are exploring, reorganising and consolidating their existing knowledge of language, redressing misunderstandings created by over-dependence on often flawed 'rules' of grammar or usage […but] less

> successful in exposing trainees to areas of language, and methods of language description (features, for example, of pragmatics or discourse), with which they are not familiar. In these cases, the cognitive effort of grappling with new data without the benefit of 'maps' …can be very daunting, to the point where participants may simply 'turn off' (Wright).

This is, at least in part, a 'quantity' issue.

In introducing trainees to the experience of working on real language, for example in concordance form, there is a need to ensure that there is a shared language in which they can communicate their discoveries effectively and succinctly (see the paper by O'Donoghue and Hales). This is a 'manner' issue.

In considering the pedagogic benefits of 'real English', there is the question 'real for whom?' This is a 'relevance' issue, almost one might say *the* relevance issue, since it effectively links all three of the worlds with which language teacher educators are concerned are concerned.

Local conditions and 'localisation'

The key to understanding the relevance of 'the real' is local conditions, a concept invoked in the chapters which follow in various forms and with reference to a variety of sociolinguistic and pedagogic issues.

In relation to the former, both Davies and Joseph address the issue of standard language and local variety, Davies seeing the post-modern stress on fragmentation and 'localised creativity' as a challenge to the concept of a standard language, Joseph commenting that 'it is easy to condemn reductionism in the study and teaching of languages, but in reality choices have to be made. They have to be made locally, by people on the ground taking account of local circumstances.'

In relation to the pedagogic aspect, Widdowson stresses that 'real language is local language' and it is part of the particular professional skill of the language teacher to be able to 'localise the language to make it learnable'. Interesting translations of this principle into the LTE domain are found in Cullen's exploration of the use for trainee classroom-language improvement purposes of lesson transcripts taken from the local teaching environment; in Grundy's construction of the pragmatics component of an LTE course in Hong Kong around the collection and analysis of a two-minute sample of learner talk from the trainees' own classrooms; and in Pennington's use of authentic classroom data as a basis for exploring possibilities for change in teaching method.

Conclusion

Davies' point about localised creativity returns this discussion to the fundamental issue of discourse and how it is to be perceived in its relation to systemic aspects of language: as essentially a relationship of extension (the discourse 'layer' as a useful resource in explaining otherwise inexplicable matters of phonology, grammar, etc) or, more radically, as one of 'pre-condition' — that by which the development, variability and use of language is made possible, and, perhaps more to the point, explicable.

As in many debates around such antitheses, there is, regardless of the theoretical pros and cons, probably a utilitarian case for accommodating both points of view. The discourse-as-layer approach offers teacher educators a manageable and profitable, if ultimately limited, extension to the repertoire of language description techniques. It underlies many published syllabuses and coursebooks, and much everyday teaching and teacher training activity (see, for example, the chapters by O'Donoghue & Hales, Cullen and Grundy in this volume). That this approach need not be disorderly and piecemeal is evidenced by, to take one notable example, the recently published *Discourse and Context in Language Teaching — A Guide for Language Teachers* (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain 2000). In an approach that goes far beyond the goal of finding 'more palatable ways of administering the medicine' or 'reprocessing existing knowledge and adding to it without a sense of déjà vu' (Bamber 1987), this not only presents a pedagogic description of language systems and skills within a comprehensive discourse framework, but also offers guidance on discourse training for teachers and learners.

The 'discourse is bigger than language' view is far more radical in its implications. If language is seen as playing a subsidiary part in meaning and 'local and historical context play a constitutive rather than ancillary role in communication' (Rampton 2000), local creativity is brought into centre stage. This is a challenging — i.e. not only interesting but also difficult — prospect for anyone managing an LTE course. It may, however, provide a framework, which the alternative approach almost certainly cannot, within which issues of quality, quantity, relevance and manner in LTE pedagogical description can effectively be resolved. (For an example in this volume, see Thornbury's discussion of issues of classroom ecology and power.)

Either way, and granted that the scope of the discourse connections perceived as relevant has grown vastly as a result of research in the intervening

years, and allowing therefore an enriched interpretation of the word 'connected', Sweet's statement that 'the main foundation of the practical study of language should be connected texts, whose study must of course be accompanied by grammatical analysis' seems truly a text for our times.

Notes

* I am grateful to my co-editor Gibson Ferguson and to John Joseph for comments and suggestions which have helped me to improve this introductory chapter.

1. All but one of the chapters - the exception being that by Alan Davies - originated in earlier forms (since considerably revised and updated) at a symposium for language teacher educators held at the University of Edinburgh in November 1997. The theme of the symposium was 'Language in Language Teacher Education'.

2. David Crystal (1985) *Who cares about English usage?* Penguin Books. p. 35.

3. A difficulty of having 'teacher' as the third in this trinity is that it should really be superordinate to all three.

4. definition 4 in *Collins Concise Dictionary* (1982)

5. 'Communicative language teaching has clearly not been adopted everywhere in the world, and ... it is not everywhere that language teaching evokes geopolitical debates.' (Allwright 1998:124).

6. for a useful clarification of this sometimes too readily taken for granted distinction, see Ur (1996:3)

7. It will not have escaped the observant that here I am exploiting the Gricean maxims. As Levinson (1983) points out, Grice's maxims apply not only to language but to many, perhaps all, forms of cooperative behaviour. Here we are exploring a form of behaviour which is, indeed, cooperative and linguistic - but not purely linguistic: cognitive, affective, educational, professional, too.

8. This was the title of a recent article by the television critic of the *Daily Telegraph* (August 4th 2001). The subject was Reality TV. The following sample of phrases and sentences from the article (my italics) throws some interesting though of course indirect light [my comments in square brackets] on the issue of reality in the classroom: 'the airwaves had to be *democratised* before it caught on' [connection between social change and openness to 'reality']… 'we Brits like our reality real' [question of whether all classroom cultures are equally accepting of 'reality'] … 'the first programme that has opened up the *interactive* possibilities of television' [connection between 'reality' and interaction]… '*convergence* between drama and reality' [pedagogic tasks are typically some combination of these two, called in the article 'dramality'].

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Part 1

Concepts of language in language teacher education

Teacher education, as a form of service industry, is in the business not of mass-producing machines (in this case, human) but of creating added value. The beneficiaries are not only people intending to work, or actually working, with learners in classrooms but also the learners themselves and a variety of other stakeholders such as parents, employers and society at large. So far, so non-controversial. However, the nature of the value added is less easy to define.

The difficulty arises partly out of the uncertain relationship between teacher education and teacher performance and partly out of the fact that teacher performance is itself part of another, and much larger, service industry, teaching. And good teaching is not easy to define.

In the case of language teaching and, by extension, language teacher education, these difficulties are compounded by the complexity and elusiveness of the value-added in question, namely skill in language. It is our 'evolving conception of what language itself represents within the process of language teaching and learning' that Joseph in the second chapter in Part 1 sets out to trace. Noting 'an ever-greater tendency in applied linguistics to treat language as non-thing-like' he explores the concept of 'languaging': the word language used as a verb 'in order to deal lexically with speech and thought as a single function when such a concept is logically required by the rest of what is being said'.

Joseph's analysis of the category of words within which it is most appropriate to locate 'language' — is it more noun-like, is it more verb-like? is it like mind, is it like sex? — may seem at first glance linguistically over-meticulous in the context of a volume with a focus on education, but of course it is ultimately not 'language' — the word — with which he is concerned but language — the phenomenon — and the former is merely his chosen route to the latter. We must, he is implicitly saying, wrestle with the complexity and elusiveness of this principal object of our professional concerns, and try to make clear, or at least clearer, what we (can) mean by it. If we don't, we will — literally — not know what we are doing. His conclusion, that 'language as an institutional thing or

language as a verbal practice … are both equally real, and each has its own importance' is, in fact, only a pre-conclusion. The important thing is what difference this makes in practice. Drawing on his experience in Hong Kong, he shows how our perception of 'language as institution and as practice … forces decisions to be made by teachers and consequently by teacher trainers'.

The verb-like (practice) and noun-like (institution) aspects of language both feature in the following chapter, in which Davies sets out the case for a 'social component' in language teacher education. Such a component should grow out of the realisation that 'language development in the individual does not happen in isolation … it will not take place without the interaction of another person who has already become a language user'. It should also challenge any presumption that trainees may have of homogeneity in speech communities — both their own and their target ones — and address the complex issues of identity (for example the ways in which members' beliefs about identity may affect their views about the standard language and stereotypes of language use), of variety (which varieties to teach — both dialects and registers), and of the practices associated with norms, as opposed to rules, and prescription.

All language teacher education, Davies reminds us, is about empowerment, 'making students powerful through their knowledge about language and through their proficiency in the languages they need'. Neither 'knowledge about' nor proficiency can be fully developed without an adequate grasp of the social dimension, and language teacher education without this dimension would be 'naïve and unhelpful'.

Both these initial chapters — Joseph's more by way of definition, Davies's by elaboration — address general but fundamental questions about the nature of the 'object' with which language teaching and language teacher education are essentially concerned. This notion of object takes on a particular significance in the following chapter, by Widdowson, whose argument is constructed around the crucial distinction between object (language) and (pedagogic) subject. The essence of Widdowson's argument is that these two are not — at all — the same, and it is by their knowledge of the language *subject* that language teachers acquire their authority and their professionalism.

Though the word 'subject' is an inescapable part of the working discourse of practising teachers and their pupils, its appearances in the academic literature of teacher education are infrequent, and it has a rather 'retro' feel to it, redolent as it is of timetables, examination certificates and school notice boards. In these familiar situations, a subject is defined by its difference from

other subjects, English 1 from English 2, for example, or both of these from Spanish, or the set of language subjects from the set of science ones. Such differences, though obviously of great practical utility, are of less fundamental significance than the distinction that Widdowson elaborates here. For him, a subject is a pedagogic construct, a version of reality which has been 'devised for learning, and as such [has] only an indirect relationship with the experienced reality of everyday life'. This experienced reality is, precisely, that 'object' (language) which Joseph and Davies are concerned to elucidate in their chapters. It is the nature of the relationship between object (language) and pedagogic subject that Widdowson sets out to clarify, pointing out that, though there must be some relationship, 'it cannot be one of direct determination'. One reason why this is so is that the particular language that a subject is about is not English, French, etc but English as a foreign language, French as a foreign language. Knowing the subject involves recognising this foreignness, and recognising how the language 'is foreign in different ways for different groups of students'. A more fundamental reason is to do with the issue of 'real' language (see introductory chapter), towards which Widdowson adopts a constructively sceptical stance. The reality of the object language — its use for real communication by native speakers in real situations — is not the appropriate reality for the classroom, he argues; it has to be 'pedagogically processed so as to make it appropriate for learning, which means that learners can appropriate it for learning'. Precisely how this is to be achieved is just what teachers in training, or indeed teachers in practice, need to discover.

Recognition of the difference between the object language and the language subject is therefore, in Widdowson's view, the key to understanding what makes a teacher a teacher, and, consequently, is critical in teacher education. Bridging the gap, or at least part of the gap, between native-like performance in real situations of use and learner-like performance in situations of learning, is, of course, what language teaching is all about. Better understanding of the discourse of learning and of the discourse of learners should help in achieving this aim. The final two chapters in Part 1, by Grundy and Thornbury, contribute, in different ways, to this process of understanding.

It is, as Widdowson points out, not language that language teachers teach but a language. Learners come to the task of learning a second language as, cognitively and socially, already 'languaging' beings, and able to transfer much of the knowledge and skill derived from their experience of their first language to the task of communicating in their new one. An important part of this experience is, undoubtedly, experience of the 'reflexiveness' of language: as

Grundy puts it (quoting Lucy 1993), those diacritic features of language which instruct audiences 'how to interpret the speech they are hearing'. The essence of Grundy's case is that as teachers we should give greater weight to this pervasive aspect of language pragmatics, both as evidence of accomplishment in the output of learners — to illustrate this he provides a detailed account of the repair strategies employed by two learners — and, more generally, as a factor in second language acquisition. Grundy's conclusion is that languages are learnable but not teachable and that 'it could well be that it is language that teaches language, rather than teachers or even learners themselves'. In the concluding part of his chapter, Grundy shows, based on his teacher training experience at the Polytechnic University of Hong Kong, how trainee teachers can be inspired, by a data-driven introduction to pragmatics based on a sample of learner talk from their own classrooms, to take this reflexive aspect of language seriously in their own teaching.

With Thornbury's chapter the attention shifts from the discourse of learners to the discourse of learning. At first sight it may seem as if Thornbury is at odds with both Widdowson — since he wants more 'real language', not less — and Grundy, since for Thornbury the 'meta-' (meta-language, meta-discourse) in classroom interaction is a problem rather than a solution. But the disagreements are in fact illusory. What Thornbury values is conversation-like talk and what Widdowson disputes is the appropriacy to the classroom of the real object language as spoken by its native speakers. Thornbury is dissatisfied with teacher talk about language, while Grundy values the reflexivity in learners' use of language. What all three of them have in common is a concern with language that learners can learn from: in Widdowson's case this is examples of language that can be generalised by learners as meaning potential; in Grundy's, it is language used reflexively; in Thornbury's, it is that type of discourse which creates opportunities for learning.

But what sort of discourse is this? It is, necessarily, instructional since its purpose is to facilitate learning; it is, Thornbury argues, conversational since it involves the 'joint construction of meaning', in which the role of learners in controlling the discourse is recognised. Hence the thought-provokingly oxymoronic 'instructional conversation' of the chapter's title. In a section entitled Training for 'a pedagogy of possibility' Thornbury relates these ideas to the approach adopted on in-service Diploma courses at International House in Barcelona. He describes how trainees are encouraged to 'gauge their learners' responses to instruction' and 'to shift [their] perceptions of the goals of instruction from a concern for transmission of the (native speaker) user's

grammar, to a concern for fostering the emergence of the learners' grammar'. How then can we begin to describe the 'value added' in an effective programme of *language* teacher education? Partly, at least, in terms of awareness:

– of the thinking/doing, object/institution equivocations in 'language' or, perhaps better, in 'languaging';
– of the social dimension of language, especially in relation to varieties, identity and prescription;
– of the nature of the language as a pedagogic subject — and its complex relationship with the object language;
– of the reflexivity of learner language, and its implications for our assessment both of what learners can do and how they can come to do it;
– of the type of discourse that provides true learning opportunities; and the paradoxical difficulty of making this real in the classroom.

Is language a verb? — conceptual change in linguistics and language teaching

John E. Joseph

Introduction

According to what might be called the 'received history' of applied linguistics in the 20th century (as related with clarity and elegance by Richards and Rodgers 1992, for example), the grammar-translation method, a classical inheritance, remained the dominant mode of language teaching through the first half of the century, despite important attempts at establishing 'direct' teaching methods, usually outside the normal educational establishment, and somewhat less successful attempts at remoulding language teaching according to the findings of modern linguistics. However, the wartime success of the U. S. Army language teaching manuals, developed by the linguist Leonard Bloomfield (1887–1949) and his students, was a turning point. By the late 1950s the audiolingual method, inspired by the wartime manuals, began to become dominant in America, and within a few years its influence was being felt in other parts of the world. But already by the mid-1960s, Noam Chomsky (b. 1928) had exposed the behaviourist fallacy that underlay the audiolingual method, inspiring a series of attempts to reformulate language teaching in a way consistent with the Chomskyan view of language acquisition as an automatic and instinctive process. By the late 1970s, the outcome of this development was a shift away from the teaching of language structure to a view that the primary role of the language teacher was to furnish linguistic 'input' within realistic communicative contexts. From this, students would acquire linguistic knowledge in a process recapitulating that of first-language acquisition. But by 1990, it was becoming clear that the teacher's role needed to be more than that of an input provider, and what Jack C. Richards (b. 1943) called 'direct teaching' (Richards 1990, where 'direct' means essentially the opposite of what it had meant in the 'direct method') came back into the picture (see further Celce-Murcia et al. 1997: 141). This was followed in due course by a return to structured attention to grammar and vocabulary under guises such as 'focus

on form'. Within a few more years, an uneasy consensus developed that language teaching had to involve some balance between communicative input and formal work, and was largely holding despite mounting opposition from people fed up with theory-driven pendulum swings and eager to follow Kumaravadivelu's (1994) vision of a 'post-method condition' for language teaching.

In any field of research, whether theoretical or applied in nature, the condition known as 'consensus' is a double-edged sword, capable of rallying the field around the true and the good, but also of building walls around the false but comfortable. Even researchers who disdain the existing consensus would like in most cases to build a new consensus around their alternative view. There is an implicit paradox here, since what research is about is the asking of questions and raising of problems, followed by the testing of possible answers and solutions. Since the questions and problems must themselves arise out of a dissatisfaction with the present state of knowledge and practice, the role of science is effectively to seek out areas in which consensus exists, and unsettle it. Each of the people named in the opening paragraph has successfully and fruitfully undertaken this difficult but necessary role.

There remains, however, the problem of the very powerful consensus about seeing the developments in applied linguistics and language teaching according to this particular 'plot'. The aim of the present chapter is to suggest an alternative perspective, centred on the evolving conception of what language itself represents within the process of language teaching and learning. My hope is that this perspective will provide a new way of interpreting where the theory and practice of language teaching have been going and are continuing to go, for it is only within such an interpretation that future developments can be cogently and productively planned.

Is language a verb?

The short answer to the question posed in my main title is 'yes'. To ascertain that *language* is a verb, one has only to consult the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2nd ed.), which contains the entry:

> **language,** *v.* [f. LANGUAGE *sb.*] *trans.* To express in language, put into words. **b.** *transf.* To express (by gesture). Hence **languaging** *vbl. sb.*

Examples of *language* as a transitive verb are found as far back as the 17th century:

> Learn, Doctour, learn to language this Sacrament from a Prelate of this Church. (**1636**, Archbishop Williams, *Holy Table*, p. 95)
> The style and manner of languaging all pieces of prophecy. (**1652**, J. Smith, *Sel. Disc.*, vi.xiii.)
> Seneca has languaged this appositely to us. (**1667**, Waterhouse, *Fire Lond.*, 185)

The *OED* also supplies a 19th-century example of meaning **b**, where the transitivity is ambiguous:

> It is very likely that Daniel had only the thinking and languaging parts of a poet's outfit. (**1875**, Lowell in *N. Amer. Rev.* CXX, 395)

Actually, the entry in the new *OED* already needs some updating. In her book reconstructing the idea system of the American linguist Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897–1941), Penny Lee provides a clearly intransitive instance of the verb when she puts it in parallel with *breathe, walk* etc.:

> I use the term 'language' as a verb in order to deal lexically with speech and thought as a single function when such a concept is logically required by the rest of what is being said. According to this way of talking we have the capacity to language and are languaging beings, or beings who language. […] If we can say that we breathe, think, walk, or sing, there is no reason why we should not also say that we language. (Lee 1996: xv n.)

She refers as well to the repeated use of *languaging* in Maturana (1987), and notes that 'Whorf (1940: 2) set a precedent for the non-nominal use of the word when he referred to what is 'languageable', putting the word into inverted commas' (Lee 1996: xv n.). She might also have invoked the authority of the *OED*. In any case, she is surely right that there is no reason why we should not say 'we language'. Until John Honey gets his way and a 'language tsar' is appointed (see Honey 1997), people who object to 'we language' will have to do one of two things. They can point to the lack of an unambiguous intransitive precedent in the body of texts which define the English language as an *institution*, a notion I shall be returning to further on; or they can argue that there is no need to say 'we language' when we can say that we talk or speak. But as Lee points out, these verbs do not capture the idea of 'speech and thought as a single function', which is crucially important to Whorf's conception of how speech and thought each

shape and, to a certain extent, limit what we can put into and get out of the other (see Whorf 1956, also Joseph et al. 2001, chap. 4). This is the idea Whorf set out to 'language' by innovating the word *languageable*.

Yet, in doing so, did he not contradict his own conception of how language shapes thought? By this very innovation Whorf stretched the limits of what is 'languageable' in English. The ease with which he did it — the fact that, as Lee states, there is no inherent obstacle to saying *languageable* or *to language* — would seem to weaken the idea that our speech shapes what we can think, and quite undoes any possibility that it limits what is thinkable. On the other hand, neither *languageable* nor *to language* has entered common usage. There is resistance. If you, reader, reacted with something other than 'yes, of course' when you read the main title of this paper, if you found it slightly, or more than slightly, ridiculous — why was this so, given that *language* has been an English verb for over 350 years? Whatever it is that makes us spontaneously sceptical about thinking of language as a verb is what Whorf was grappling with. It is hard to pin down, but as a matter of common experience, even if we do not refuse to countenance linguistic innovations, neither do we automatically embrace them all, even if they capture something conceptually new. To that extent, our language 'limits' us, though never in any absolute sense.

Reconceiving language as a verb

Whorf may have been the first linguist to exploit the grammar of the word *language* in the ways outlined above, but he was far from the first to wonder whether the meaning of *language* might be usefully conceived as verb-like in nature. Along with their morphological and syntactic differences, there is a generally recognised semantic distinction between nouns and verbs, such that nouns refer to persons, places or things (concrete or abstract), while verbs refer to actions, states or conditions (likewise concrete or abstract). Note however that I have just defined *verbs* using three nouns: for even the quintessentially verbal 'actions', 'states' and 'conditions' can be conceived of as 'things', in the abstract. And while it may be less commonplace to do the reverse and reconceive things as actions, it is interesting to note how many linguists over the last two centuries have tried to characterise *language* as having the essential properties of a verb rather than those of a noun. When Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835; see Humboldt 1836), whose linguistic writings straddle the French Enlightenment and German Romanticism, insists that language is

Energeia rather than *Ergon* — a kind of energy, or potential for action, rather than what is produced through that action — he is urging his contemporaries to stop conceiving of language as something static and to think of it instead as dynamic, which is to say as having the essential qualities of a verb. When Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913; see Saussure 1916) tries to redefine *langue, langage* and *parole* in such a way that *langue* excludes the physical capacity for language (included in *langage*) and the observable texts actually produced in a language (part of *parole*), he is again, rather in the spirit of Humboldt, removing from language those characteristics which would make it most like a prototypical noun. When Bloomfield embraces a behaviourist perspective on language, he is rejecting the notion of language as a system which people have in their minds in favour of the one way in which it can be objectively observed, as patterned regularity in what people do; and when in the same years, and in a not altogether unrelated spirit, Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951; see Wittgenstein 1953) declares that meaning is *use*, he is again rejecting a traditional conception of language in favour of one less palpable and based on action. In British linguistics, J R Firth (1890–1960) initiates a scepticism about the reality of the language system — again a dubiety about its noun-like attributes — which is continued in the work of M A K Halliday (b. 1925) and in a still more radical form in the writings of Roy Harris (b. 1931; see Harris 1996). (On Firth, Wittgenstein and Harris, see Joseph et al. 2001, chaps. 5, 6 and 14.)

Within this perspective, the achievement of Chomsky is to resuscitate a noun-like conception of language, when he rejects Bloomfieldian behaviourism in favour of a self-described return to the assumptions of traditional grammar. For him, language (or 'grammar' or 'I-language') is a system of knowledge not only physically present in the 'mind/brain' of speakers but with a core component, Universal Grammar (UG), that is innate. He sometimes uses the physicalising metaphor of 'language organ' for UG, or says that it is 'hard-wired' into the brain. And he insists that this 'thing' is the only aspect of language which is interesting and can be known about in a principled way, an insistence he has maintained in the face of 40 years of criticism that, because it cannot be observed directly or even in its direct effects, it cannot be studied scientifically.

In traditional modes of language teaching, grammar is the attempt to capture analytically this 'thing' called language, in the belief that this is a necessary prerequisite to its understanding and transmission, at least by and to adults. There is then a certain irony in the fact that the role of grammar in language teaching was undone less by the wartime application of Bloomfield's

behaviourist (hence supposedly action-based) methods than by Chomsky's insistence that language is indeed a 'thing', but one which operates automatically, and is essentially immune to conscious manipulation. Still more ironic is the fact that this giving up of grammar as the basis of language teaching led to an ever-greater tendency in applied linguistics to treat language as non-thing-like, as the following quote makes clear:

> As Studdert-Kennedy (1991) has declared, 'language is not an object, or even a skill, that lies outside the child and has somehow to be acquired or internalized. Rather it is a mode of action into which the child grows because the mode is implicit in the human developmental system' (p. 10). […] Like Studdert-Kennedy, I start with the presumption that language is not an object, nor is it some opaque form of knowledge. (Locke 1995: 279–280)

One might like to know what precisely is the difference between, on the one hand, a 'skill' and an 'opaque form of knowledge', and on the other, 'a mode of action […] implicit in the human developmental system'. The case could be made that they are two ways of describing the same conception, with the first two more noun-like and the last more verb-like in character. In that case, we would seem to be dealing with a continuum of conceptualisations or ways of describing concepts, with 'object' at one extreme, 'action' at the other, and 'skill' and 'knowledge' somewhere in between. At this point, it may be helpful to bring in the methods of 'prototype semantics'.

Prototype semantics of 'language'

The prototype theory of semantics takes its inspiration partly from Wittgenstein's notion of 'family resemblance' in meaning. There is plenty of evidence that the prototypical noun is just what grammars typically say it is, a person, place or thing — *not* an idea or other abstraction. Abstract nouns are nouns, by definition, but they are not such good examples of nouns as concrete nouns are. Experiments have shown that for English speakers, prototypical birds are sparrows, robins, and the like; penguins and ostriches are birds, too, but are more peripheral to the category, presumably because they do not display a key characteristic of the prototypical birds, sustained flight (see Figure 1). Ducks and geese are closer to the centre, chickens further away. The evidence for what is or is not prototypical comes from asking people to give examples for the category, from timed-response tests, and from linguistic evidence such as the animacy hierarchy, which shows a universal pattern of

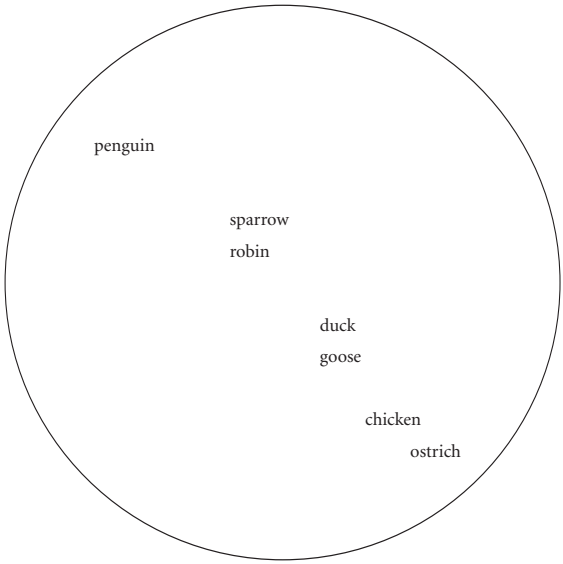

Figure 1. Prototype semantics of *bird*

grammatical distinctions based on closeness to or distance from prototypical concrete, animate nouns (see further Saeed 1997: 37).

How close the noun *language* is to the prototypical centre of the category 'nouns' is the basic question we are pursuing, and it is not an easy one to answer on account of a curious complexity in the psychology of prototype semantics. I refer to the levelling or centripetal effect of generalisation, whereby *all* members of a category are assumed to have the prototypical features of that category. When this happens in our judgements about individual human beings, we call it prejudice. When I meet a lawyer, I assume he or she is devious without waiting for any evidence. If experience then reveals that, on the contrary, this particular lawyer appears to be an honest and straightforward individual, I then interpret this as a sign that this is a *really* devious one. But my particular views about the deviousness of lawyers results from my individual personal experience of them. They are not universally shared. It is a fact about prototype semantics generally that its fields are no more than generalisations, for each of their individual members will have their own particularities, and there will be sub-groupings of individuals by these particularities within any language community.

So too with *language*. It is to be expected that speakers of English will vary in how many of the prototypical features of the category 'nouns' they conceive of it as having. Even if we accept the view that language is not a thing, let alone animate, it should not surprise us that most people conceive of it in thing-like and even animate-like terms. Even among linguists the idea became prevalent and powerful from the mid-19th century onward that language is 'a living organism'. To linguists such as August Schleicher (1821–1868) and Arsène Darmesteter (1846–1888), author of *La vie des mots*, this was *not* a metaphor, but a revelation. Languages had a life cycle, being born, growing, and ultimately dying, at both the level of the individual and the species. We still talk about living and dead languages, language death, endangered languages, and so on, in ways that reflect this heritage, and that most people, but not all, recognise as metaphorical.

The diverse ways in which English speakers conceive of 'language' means that any attempt to analyse the semantics of the word *language* can only be partial. In general terms, what we can say is that *language* belongs to a subcategory of aprototypical nouns inhabiting that edge of the category 'nouns' which borders on the category 'verbs', where the opposition between these two categories is essentially grammatical, with their semantic differences being secondary (see Figure 2). As I pointed out earlier, *language* would seem to partake in some of the prototypical semantic features of verbs, being neither a person, place nor 'thing' in the ordinary sense, but an action and perhaps a condition. The category to which it belongs is distinct from but related to that of gerunds — *talking, walking, breathing* — perhaps the most marginal of all subsets of nouns, since they are nouns in grammatical form only. Again, however, the very fact of belonging to the category 'nouns' opens the possibility of their being conceived as more or less thing-like and even animate-like by different people. Other related subcategories include those of 'de-verbal' nouns like *punishment, invasion, behaviour*, derived morphologically, and *read, talk, act*, as in 'a good read', 'an interesting talk', 'a class act', with no overt morphological derivation (see Figure 3). Still another consists of nouns with a closely related commonly-used verb, such as *life, death, birth, sight.*

The related class of nouns to which I am asserting that *language* belongs can be described as follows: semantically verb-like nouns neither derived from verbs nor having a closely related commonly-used verb. This is not a category recognised in traditional analysis. I am not sure what its prototypical examples might be, but its membership would include such nouns as *mind, instinct, sex*

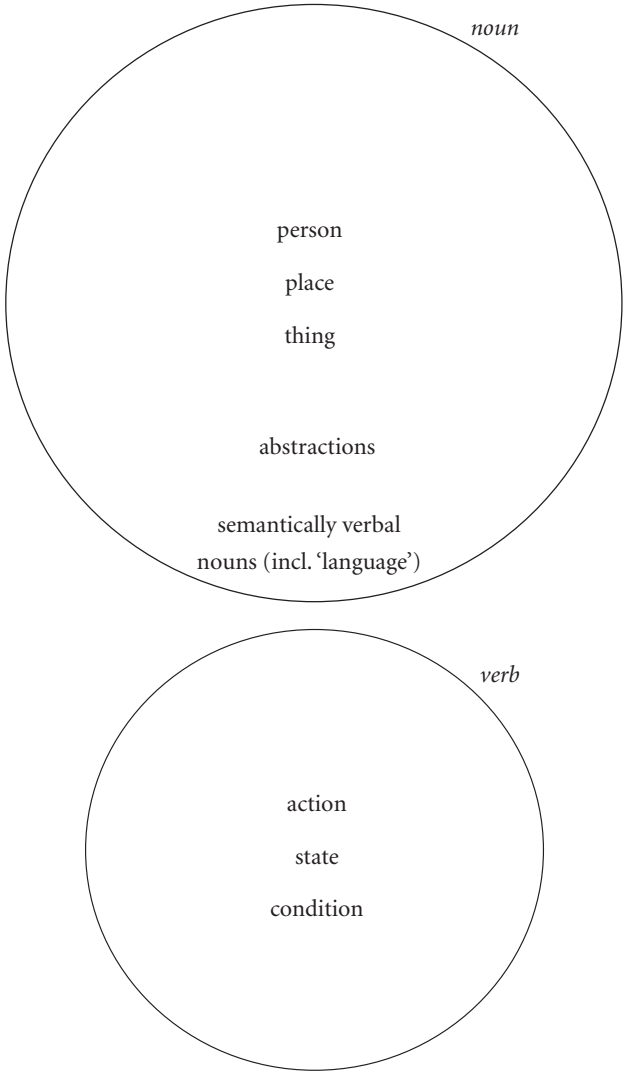

Figure 2. Prototype semantics of *language*

(in one of its meanings). All of these are words that name something people do, and for which there is no closely related commonly-used verb. It is surprising that such a category should exist at all. In the case of *sex*, without going into

(i.) *talking, walking, breathing, teaching*
(gerunds; non-completive [cf. ii.a])
(ii.a) *tal, walk, sleep, act*
('de-verbal' nouns derived morphologically)
(ii) *life, death, birth, sight*
(nouns with a closely related commonly-used verb)
(iv.a) *sex* (the activity), *accident, fun*
(nouns without a closely related commonly-used verb, but which one can 'have' or 'do'; conceptually simple)
(iv.b) *language, mind, instinct*
(nouns without a closely related commonly-used verb and which one cannot 'have' or 'do'; conceptually complex)
(ii.b? iv?) *culture (cultivate)*
(iii? iv?) *health (heal), deed (do)*

Figure 3. Nouns which partake in some of the prototypical semantic features of verbs (incl. 'verbal nexus-word' and 'verbal substantives' [Jespersen 1924:133–144])

gory detail, it is true that you can sex mice, which is to say determine their sex, but neither of these is the same as the *sex* in 'having sex'. The *OED* also says that in mid-20th century slang you can *sex*, intransitive, meaning 'have sex' — a usage I have never encountered, and to which I would accord a status comparable to that of *language* the verb.

Then again, there is a difference between *to sex* and *to language* in that the latter denotes a relatively complex action, combining, as Lee puts it, 'speech and thought as a single function'. *Mind* and *instinct* are similarly complex, in a way that *sex* is not. Indeed, the whole action of sex can be expressed in any of several simple, unrelated English verbs, none of which is considered acceptable in public discourse.

The basis for distinguishing a subgroup for *language* from another for *talk* and *sight* based on their relation to a verb is not entirely satisfying. It necessitates marginalising the verbal use of *language*, which is not a methodological move that can be made neutrally or without logical consequences. Moreover, I am unsure of where to put examples like *health* or *deed*, which few people relate to *heal* and *do*. Whether I class *health* with *talk* or with *language*, its non-obvious relationship to the commonly-used verb *heal* is going to make it aprototypical within the subcategory.

The point I want to make is this. The prototypical members of the particular set of nouns which includes *language* and *mind*, distinguished by being

semantically verbal yet lacking a closely-related commonly-used verb, are prone to engendering wide disparity and disagreement in how they are conceived. This is because, in semantic terms, they are neither fish nor fowl. To the analytic eye they appear semantically verbal, yet are bound to no verb, at least to no closely related commonly-used verb. On the grammatical level, it is relatively rare for them to be construed as verbs; they are nouns for most people most of the time. And that may engender a semantic 'boot-strapping' effect, which leads us to think of them as being like prototypical nouns — things, maybe even living things.

The thought process by which this happens is a natural one. It does not necessarily lead us into error, so long as it leaves us with multiple ways of conceiving of language, and does not direct us to one of these conceptions to the exclusion of the others. The insight behind the views of Studdert-Kennedy and Locke, cited above, is that the tendency to conceive of language as a thing has become overly powerful — the same insight which impelled the earlier linguists we surveyed to try to reinstate the verbal view alongside it, by reconceiving language as a dynamic thing (Humboldt), eliminating its physical attributes (Saussure), eliminating the 'mind' which the thing called language would have to inhabit (Bloomfield, Wittgenstein). Although I have connected the nominalising tendency with 'natural' thought processes, these have been abetted in the case of linguistics by the desire to have a definable, and in some cases even a 'natural', object of study, without which linguistics might not appear to have the focus required for a 'scientific' enterprise (see further Joseph 2000a).

But even admitting that the nominal view of language is overly powerful, the approach offered by Studdert-Kennedy and Locke in the earlier quote seeks, not a balance, but a tipping of the scales in the opposite direction. Just like those whom they are implicitly criticising, they present language as 'object' and language as 'mode of action' as an either-or choice. As long as we choose one and reject the other we are making the same mistake, whichever one we choose. We are limiting our perspective to one side of a multi-sided phenomenon. I have argued in a similar way against Roy Harris when he labels as 'myths' various traditional perspectives on language, including the 'reification' of language into something thing-like (Joseph 1997 & forthcoming). As Saussure said, the study of language differs from other quests for knowledge in that the object of study is not given in advance, but is itself determined by the point of view taken by the investigator. When we approach language as a noun, we deal with its nominal attributes, and when we approach it as a verb, with its

verbal attributes. Either can be useful for different purposes. For some purposes we can even approach it usefully as a living organism. *All* these approaches are metaphorical, and the rule with metaphor is that it is good when we control it and bad when it controls us. Letting any of these metaphorical approaches get exclusive control of our thinking about language is liable to throw our thinking out of balance in the long run.

Implications for language teaching, with particular reference to English in Hong Kong

The debates which have gone on in the language teaching professions for a generation about whether grammar should have a significant role in language pedagogy, or whether learners will be better served by exposure to 'natural' target language with minimal intervention, might be looked at in this noun-verb frame. 'Communicative' approaches seem to have been based on an essentially verbal conception of language; certainly the arguments for them were always put in terms of getting students to *do* things, to *perform* functions the way they are performed in the target culture, as against more traditional approaches which started from this man-made edifice of grammar, which could be printed in a book and held physically and purchased, with all its reassuring solidity. *Deceptively* reassuring, some would say, for what good is having the grammar of a language if you cannot *do* anything with it?

And yet, that noun-like conception of language which is distilled in grammar is so powerful within our culture generally, that many teachers and learners feel that without it they have nothing to *hold onto*, and they find that disorienting, and dispiriting, and it only gets worse if 'experts' keep telling them that this betrays a weakness on their part. Just as individuals differ in their linguistic style, some preferring nouns and others verbs, so also there is no lack of evidence that we differ in our learning styles, in what I am trying to suggest might be looked on as parallel ways.

There is another facet to this as well, and it is that native speakers of any language are not simply capable of 'performing' in the language. They are also part of a linguistic culture which tends in most societies to be based around a conception of the language as an institution — a very noun-like conception, which tends to get realised in physical forms like printed texts, including grammars and dictionaries. In many cultures, over the centuries, it has transpired that this institutional conception of the language has become so power-

ful as to be taken by most people within the culture as being the *real* language, while what they *do* is somehow less authentic, a corruption of the real thing.

This is an excessive view, and in order to counterbalance it linguistics swung completely in the opposite direction, to say that only what ordinary speakers do is really real; the language as an institution, the standard language, is secondary and artificial, and ultimately doesn't matter. Again, this is the other extreme, and it is just as illogical — indeed it maintains the same untenable insistence that only one or the other — language as an institutional thing or language as a verbal practice — can be real. They are *both* equally real, and each has its own importance. Unless we can approach languages as having the conceptual attributes of both verbs and nouns, then as linguists we are going to think about it in a reductivist way, and as teachers and teacher trainers we are going to be serving well only a fraction of the population we are supposed to be serving.

Of course, it is easy to condemn reductionism in the study and teaching of languages, but in reality choices have to be made. They have to be made locally, by people on the ground taking account of the current circumstances. I would like to conclude with a particular problem from my own experience which centres on this whole question of language as institution and as practice, and how it forces decisions to be made by teachers and consequently by teacher trainers.

As noted earlier, languages as institutions are human creations, requiring a great deal of work by many people over time to put them in place and maintain them. It is widely accepted now that where English is concerned there is not a single, universal institution but a sort of conglomerate of institutions, interrelated through their common history yet independent. Arguably, the rise of one such institution is visible in its early stages in Hong Kong. The first stage in this process is for a *distinctive* form of language to be recognised. Linguistically speaking, Hong Kong English is distinctive — not with total regularity, but then variability characterises every language. Here are two samples chosen at random from papers written by students in a course on Language in Society which I gave at the University of Hong Kong in 1996:

> Multilingualism becomes more common and popular among the countries. […] According to Ramirez, multilingualism appears to be a characteristic of most human. There are already many countries recognize two or more languages are their official languages. As the technology is largely improved in recent decades […] multilingualism is need for a country to develop trade/communication with other countries. […] Besides, people with multi-linguistic people are able to

> communicate with other countries, that serve global needs and shorten the gap between nations.
>
> In Hong Kong, people are exposed to written Chinese in the most of the time as it is the mother language for over 95% of the population. Problems of written Mandarin/Cantonese are concerned. Students in Hong Kong are taught of written Mandarin and it is commonly used. However, written Cantonese can represent spoken Cantonese syllable by syllable, and all people in Hong Kong can fully understand. […] Hong Kong has a smaller percentage who cannot read Chinese while comparing with Singapore. For English, Hong Kong has a lower standard comparing with Singapore as it can be expected as language mainly used in Singapore is English (to communicate with other races) while Chinese is used in Hong Kong.
>
> —
>
> The quality of teacher directly affect the performance of the students. In Hong Kong, most teachers […] have the problem of the using of English themselves. Then some teachers […] will teach in half English and half Chinese that make students neither good at English nor Chinese. […] When the children are in the primary, they use their Chinese language logic to study English. This is the reason that primary students make Chinese style English like 'Do you think you can pass me the salt?' instead of 'Can you pass me the salt?' […]
>
> Many parents in Hong Kong have strong desire to have their children learning in English. It is because having higher English can have better job opportunities […].

You may instinctively agree with the majority of people in Hong Kong that what we see here is simply evidence of a decline in English standards. At the same time, there is a difficult question about what exactly the English standard for Hong Kong should be. In the context of English in Hong Kong, if history teaches us anything it is that the 'decline' in externally-imposed standards *must* occur if English is to survive in post-colonial Hong Kong. New 'internal' standards must replace them — and that is precisely what has been happening with the emergence of a distinctive form of English. Hong Kong people are not making wholly random errors in English, but regularly occurring patterns largely traceable to the influence of their other principal language. It was by just such a process that the Romance languages came into being, an emergence that was at the same time a crumbling of the standards of Latin measured against the external criterion of Virgil and Cicero, and not a random crumbling, but one connected to the other languages spoken in the former Roman Empire (see Joseph 1987). In the middle ages, the Romance dialects were already taking on their distinctive forms, but it was only over the course of many centuries that they came to be recognised as distinct 'languages'. Particularly where writing was concerned, but also in prestigious spoken registers,

there was good Latin, conforming to classical standards, and bad Latin, where those standards were giving way to the influences of the vernacular language. With the Renaissance and the spread of the modern idea of nationhood, the *status* of this 'bad Latin' changed and people began to think of it as something else, their language. In the case of France, by the eighteenth century it became an *idée fixe* that French was the most rational of all human languages, an opinion which continues even now to be widely held in French culture.

The status of Hong Kong English today is somewhat comparable to that of 'bad Latin' in the later middle ages, though there is a twist. The typical pattern in the recognition of a new language or form of a language is that a group of partisans within the native population begin asserting linguistic autonomy, and there ensues a struggle for international recognition. In the case of Hong Kong English, international recognition has come in the almost total absence of local assertion. Hong Kong English is, for example, one of the forms of English under study in the massive International Corpus of English (ICE) project undertaken under the direction of the late Sidney Greenbaum. The lack of any positive recognition of Hong Kong English in the local public discourse is perhaps not surprising, given that the emergence of other Englishes, including American, Australian, Canadian, Indian, New Zealand, and Singapore English, as well as Quebec French, Venezuelan Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese and the like have always been post-colonial phenomena in the most literal sense. (For fine studies of the post-colonial emergence of new Englishes in Singapore and Malaysia, see Platt & Weber 1980; in Sri Lanka — and in a rather different vein — Parakrama 1995; and for an overview, Platt, Weber & Ho 1984). In some cases the emergence took a few years, in others entire decades, after the withdrawal of the colonial power. We do not find cases of local varieties of a language attaining official or social recognition as distinct 'languages' during the time of colonial rule. So it may be that the best we can expect is that Hong Kong English will be a future development. That is, although in terms of linguistic form it is well along the path of emergence, in terms of status we could not, projecting from historical evidence, have reasonably expected it to begin attaining recognition until after 1997, other than from linguists focusing on its formal distinctiveness.

Currently, 'Hong Kong English' is a noun phrase recognised and used only by linguists. It is not taken seriously by speakers of the language it purports to name, who instead conceive of the English language as a unified institution, in comparison to which they themselves *perform* well or poorly. It is as though what they do is 'verbal', but is therefore inferior to the 'real thing'. The creation

of 'Hong Kong English' as a distinct institution (comparable to Indian or Singaporean English) is essentially a matter of the populace accepting the noun phrase as naming something real (see further Joseph 1996, 1999a, 2000b).

Until that happens, the training of English teachers has to strike a difficult balance between teaching to an 'international' standard (whatever that is) and fostering conditions which could ultimately help to make English a language *of* Hong Kong, not just *in* it. English teachers in Hong Kong develop a sense of which of the 'errors' students make are so systematic — the weakening of the count-mass noun distinction, for example — that if a 'Hong Kong English' emerges they are likely to be among its distinctive features. Some of them tolerate these features on this basis, others go after them all the more strongly. Good teacher training in the Hong Kong context and others like it raises these issues, and does not force a party line onto teachers, but makes them know that they are intervening in a cultural process, for better or worse, and prepares them to make informed judgements for their own practice. One hopes that they will find a practice that balances a conception of English as a verbal activity and as an institution in which students might one day locate a part of their identity (see further Joseph 1999b, 2001). That means neither refusing to accept anything that is not the Queen's English, nor accepting whatever the students produce on the grounds that they are fluent and communicative. Rather what it means is steering them away from those things that are unlikely to emerge as part of an eventual Hong Kong English, if it emerges. This is what the best teachers already do, though it requires a considerable linguistic instinct, and would be made easier by further empirical studies into the English of Hong Kong students. (For a discussion of the LTE implications of this, see the chapter by Davies.)

The Hong Kong case, while in some ways unique, is a variation on a theme common to all language teaching, and by extension teacher training; because good teaching means helping students learn to *do* things with the language which are culturally authentic, the verb-like thing; and nothing is more culturally authentic where language is concerned than the *institution* of the language, the noun-like thing that they ultimately cannot ignore, but must comprehend, grapple with, accept in some respects and resist in others, as they construct their own linguistic identities simultaneously within it and in opposition to it.

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The social component of language teacher education

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Language development in the individual does not happen in isolation; unlike physical growth, it will not take place without the interaction of another person who has already become a language user. This is the case whether or not there is, as some maintain, a language faculty in the mind. Those who are brought up in isolation from other people (the 'wolf-child' is one such example) or who are born with the clinical condition of isolation (as is found in autism) do not acquire language or do so only minimally. What this means is that language (in its learning and its use) is as much social as it is psychological or cognitive. Indeed, it is perhaps even more social than it is cognitive. There are two reasons for this statement. The first is that, while the cognitive condition is necessary for language to activate, without the social condition it is insufficient. And second, while the cognitive provides the grammatical structure, it is the social that provides the cultural and political norms that make the use of that structure appropriate and meaningful.

Imbued as it is with these cultural and political norms, language cannot be value free, which must mean that language teaching and language teacher education cannot be neutral (Pennycook 1994). Therefore, language teacher education, in its concern with language use, needs to take account of both micro (learning takes place through social interaction) and macro (speech communities are associated with norms and values) concerns.

This micro-macro contrast captures a traditional division in sociolinguistics. The micro view considers the ways in which society intersects with language, dealing with topics such as accent stratification by social class and gender influence on language use, while the macro view takes account of the involvement of language in society and is concerned with topics such as language planning for education, publishing and the language of scientific writing.

Students on language teacher education (LTE) courses are likely to have gained a considerable measure of control over the grammar of the language(s)

they plan to teach; they know the rules cognitively. They are — if not native speakers — almost certainly still learning how and when to operate those rules and it is precisely in their engagement with what have been called the rules of use that they need a social component in their LTE. In this chapter I shall look at the social component in language teacher education under these three headings:

1. the complexity of speech communities
2. which variety (in this case, of English) should we teach?
3. should LTE be linguistically prescriptive?

The complexity of speech communities

The sociolinguistic project is in part an investigation into shared understanding or intelligibility. The complexity of the factors — change, variability, attitudes, identities, communities, behaviours, etc — revealed in this investigation is a constant challenge to providers of LTE and its consumers, as both the ground on which and the material with which, in large measure, they work.

History alone, the fact that two or more languages (for example the Romance languages) have the same origin in one parent language, will not explain shared understanding if too long a time has elapsed since the split (as in the case of Finnish and Hungarian) or if speakers no longer wish to understand one another (as was for a time the case with Dutch and Afrikaans). What matters is whether or not speakers understand one another now. Politically, languages are defined institutionally, that is to say they symbolise the claims of nationalism and are therefore on the one hand like flags, airlines and membership of the United Nations, and on the other hand like the preferred ethnicity which is regarded as the idealised norm of the nation (even though it may not be the choice of the whole population: examples are Bahasa Malay for Malaysia or Kiswahili for Tanzania or Chinese for China or English for the US). Problems arise when there are two or more languages in conflict as representatives of the nation, for example French and English in Canada or Flemish/Dutch and French in Belgium or English and Afrikaans in South Africa or the regional languages as well as English in India. What languages also do politically is to provide an identity for individuals (and groups), in some cases out of a desire that individuals or groups may have to share a selected group's prestige, in others solely out of a desire to belong because of what is felt as a shared ethnicity.

(Note that this second reason may in fact be a derivative of the first in that a wish to identify is typically predicated on a desire to share perceived prestige, even when this prestige is hidden or negative.) The obvious explanation for this role of language is that languages provide a badge of identity, that is to say that speakers of the same language will identify with one another as do sharers of any other ethnicity or social identity such as race, colour, religion or gender.

In cases of this kind, it can be the symbolic rather than the communicative value of a language that provides a sense of identity, real or wished for, especially in migrant communities. Community members' beliefs about their identity affect their views towards such language factors as the speech community, the standard language, and stereotypes of language use.

The speech community is most helpfully seen as a primitive sociolinguistic category which escapes precise definition but nevertheless has a heuristic value. It is that portion of human society in which language behaviour — or, better, languages behaviour, because the typical speech community is multilingual — has some important shared community meaning.

What seems to define membership of a speech community is that members share common attitudes towards appropriate language use (Ryan and Giles 1982), and agree on which language it is right to use for which purpose; towards norms of language use (Labov 1972); and towards correctness, so that they share the same views not just about what it is appropriate to say (which language or which register in which situation, what counts as a joke, when swearing and other forms of opprobrious language are and are not appropriate — and what counts as a swear word or a curse) but also about which features are formally correct. Such views often reduce themselves to shibboleths, no doubt (whether in English to use *due to* or *owing to,* whether to say *It's me* or *It's I*) but what they reflect is a common (a speech community) view towards the language, which is thus being given the task in these very stereotypical ways of representing people's sense of belonging to and identifying with the group of significant others.

Thus in a speech community there is common agreement as to what is the standard language: rather as in a common culture there is agreement as to what is high culture as well as what is correct or proper behaviour or comportment ('table manners'). Agreement need have nothing to do with individual (or even sub-group) use. It is perfectly possible for a group never itself to use the standard language (or as in some communities in the West Indies for only a small minority to use it) while at the same time accepting completely the status of the standard language in question, even going so far as to stigmatise itself in

its own language use as being inferior. Spoken language use in some areas of Birmingham has been cited as an example of such stigmatising (Giles and Powesland 1975).

In extreme cases such social attitudes, such attitudinal affect, can influence intelligibility, which as Wolff (1959) has pointed out is as much a matter of whether we think we understand (or indeed wish to understand) as whether we do.

The distinction between, and relationship between, dialects and languages introduces further complexity. The distinction is partly a linguistic one and partly a sociolinguistic, or political, one. In linguistic terms a dialect shares intelligibility with another dialect while a language does not share intelligibility with another language; or to put this another way languages do not share an unbroken history of similar origins while dialects do. Dialects share some kind of common origin as well as a current identity of system, both morphological and syntactic, such that a speaker of one dialect will find another at least partly intelligible. The need for a sociolinguistic or political distinction arises from the fact that language users do not necessarily take account of the linguistic distinction. There are, after all, languages which are mutually intelligible on linguistic grounds (for example Hindi-Urdu, Norwegian-Danish) and which could therefore be called related dialects but are in practice called languages for political and national reasons. There are also varieties which do not have a common linguistic history but which for political reasons are regarded by a speech community as mutually intelligible: some may consider them to be dialects rather than languages. On sociolinguistic grounds dialects are dialects of the same language because their speakers claim them to be so, and they are distinguished from languages in terms of power. 'A language is a dialect with an army' (Briand in Haugen 1966) it has been said; and again 'a dialect is a language that did not succeed'.

On an LTE course, trainees need to be encouraged to stand back from their own native community in order to appreciate that it is not perhaps as homogeneous as they may have assumed. And to recognise that this is true of all communities, not just their native one but their target training community too. They will need to learn balance between allowing their students creative choices and ensuring that the choices they make are drawn from a meaning-giving pool, so that they can move convincingly between their first and second (and subsequent) speech communities.

Which variety should we teach?

The traditional linguistic view of Standard English is comforting in its certainties. Standard English, Quirk (1990) insists, is the English we take for granted, English which is not strange or unusual or different in any way, what is sometimes referred to as the unmarked variety. Of course he is talking about the form of English not the content: if I read an article in a science journal I will probably find the content, including the terminology, new and strange but the form (grammar, spelling, etc) will not be strange. 'There is,' Quirk continues, 'nothing esoteric, obscure, or special about [Standard English]: whoever or wherever we are in the English speaking world, we have been familiar with it all our lives.' He is of course taking it for granted that we are also educated. He quotes the definition of Standard English given in Webster's Third Dictionary:

1. the English that is taught in schools;
2. English that is current, reputable and national;
3. the English that with respect to spelling, grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary is substantially uniform though not devoid of regional differences, that is well-established by usage in the formal and informal speech and writing of the educated, and that is widely recognised as acceptable wherever English is spoken and understood;
4. all words entered in a general English language dictionary that are not restricted by a label (as slang, dial., obs., biol., Scot.).

Greenbaum makes similar points. 'Standard English', he tells us, was first attested in 1836 and is understood to mean 'the consensus … of what educated speakers accepted as correct' (1988: 18). He admits that it is a class dialect but by class he does not mean social class, at least not directly; he means 'the language of the educated all over Great Britain'. It is 'the prestige variety of the language', the dialect of choice by and for the educated. The same applies to American English (and there is no problem about admitting two (at least) standards). 'If pressed to say definitely what good American English is, I should say it is the English of those who are believed by the greater number of Americans to know what good English is' (Williams 1890 in Greenbaum op. cit.). Again there is no problem with the circularity of this definition, no more than there is with saying, for example, that good manners are how people with good manners behave.

A further traditional view, one that hovers over the statements we have just quoted is made explicit by Quirk: 'When we speak of learning to write, we

really have in mind learning to write Standard English.' (Quirk 1990: 114). This distinction is not universal, but it is one frequently made, that Standard English refers to the written language and not the spoken.

Quirk's position is both liberal and humane: we may distinguish, he suggests between a recognition knowledge of Standard English and an active knowledge. What the acquisition of literacy does is to provide recognition knowledge; the aim of the school is to develop an active knowledge. But the active knowledge he is talking about is the active knowledge of the written language: how to write in Standard English. 'Standard English,' he maintains, 'is that kind of English which draws the least attention to itself over the widest area and through the widest range of usage…It is particularly associated with the English that is intended to have the widest reach, and in consequence it is traditionally associated most of all with English in not just a written form but a printed form.' (ibid: 123) Since for English there is no official Academy, as in France, its role is taken by unofficial bodies: 'the standards of Standard English are determined and preserved to a far greater extent than most people realise by the great publishing houses.' (ibid: 123–4) Because of this, Quirk remarks, Standard English has no moral or aesthetic claim. We adopt it because it is so effective as a communication instrument: in itself it is neutral; the uses we make of it, he reminds us 'are our own responsibility' (ibid: 124).

Peters too emphasises the neutrality of Standard English. It is, she writes (1995), not the exclusive property of any social or regional group, but a resource to which English speakers at large have access. But she takes a wider view of its domain; it should not, she recommends, be equated with written English. The apparent disagreement between Peters and Quirk is not, in fact, a real disagreement. They are responding to different issues. For Quirk the issue he wants to put aside is that of accent and of spoken discourse in a Black English or other minority English classroom; what Peters is referring to is the fact that whatever the accent with which the educated speak English, their speech just as much as their writing will use the grammar etc of Standard English. In other words whatever their accent their dialect will be Standard English. In writing of course there is no parallel to an identifying local accent since spelling does attach to one or other of the widely taught standards. Peters makes the interesting connection between Standard English and International English and no doubt this link is influential in her widening the provenance of Standard English to the spoken language since so much of International English (telephone, radio, television etc.) is spoken.

Quirk accepts that Standard English does have some relevance to pronunciation: notice that this is a quite separate point from the grammar etc of formal educated speech. 'There is,' he writes (1990: 123), 'some general consensus about a range of pronunciation. It is the range that we associate with (and expect from) the educated: whether these be television news readers, political leaders, doctors, lawyers or schoolteachers. As Mugglestone (1995: 328) points out, those who speak Standard English with a regional accent do so not in the broadest reach of that accent but in a somewhat modified version, one that is likely to approximate towards the accent with most prestige.

Given these comforting and apparently general views as to the value of and agreement about Standard English why should there be any need to defend it, to seek to protect it, which Honey (1999) sets out to do? The reason is that there are many voices raised against Standard English, attacking on a variety of fronts.

Sarup (1993) refers to the growing feeling in the social sciences and humanities (less so in the natural sciences) that the Enlightenment project — the 18th century drive to develop objective sciences, the taking for granted that nature's secrets were to be revealed to empirical enquiry, the belief in universal morality and law, the general belief in progress — has failed. Lyotard (1984), for example, characterises the postmodern condition as one of repudiation of the big stories, the meta-narratives of Hegel and Marx; he believes that no-one can grasp what is going on in science as a whole. He and other postmodernists stress fragmentation: all that is worth doing is localized creativity. And Hobsbawm (1994: 517) reminds us that 'all postmodernisms tend(ed) to a radical relativism'. Standard English, as one kind of universal meta-narrative, seems to have met the same fate.

The political critique against universalism takes a number of forms. There is the Marxist critique of those such as Fairclough (1992), who points to the hegemonising of the concept of Standard English but also makes the point that access to Standard English is an important opportunity. 'Language standardisation after all is first a matter of hegemony … and only consequentially a matter of opportunity' (Fairclough 1992: 43). His argument is that the opportunity we hear so much about may not in reality exist for many children; we hear less in the rhetoric about opportunity than about the reality of discrimination. Crowley (1996: 188) argues that the sampling of the word store which was the basis of the Oxford English Dictionary was a deliberate act, a monoglot and monologic representation of the language. It was, he remarks, a representation which was crude in its form and brutal in its exclusiveness and, he tells us ominously, still has effects in the present.

A critical feminist view is presented in Kramarae and Treichler (1985: 431). Their definition of Standard English cites Smitherman (1983):

> What passes for standard, so-called correct English, is not what is spoken by millions of people, Black or white, but what a small group of often unprincipled people speak. One can find some interesting linguistic contradictions in this group and speech forms that depart from the textbook descriptions of Standard English. There seems to be a wide diversity of acceptance and practice among the Standard English linguistic pace setters. While they can be heard using such incorrect grammatical constructions as 'between you and I', their range of Standard English does not include speech forms used by Black (or white) working class people, with the possible exception of those idioms borrowed from the hipster segment of the masses.

We may be persuaded on the basis of Smitherman's argument that it is indeed necessary to keep the spoken and the written modes of English apart.

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989) make the point in a post-colonial discussion:

> One of the main features of imperial oppression is control over language. The imperial education system installs a 'standard' version of the metropolitan language as the norm and marginalises all variants as impurities. As a character in Mrs Campbell Praed's 19th century Australian novel 'Policy and Passion' put it: 'To be colonial is to talk Australian slang: to be everything that is abominable'.

How then should we view Standard English? We can live with uncertainty, viewing it as an abstraction, an idea in the mind rather than a reality, a set of abstract norms to which actual usage will conform to a greater or lesser extent (rather like cultural food preparation norms, or norms of politeness). This is the position of Milroy and Milroy (1985). It makes sense since it provides us with the necessary orientation of which Bartsch (1987) writes but does not imprison us in an absolute set of prescriptions. The correctness reminders then are just that, not demands for action, but reminders that language is indeed the dress of thought and we need to take care with our use of it. The search for the standard is like the search for the snark, indeed for perfection. Mugglestone (1995: 330) reminds us that 'the processes of standardisation … can and will only reach completion in a dead language where the invaluable norms, so often asserted by the prescriptive tradition (and the absolute of language attitudes) may indeed come into being.' But there is also the equally important and hard-felt practical view that Quirk takes, distressed by the attacks on Standard English by those who should know better. He acknowledges the importance of having choice among a variety of Englishes and continues:

> Nonetheless, I hold that the stated or implied orthodoxy of regarding the term 'standard' as fit only for quotation marks is a 'trahison des clercs'. It seems likely indeed that the existence of standards (in moral and sexual behaviour, in dress, in taste generally) is an endemic feature of our mortal condition and that people feel alienated and disoriented if a standard seems to be missing in any of these areas (as Bartsch suggests). Certainly ordinary folk with their ordinary common sense have gone on knowing that there are standards in language and they have gone on crying out to be taught them. And just as certainly the 'clercs' themselves are careful to couch even their most sceptical remarks about standard language in precisely the standard language about which they are being sceptical. Disdain of elitism is a comfortable exercise for those who are themselves securely among the elite. (Quirk 1985: 6).

Within Standard English there are different purposeful institutionalised language varieties. To what extent should discussion and description of these varieties have a place in LTE?

The distinction between user (dialect) and use (register) made in Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens (1964) is useful here. As the terms 'user' and 'use' suggest, it is easier to make a case for discrete dialects than for registers: dialects exist because children are socialised into families and social, often geographical, groupings such that they cannot, as it were, help themselves; they have no choice but to acquire the dialectal code of the ethnic group into which they are socialised. Registers have no such imperative. That register exists is certain, but registers are not discrete varieties, they belong to practices not to individuals and can therefore be learned and discarded at will. They are, as it were, put on like dress for public performances. And they are put on because — as Firth noted — public performances require roles which, again like clothes, individuals take on so that, in part, they can share understandings with one another. They form in this way the sub-cultures of work and play, of all institutional behaviours.

Halliday (1988) maintained that registers differ both semantically and lexicogrammatically. However, those who work with languages for specific purposes (LSP) go beyond the semantic and the lexicogrammatical. Johns (1999) looks back at its short history:

> The definition of LSP by means of a polarization between language(s) for general/common purposes and language(s) for specific purposes, which largely dominated LSP research in the 1960s, was discarded in favour of a new definition of LSP in terms of the totality of linguistic means used in written or spoken texts' (Johns 1999: 514).

Robinson approaches the topic pragmatically, from the practical end. She defines English for Specific Purposes (ESP) as 'a type of ELT…it is goal-oriented. Students study ESP not because they are interested in the English language as such but because they have to perform a task in English' (Robinson 1989: 396). Robinson notes that ESP students are exposed to the 'whole of the English language as a linguistic code'. But she points out that:

> where individuals are grouped together, as for work, then we find work-inspired meanings and functions, and work-inspired text types or genres into which these meanings and functions are organized (ibid: 417).

Robinson appears to eschew the more discrete approach of the quantitative (and analytic) type referred to by Swales (1990: 2):

> Historically, language analyses for specific purposes began in quantitative studies of the linguistic properties of functional varieties or registers of a language (Barber 1962, Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens 1964). A prototypical study of this kind would involve investigating the occurrence of verb forms in scientific English, such as in Huddlestone (1971).

As Swales (and Robinson among others) note, such an approach was not wholly successful; first, because of the impossibility of boundary definition between one specific purpose and another and, second, because it is meanings rather than forms which distinguish one sub-culture from another. This was what Frake (1972) found, that speaking the language grammatically was not enough to obtain a drink among the Subanun. What was needed was an ethnography of speaking. Or, as Widdowson (1979: 55–56) came to realise, what marks an LSP is its communicative character:

> The fact that scientific English exhibits a relatively high proportion of certain syntactic features and a relatively low proportion of others may be useful for identifying scientific English texts, should we ever wish to do such a thing. In fact this approach has proved useful for establishing authorship; it can reveal, with the help of the computer, who wrote what. But it cannot reveal the communicative character of what was written. It cannot of its nature deal with discourse.

Specific purpose varieties exhibit a lack both of discreteness and of coherence. 'Medical English', for example, on the one hand overlaps with 'chemical English' and on the other is itself made up of the English of surgery, the English of general medicine, the English of paediatrics and so on. At the lowest level, we can suggest that an LSP equals the target language when used for a particular communicative purpose. For teaching purposes, it is probably sensible to follow Robinson (1989). For her, LSP is (only) a pedagogical methodology, in which

the teacher exemplifies the communicative value of different ways of writing or speaking. (On teacher education for ESP, see the chapter by Ferguson. For an LSP approach to language improvement in LTE, see the chapter by Cullen.)

LTE is about empowerment, making students powerful through their knowledge about language and through their proficiency in the languages they need. But which language(s) do they need, and within each language which variety, which standard? Those teaching on LTE courses have to face the imperative of language planning: for example, which variety of English to select for institutional use in Singapore — British, American, Australian, Singaporean? And in making or advising on such a choice, what are the issues at stake? Are they matters of linguistic intelligibility or of cultural accessibility? Or are they symbolic statements, having nothing to do with the linguistic meanings, all to do with political assertions of difference?

Should LTE be linguistically prescriptive?

Different needs in language learning may be simplified, following Davies (1999), into those of:

1	the foreign language learner (FL)
2	the standard dialect learner (SD)
3	the learner of advanced writing (AW).

These divisions are not watertight and it is normal for there to be leakage so that the standard dialect learner is also a learner of advanced writing and so on. The table of questions and answers below can be helpful in distinguishing the three types of need:

	Question	*Answer*	
1	What do I do?	This is what you do	FL
2	Which one do I choose?	That depends	SD
3	How do I do it?	Practice this.	AW

In the case of the first level, the unmarked case is that of the foreign language learner who lacks information about language form and uses; so there will be questions like: what is the plural of X? what is the past tense of Y? how do you form the possessive of this proper name? how do you spell X? how do you pronounce Y? how do you ask someone the way? how do you make a polite request? These are questions seeking information which the learner has not yet

acquired. Notice that some of these questions (for example: how do you spell X?, does this word need a hyphen? how do I split this word if it crosses the line?) are questions which native speakers ask. The point is that there is a real question and there is an answer to be found.

In the case of the second level (which one do I choose?) the typical case is that of the dialect L1 speaker who is acquiring a superposed standard language through (usually) education. This is, again, typically, or at least most talked about, the case of the disadvantaged, the minority for whom the standard is not the home language, the Black English Vernacular speaker, the working class or long stay ethnic minority. The problem for such a learner is which variety to use and the problem arises when there is a real choice, that is after the learning of a particular Standard variant. While the fall-back (through ignorance) of foreign language learners is their first language (L1), that of the dialect speaker is randomness, uncertainty as to which variant to use, the dialect or the standard. Such uncertainty makes for social anxiety about being correct, which notoriously in turn makes for hypercorrection, excessive correction in the wrong place.

What does being correct mean at this second level? Is it, as with the first level, essentially concerned with knowing, being skilled in the standard dialect? The answer is complex. For the FL learner there is only one way to be correct, to use the appropriate standard form. For the SD learner correctness either depends on situation or it requires a performance similar to the FL's. If it depends on situation, then to be correct the learner must use the Standard or the dialect variant appropriately (for example the more formal 'don't' as against 'dinnae').

In the third case, for the AW learner the question 'how do I do it?' is a genuine question. Much of the underlying argument about correctness is in reality about the lack of correctness in writing, better considered as a lack of precision, an inability to write what you mean, an incoherence or non clarity in the composition of prose texts, a failure to take the reader with you. These failures surely underlie some of the unease about young people's use of English which is often falsely attributed to lack of awareness of the correct forms: in other words what is really a failure at the third level is attributed to one of the first two levels. Such complaints about inadequacy are frequently made too early. As Bolton (1984) says: 'writing requires a great many skills, best learned like the skills of any other subject one at a time in some deliberate order' (Bolton 1984: 218).

The notions of correctness and of prescription (or prescriptivism) are commonly dismissed as pre-theoretical primitives, to be noted in passing at the beginning of books on linguistics as fuelling popular views of language, not serious or interesting in themselves, anymore than popular views of the sky are to meteorologists and astronomers.

It is common for linguists to make an absolute distinction between description and prescription and to reject prescription as not their concern. True, some linguists do accept that all description is necessarily a form of prescription. Haas (1982) and Jespersen (1922), for example, make this point explicitly, but it may well be implicit in all linguistic endeavour and accepted as what descriptions entail (as with, for example, map-making).

Greenbaum (1988) refers to three criteria common to views of correctness:

1. preferences for earlier forms and meanings;
2. desirability of preserving and creating distinctions;
3. appeal to logic.

Greenbaum points to the absurdity of the views of prescriptivists; the absurdity of what they say not of the fact that they say it. 'If we need a distinction,' Greenbaum remarks, 'we shall be able to make it.' In other words, don't generalise from a few changes to: the language as a whole is decaying.

Nevertheless, I wish to argue that the activity of prescription is necessary to language vitality. Description is of course the positive side of prescription; they are separated by an ever shifting boundary, the one defining the other. At bottom, description is itself a form of prescription since it involves selecting these items, this dialect, these words rather than those: description, like all choice, represents a value judgement.

Indeed, Bloomfield (1927) insists that all societies have strong notions of correctness which members impose on one another through proscription. In his view there does not have to be a written language for such pro- and prescriptivism to take place. Bloomfield's experience of the Menomini (a small native American language group) caused him to expand this view and to assert that individual qualities can cause attribution of superiority in language, as elsewhere and without appeal to a written standard language:

> The Menomini will say that one person speaks well and another badly, that such and such a form of speech is incorrect and sounds bad.
> By a cumulation of obvious superiorities, both of character and of standing, as well as of language, some persons are felt to be better models of conduct and speech than others.

Bloomfield's point is essentially a social or sociolinguistic one, that there is always an attribution of prestige, that there is always a model accepted by the community. Disputes about accuracy, about language standards and about which standardised version of a language to adopt (for education, for teaching languages to foreigners etc) are basically disputes about models and ultimately about identity, which group one chooses to belong to.

Those who rage against the ignorance of prescriptivists would do well to consider George Thomas's discussion of purism (Thomas 1991). He defines puristic activity as being usually associated with written standard languages and indeed is often viewed as an intrinsic part of the process of codification.

He shows how purist schools of thought have moved to an interest in sociolinguistic empiricism within which purism is regarded as itself a factor in the language situation. In other words, purist movements (for example the Society for Pure English, the Queen's English Society, the Plain English Movement) are indicators by their very existence of sociolinguistic vitality.

The notions of correctness, to which Bloomfield alludes, are the touchstones of our prescriptive intuitions. They are the outward manifestations of our social norms, those underlying conventions of our sociolinguistic behaviour, to which group members adhere. In her discussion of language norms, Bartsch (1987) reports that linguistic correctness has always been a basic notion of traditional grammar, which has been concerned with what the correct expressions in a language are and what the correct use of these expressions is. Even today, when there seems little theoretical interest in the topic, correctness still plays a major part in, for example, the area of grammatical intuitions. Bartsch contrasts norms with rules. Speaking of language learning she explains that 'it is not the theoretical linguistic rules that have to be learned, but the norms of the language; and for that it is necessary to present the correctness notions'.

In other words, the role of the correctness admonitions is to allow us to demonstrate, to ourselves and to others, that we adhere to the norms and in so doing give public recognition to our acceptance of them. 'Norms are the social reality of the correctness notions: the correctness notions exist in a community by being the content of norms' (Bartsch 1987: 4).

Greenbaum (1988) maintains that norms 'are highly significant for speakers of the language … Correct performance marks the user as a responsible member of society' (1988: 33). And we may add that adherence to the norms in principle does not necessarily mean adherence in practice any more than in

any other area. We can invent the precept: 'Say what I tell you to say not what I actually say.'

The expectation that our linguistic conventions are generally shared extends to much wider assumptions about shared understandings. Taylor (1990) points up this issue by asking the question: 'What does it mean to say that someone is speaking English as a normative activity?' He contends that understanding must involve the ability to explain effectively, respond appropriately and use an expression acceptably. That is what speaking normatively means. Of course we are free linguistic agents; speaking normatively is something we don't have to do, unlike in the case of linguistic *rules*, neglect of which produces gobbledegook and breakdown, not just lack of acceptability. This means that while we don't argue about accuracy, the rules, we do about acceptability, the norms.

Interestingly, Taylor uses the term 'moral' of norms: morality is after all that set of rules society assumes which are not legally binding. Laws are to linguistic rules what morality is to language norms.

Students of LTE need to be made aware of the ongoing debate about norms and prescription, and to recognise that norms cannot be dismissed as irrelevant — they are as necessary to language users as ethical codes are to societies. There may be no absolutes since norms are conventional, but at the same time norms do matter, precisely because they concern both feelings of identity and a universal concern to share meanings. But more than that, it is important for LTE to clarify the description-prescription relationship.

Conclusion

What a social component ('sociolinguistics' or 'sociology of language') offers to LTE is both knowledge and skills: knowledge about the complexity of speech communities and the relation between description and prescription in language pedagogy and skills which will inform curriculum choices among varieties of English. When language teacher education lacks a social component, it is likely to prove both naïve and unhelpful since it will make idealised assumptions about communities, about learning and motivation and ignore the common understanding that language does not exist on its own but in the hearts and actions of its speakers as much as in their minds and voices.

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Language teaching: defining the subject

H. G. Widdowson

It seems reasonable to expect that teachers should know their subject. This knowledge provides the grounds for their authority, and gives warrant to the idea that they are practising a profession. Without this specialist knowledge, they have no authority, and no profession. To say this is simply to state the obvious perhaps. But it needs to be stated because over recent years the authority of teachers in Britain, and elsewhere, has been undermined, by politicians and parents and teachers themselves. Thus politicians put it about that teachers have been seduced by barmy theories into following trendy methods, instead of sticking to the basics and relying on common sense. Since common sense is common, it needs no special knowledge or expertise to put it into practice. Parents have as much access to common sense as anybody else, and so, as clients and consumers of educational products, they claim the right to have a say in what goes on in schools. Education is a service industry like any other, and the customer, after all, is always right. And teachers have often conspired in the decline of their own status by claiming common sense status for what they do, by emphasising how down to earth they are: just ordinary practitioners, mere practising teachers. If you deny the distinctive expert knowledge upon which authority depends, you should not be surprised to find that your authority is not recognised.

The least we should expect of teachers, then, is that they should know their subject. No knowledge, no authority, no profession. But what is a subject? And what does it mean to know it? Our particular concern is language as a subject. But the first thing to note is that it is not *language* in general, but *a particular language*: English, French, German, Russian. Language is the concern of the discipline of linguistics, and has not become a subject as such on the school curriculum. One could argue, and indeed I would argue myself, that it should be, that understanding the nature of language is something which should be central in education, and not just something left to be randomly and imperfectly inferred from the learning of particular languages. There has been some recognition of this, of course, in various proposals for the teaching of language

awareness, but this, like so much else in current enquiry, has tended to go critical and become socio-political awareness, nurtured by expedient interpretation often based on a very limited knowledge of the nature of language. In accordance with the temper of the times, critical language awareness is directed at an immediate payoff: it takes short cuts to get quick results. But that is another story. The point I want to make here is simply that the subject we are concerned with is, to all intents and purposes, not language, but *a* language.

If it is *a* language rather than language that teachers teach, then it would seem to follow that it is a particular language that they should know. English teachers should know English, French teachers French and so on. But what kind of knowledge are we talking about? We are talking about a language as a subject, and that is not at all the same as a language as experienced by its native speakers. English, French and so on are, like every other subject on the curriculum, pedagogic constructs, versions of reality which have been devised for learning, and as such they have only an indirect relationship with the experienced reality of everyday life. Indeed, it is a feature of school subjects that they are abstract reformulations of the actual. Physics, chemistry, geography, history and so on are constructed abstractions which do not replicate lived experience, but are designed to provide some explanation in reference to which students can make better sense of experience. If subjects were not at a remove from everyday reality, they would serve no educational purpose whatever. It is not uncommon to hear it deplored that classrooms are detached from the 'real' world outside, but their very function requires them to be detached. It is in their very detachment that they create contexts within which subjects can be learned. Of course, these detached contexts have to meet certain conditions whereby they stimulate learning: they have to represent some reality which learners will recognise and engage with. To do this they have to carry conviction, but they do not have to be true to life. I shall return to this point presently.

Meanwhile, my present point is that knowing a language as a subject is not the same as knowing it as it naturally occurs in the social contexts of everyday life. To put it another way, experience in the object language is not the same as expertise in the language subject. (On defining the subject in the context of an LTE programme, see the chapter by Barnes.) If it were, then linguistic competence would be all you would need as a teacher in the way of knowledge, and native speakers of a language would automatically claim authority 'by primogeneity and due of birth', as Shakespeare has it. And, of course, it is not unusual to find such claims made, and not only made but acknowledged as valid. There

is a widespread belief, encouraged of course by interested parties, that if you want a language taught properly, you need a proper, authentic native speaker teacher to do it for you. I would wish to argue, on the contrary, that not only do native speakers not have the required knowledge, but that their very experience of language makes it all the more difficult for them to acquire it.

As a corollary to the belief that if you want a language taught properly you get authentic native speakers to do it, is the equally widespread belief, also encouraged by interested parties, that the language to be taught as a subject has to be the object language, the genuine article, the proper language as attested by the authentic use of native speakers. So it is that a range of pedagogic publications have been produced by Collins COBUILD bearing the persuasive slogan 'helping the learner with *real* English'. The slogan is subtly ambiguous. On the one hand it can mean that when learners come across real English, such descriptions will help them cope with it. On this interpretation, this is a *descriptive* claim and as such seems quite valid: to the extent that these are descriptions of what currently occurs in contexts of actual use, they can clearly serve as invaluable sources of reference. In this respect, what COBUILD has done is a massive achievement which deserves recognition: there is no doubt that it represents a very important development in the description of English. But this slogan admits of a quite different interpretation, namely that real English will help the learner to learn the language. This is a *pedagogic* claim, and the fact that the descriptions have given rise to a whole range of teaching materials suggests that this is the meaning that is intended. The descriptive claim carries no implication for the definition of English as a subject. The pedagogic claim clearly does. And John Sinclair, the prime mover behind the COBUILD enterprise, has himself made it quite clear that he believes that the subject should be reformulated in the light of descriptive findings. There are, he tells us, three clear messages that emerge from corpus-based descriptions of English. One of these reads as follows:

> The categories and methods we use to describe English are not appropriate to the new material. We shall need to overhaul our descriptive systems.

What is at issue here is the extent to which descriptive systems should be based on the observation of attested usage rather than on introspection and elicitation, the traditional sources of linguistic data. This has to do with principles of linguistic description, and has no bearing on language pedagogy as such. The other two messages, on the other hand, decidedly do:

> We are teaching English in ignorance of a vast amount of basic fact. This is not our fault, but it should not inhibit the absorption of new material.

The implication here is that the subject English is misconceived unless it absorbs the newly revealed facts about English as it is actually used: the subject is, in effect, subject to linguistic description. The third message is a more explicit formulation of the second:

> Since our view of the language will change profoundly, we must expect substantial influence on the specification of syllabuses, design of materials and choice of method. (Sinclair 1985: 252)

There is no doubt that corpus descriptions do reveal new facts about the object language — facts about usage which we have hitherto been in ignorance of, and it would be foolish, not to say unprofessional, of teachers not to be made aware of this. There is no doubt either that what corpus linguistics has revealed does provide a new perspective on language, which has implications for principles of linguistic description which, in turn, may well have implications for how we conceive of the subject. There must, obviously, be *some* relationship between the language subject we teach and the object language people actually use, but, as I have argued elsewhere (Widdowson 1991, 2000a, 2000b) it cannot be one of direct determination. The crucial question is: what *is* that relationship: that is to say, what is the relationship between descriptive facts and pedagogic factors? And in the context of the present discussion about the professional authority of teachers, what do they need to know of this relationship to validly claim to have adequate knowledge of their subject?

Perhaps the first point that might be made is that in spite of the widespread commendation of 'real' English that I referred to earlier, and the Sinclair precept that teachers should 'Present real examples only' (Sinclair 1997: 33), not all the language attested by native speaker use is seen as eligible as subject content. The reality is carefully filtered. It is a not a matter of just 'dumping large loads of corpus material wholesale into the classroom' (McCarthy 2001: 129). Or even small loads, if it comes to that. But then the question arises as to when and why it is not pedagogically appropriate to present large or small loads of corpus material as real examples. We might approach the question by considering in some detail what kinds of problem learners are likely to encounter when presented with instances of 'real' language. Take the following text.

Here we have a text taken from a British daily paper: a real example of English in use. What pedagogic considerations might come into play in pre-

It takes bottle to cross Channel

Bibbing tipplers who booze-cruise across the Channel in search of revelry and wassail could be in for a rough ride. Itchy-footed quaffers and pre-Christmas holiday-makers are being warned not to travel to France, where widespread disruption continues despite the lifting of the blockade on trapped British lorry drivers.

senting such a text to a class of students — let us say as an exercise in reading comprehension for fairly advanced learners who have already had several years of formal instruction in the language?

We might note to begin with that certain expressions are likely to cause difficulties. The headline, which readers might reasonably expect would key them into the content of the passage, creates its own problem of interpretation. What are learners to make of the phrase *It takes bottle*? If they are familiar with the common convention in headlines that articles are omitted, they might assume that *bottle* is an instance of the familiar count noun, in which case, they will look for something in the text that *it* can refer to. *What* takes a bottle? Since there is no cataphoric candidate in the text, students might then take an alternative tack and assume that *bottle* is in fact an uncountable noun and as such has a meaning they are unfamiliar with. They consult a dictionary, and this confirms the assumption. If the one they consult is the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (OALD), they find among all the meanings of the countable noun the following entry:

> [U] (*Brit S*) courage; impudence: *he's got (a lot of) bottle.*

If they turn to the *COBUILD* dictionary, the relevant entry reads:

> In British English, **bottle** is used to refer to courage or boldness; an informal use. *But will anybody have the bottle to go through with it.* N-UNCOUNT

Thus enlightened, the learners can now make sense of the headline: It takes courage to cross the Channel. On then to the passage proper. *Bibbing tipplers who booze-cruise…* Back to the dictionary. The word *bib*, they discover, exists only as a noun, and denotes a piece of cloth or plastic that is put under a baby's chin to protect its clothes from getting soiled when it is being fed. That is not very helpful. On then to the next word. The noun *tippler* does not appear in either dictionary. A tippler is presumably someone who tipples, so they might then look up the verb *tipple*. But that is not there either, though the noun *tipple* is:

> In British English, a person's tipple is the alcoholic drink that they usually drink; an informal use. (COBUILD)

The learners might then infer from this that tipplers are persons indulging in their favourite drink. Alternatively, they might extend the range of their enquiry and try the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (CIDE), and here they would be rewarded:

> A tippler is someone who often drinks alcohol.

On then to the next word. The verb *booze-cruise* does not figure, as noun or verb, in any of the three dictionaries, though the word *booze*, noun and verb, does. So by now our learners are beginning perhaps to get some sense of who these people that are being referred to here are. They read on. *Revelry* poses no problem: if they do not already know the word, it figures in all three dictionaries. They then encounter *wassail*, which figures in none of them. And they have yet to negotiate *rough ride* before they get to the end of the first sentence, let alone *itchy-footed quaffers* which begins the second.

It is clear, then, that this text would pose a number of problems, even for quite advanced learners of English, in that it uses language they do not know, and in some cases cannot even find out about by recourse to reference books supposedly designed to help them. Of course one might argue that readers do not normally process text in this analytic way by fixating on particular words but rather pass lightly over the occasional obscurity. This is true. But language learners, only too aware that they are learning the language, are seldom encouraged to be so cavalier, and anyway it depends of course on how occasional the obscurity is. In the present case it would be densely present for many a student reader, and there would be little that is not obscure for them to take bearings from. The difficulties that I have demonstrated arise from a lack of lexical knowledge, but of words, let us note, that are uncommon or quaintly archaic. Some (e.g. *wassail*) would not appear in a dictionary of current English

for precisely that reason, and others that do (e.g. *tippler, quaff*) would be assigned low priority for learning on the grounds of extreme infrequency. The problem here is that there is no knowing when an archaic word might crop up in a contemporary text, and texts do not consist only of high frequency words. Texts are designed for particular communities of expert users of the language and rely not only on a knowledge of what commonly occurs but also of what rarely occurs, or may indeed not occur in conventional usage at all, but is available in absentia as part of expert user's knowledge of the language.

And it may be that these abstruse words are crucial to the interpretation of a text. The very fact of frequency makes commonly occurring words less communicatively salient. They play a supporting role. The more significant words are likely to be the *infrequent* ones. So in this text, for example, it is these quaint uncommon words which carry the most pragmatic weight, precisely because they *are* uncommon. Furthermore, in this case, they are weighty because they are loaded with affective meaning. Consider what it is that makes the language real for the readers for whom this text was written. In part, of course, it is that it makes connection with a familiar frame of reference. The writer is making assumptions that the reader will already know about certain current affairs, like the French blockade of lorry drivers, but will also be familiar with the fact that it is common practice for certain sectors of the British community to go across the Channel to France to buy cheap alcohol and revel in riotous heavy drinking on the way home. But that is only part of the story. The writer is not only assuming that the readers are in the know about what the words refer to, but will also recognise, and respond to, what the words imply. And this, of course, is where affective meaning comes in. Here it is the very infrequency of expressions like *bibbing tipplers, booze-cruise, wassail,* and *quaffers* that attracts attention, and carries the weight of affective significance, and it is the realisation of this significance that makes the text real for the readers for whom it was designed. They recognise the irony, and that they are being invited to share an attitude of amused contempt. This is *knowing* language, and its use is essentially conspiratorial. You cannot join the conspiracy of course unless you are in the know about what the use of these infrequent words implies, what *effect* they are meant to have. So even with the information that *tipple* (and presumably *tippler* as well) is an informal word, you cannot infer from this what attitude is expressed in using it. Similarly, if you look up the word *quaff*, you will be told that it is an old-fashioned word for drinking alcohol, so you can infer that a *quaffer* is a drinker. But this will give you no clue as to why the writer is using such an old-fashioned word, or what effect this

would have on the readers for whom this text is written. In these respects, the significance of this passage of real English will be lost on you, and this is because you are not in the know, you are not members of the community for whom the text is designed. What makes the language a reality for its users is its local value: the specific contextual connection and the exclusive appeal to communal cultural values and attitudes.

Real language, then, is *local* language in that it is always associated with specific contextual realities. It is designed to appeal to particular communities, and this will necessarily exclude people who do not belong. In short even if learners could track down the meanings of all the unknown words in their dictionaries, they might still not realise the effect of the pragmatic use of these words which makes the text real for the user community for which it was designed. Nor is there any reason why they should, for they are not learning English to become members of this particular community of users. The writer of this newspaper text presumably composed it with a particular discourse community in mind, which is why it poses problems for the quite different community of language learners.

Of course, it is the purpose of learning to reduce this difference so that learners gradually approximate to expert user competence; and as they do, they accordingly become more capable of gaining access to the meaning of such 'real' texts. But how is this process of gradual approximation to be induced? We need to take pedagogic decisions as to what kind of language data will be most conducive to the activation of learning, and at what stage 'real' texts (and what kind of 'real' texts) can be most effectively introduced. So far I have been looking at the problems that arise in making sense of this particular text. But language data is not presented in class only for students to make sense of, but also, crucially, to learn *from*. The somewhat paradoxical situation arises that the words which the students need to focus on as posing the greatest problem for understanding are those which are likely to constitute the least valuable investment for learning. So the expense of effort in finding out the meaning of such rare and archaic words as *bibbing, tipplers, wassail* and *quaff* can be considered wasteful on two counts. In the first place it may still leave learners at a loss about the significance of their use in this particular text, and in the second place it does not provide them with linguistic knowledge that they can put to subsequent use. Even in the unlikely event of their needing to use such words, the dictionary gives them very little guidance as to when it would be appropriate to do so, and what their effect would be. In short, for many students, the very 'reality' of this text may make it virtually useless as language to learn from.

The essential point is that *samples* of real language do not of themselves serve as good *examples* of language for learning. Examples are always examples of *something*. The text we have been considering, and countless others that might be culled from actual occurrences, may be good examples of what journalists write in newspapers for the benefit, and amusement, of a particular community of like-minded people, but then, of course, you have to be like-minded yourself to *recognise* them as examples. Students clearly cannot do this, since they are, by definition, not members of this community, and may indeed never be.

What students need to invest in, I would argue, is knowledge of language as what Halliday refers to as 'meaning potential', that is to say of semantic meaning as encoded in lexical and grammatical form, and learning this *as* potential implies that they need also to know how it can be realised pragmatically in various ways. The essential reality for learners is this realisation, and this is likely to be effected by uses of the language which may bear little if any direct resemblance to the kind of 'real' language represented by the text we have been considering.

The point to be made here is that samples of pragmatic use are often quite inadequate as examples of semantic potential. To illustrate this, let us suppose that the word *quaff* in our text is one which, for some reason, is worth the effort of students to learn. They turn to a dictionary for information about its meaning. What do they find?

> **quaff** (*obj*) *v* to drink (something) quickly or in large amounts. °*In Shakespeare's play 'King Henry IV', Falstaff and Bardolph are often seen quaffing in the Boar's Head Tavern.[I]* °*He's always quaffing these strange herbal medicines, which he thinks will make him more healthy.*[T] (CIDE)

> **quaff** (v[Tn]) (*dated or rhet*) drink (sth) by swallowing large amounts at a time, not taking small sips: *quaffing his beer by the pint.* (OALD)

> **quaff** … If you quaff an alcoholic drink, you drink a lot of it in a short space of time; an old-fashioned word. *By the time he had quaffed his third, he was winking playfully at a plump woman who sat across from him.* (COBUILD)

The entries provide learners with two quite different kinds of information about the word: a conceptual kind which is intended to explain and a contextual kind which is intended to exemplify. The first, printed in roman, defines the semantic meaning which is encoded in the form; and the second, printed in italics, gives an indication of its use. One can think of the two parts of the entry as complementary in that the contextual sample in the second part can provide

additional semantic information. Thus in CIDE and OALD there is no indication in the definition (as there is in COBUILD) that the word *quaff* relates to alcoholic drink, but one might suggest that this might be inferred from the samples given: in OALD we have reference to beer, and in CIDE to a tavern. The obvious difficulty here, however, is that the learner cannot know how representative these are as contextual occurrences: that is to say, whether these are examples of collocational regularities of typical use or just random samples. The difficulty is compounded in the case of CIDE since this provides a second sample which directly contradicts the meaning of the word which might have been inferred from the first, and which is quite explicitly specified in COBUILD. The only way of avoiding such contradiction is for the learners to infer that this second sample demonstrates an ironic use. But how are they to make such an inference, particularly since in the CIDE entry (unlike those in OALD and COBUILD) there is no indication that the word is old fashioned, or (*dated*) or (*rhet.*)?

So the contextual part of these entries does not seem to function as a reliable complement to extend the range of semantic meaning as defined in the conceptual part. But it does not actually exemplify this meaning either. In CIDE, the occurrence of *quaff* in the samples does not demonstrate what it means: Falstaff and Bardolph could have been seen doing all manner of things: eating, gambling, arguing, fighting, indulging in riotous or indecent behaviour. All we can tell from this sample is that they were (verbing). The same point applies to the second sample in CIDE: in quaffing strange herbal medicines, he might be buying them, trying them out, searching high and low for them, praising them, sipping them, injecting them, sniffing them up his nose. Nothing in the contextual sample indicates that quaffing means to drink something, let alone in large amounts. This is also the case with the COBUILD sample: *by the time he had quaffed his third.* His third what? Cigarette? Sandwich? Song? Tune? There is no way of knowing. Indeed the learner might even think that here we have a kind of formulaic phrase analogous to *taken his seat, plucked up his courage, changed his mind, seen the light.*

If these contextual samples neither extend nor exemplify the semantic meaning explained in the conceptual defining part of the entry, then what pedagogic purpose do they serve? What, for the learner are they examples *of*? One answer might be that since they show the word in contexts of actual use, they do indeed exemplify, but pragmatic rather than semantic meaning. But a moment's reflection makes it clear that they do nothing of the kind. The citing of a particular occurrence tells learners how the word has been used on one

occasion, but they do not know how representative this occurrence is. So they cannot learn from it what the general pragmatic value of the word might be. They cannot infer what the sample is an example of. The inclusion of 'real' language data in its entries no doubt lends the dictionary a certain face validity and in this respect can be said to have a promotional value (who after all would want to buy a dictionary that describes unreal language). But its pedagogic value is not easy to discern.

This is not to say that corpus descriptions cannot be turned to pedagogic advantage. What I have been discussing so far is the use of a corpus as a source of single samples to include in dictionary entries. But it can also be used to provide an array of multiple samples in a concordance. And here, as a number of people have impressively demonstrated (e.g. Johns & King 1991, Tribble & Jones 1997), there are pedagogic possibilities, because in this case learners have data, conveniently focused, from which collocational regularities and pragmatic values might be inferred. But the point to notice here is that this focus is a function of the concordance display, and this is analytically contrived so as to present arbitrary samples of text in parallel. It is, of course, possible to include more and more text to try to capture contextual reality, but then this is inevitably at the expense of focus, and the more text you include the greater effort of inference is called for. It is the artifice of the concordance that makes it pedagogically effective, and the more you approximate to a contextually 'real' presentation of use, the further you get from a presentation that is useful for learning. The concordance device clearly can be exploited to pedagogic advantage precisely because it is a device. Unlike the 'dumping' of 'real' material in dictionary entries, it presents samples as examples that learners can learn from. In this respect, it treats the object language so as to make it suited to the language subject.

It seems clear that the language of normal user occurrence has to be pedagogically processed so as to make it appropriate for learning, which means that learners can *appropriate* it for learning. And this appropriation depends on two conditions: firstly, the language has to key into the learner's reality so that they can realise it as meaningful on their terms; secondly, it has to activate their learning — it has to be language they can learn *from*. In reference to English, it is obvious that the 'real' language of its users will generally fail to meet the first condition since the learners will be in no position to ratify the language as real. They are outsiders, not in the know. What makes a language real for its native users is that they can key it into their socio-cultural reality. If the language is to be made real for learners, the same conditions must apply: they need to key it

into *their* socio-cultural reality. They too must somehow make it local. And it is precisely this learner orientated realisation, this localisation, that it is the business of the subject to bring about. This is true of any subject: physics, chemistry, geography — they are all designed to localise knowledge of various kinds so that students can engage with it, appropriate it, make it their own. Furthermore, as we have seen with the dictionary entries we have been considering, 'real' English, of itself, fails the second condition too, to the extent that it does not provide adequate data for learners to learn from.

I said earlier that the subject that language teachers need to know is not language in general, but *a* language: English, French, German, and so on. But it is not a language either, if by that we mean the language as experienced by its native users. It is French, German, English *as a foreign language*. That is our subject, and that is what teachers need to know. Such a subject needs to be designed so as to counter the foreignness and compensate for it, so as to localise the language to make it learnable. Classroom language is bound to be contrived in one way or another: the question is what kind of contrivance will engage the interests and dispositions of learners, and so meet the local conditions for learning. The teacher's responsibility is to create these conditions by artifice.

A failure to recognise this distinction between the object user language and the foreign language subject not only creates problems for learners but for teachers too, the vast majority of whom are not native users. Persuaded that what they are supposed to be teaching is the object language, they are naturally all too aware of their inadequacy. Here, for example, is what one such teacher has to say:

> …we suffer from an inferiority complex caused by glaring defects in our knowledge of English. We are in constant distress as we realize how little we know about the language we are supposed to teach. (Medgyes 1994: 40).

But there is no need for such distress. Medgyes may, by some measure of ideal proficiency, be defective in his knowledge of the English that native speakers use, but this does not make him inferior as a teacher since this is not the language he is supposed to teach. For what language teachers are supposed to teach is the subject, and this is English, French, German or what have you *as a foreign language*: a language which has been pedagogically treated so that it is made less alien and more accessible to learners. Language as a subject must be fashioned to account for the experience of learning, not that of using it. Of course, this contrived language has eventually to be brought into correspondence with normal actually occurring language in whatever contexts of use are

deemed to be those the learners are most likely to encounter. The object language is the ultimate objective. My point simply is that the process of getting there must be contrived. You do not start at your destination. You do not begin by presenting learners with authentic language, you design means, as I have argued elsewhere (Widdowson 1990) whereby they are enabled to gradually authenticate it. And this authentication will only be approximate: it seems to me unlikely, perhaps impossible, that most learners will ever reach the point of assimilating the foreign language so completely that it ceases to be foreign. Nor is there any need for them to do so. But even for those who do succeed, it will be something they will have learned through acculturation well beyond what they can be taught, and so well beyond the scope of the subject.

For the subject defines what is to be taught, it does not circumscribe what will be learned. To know the subject English therefore is to know what aspects of language provide the best investment for learning, what aspects are most effectively learned *from* so as to prime the learners to learn for themselves from further experience. To know the subject in this sense is to know the essential and most conceptually salient aspects of grammar and lexis and their semantic potential (as discussed earlier), from which more particular aspects can be realised, inferred by contextual implication. The relevant consideration here, I would argue, is not frequency of actual use but semantic potential, or what we might call its pedagogic valency. According to the OED the term valency denotes:

> *The combining power of an atom measured by the number of hydrogen atoms it can displace or combine with.*

By analogy, the pedagogic valency of language items can be measured by their power, or potential, in covering for and combining with others. To know the subject then is to know what valencies constitute the best investment. This relates to the second condition I referred to earlier. But it is also to know how to meet the first condition: how the language items can be most effectively localised by devising activities which take into account the dispositions and experiences of particular groups of students, which will, of course, have been drawn from their own language and culture.

I would, then, define the subject English as a foreign language in terms of investment in valency whereby you identify what is to be expressly taught as language to be learned *from*, and localisation, whereby this unreal, abstracted language is made real for learners, and its foreignness gradually made familiar. To put the matter simply: the subject requires that the language is dissociated

from the experience of its users, analysed, and then reassembled so that it can be associated with the experience of its learners. And knowing the subject of English as a foreign language means knowing how to do this.

What I am saying, then, is that knowing English the subject involves recognising its foreignness, how it is foreign in different ways for different groups of students, and how the language has to be localised so that it can key in with their reality, and can be progressively appropriated and authenticated. A teacher's knowledge of the language subject means knowledge *about* the language, and how it can be managed to make it learnable, which in turn involves managing the learners to induce them to learn. This management can take many forms, of course: it can deal with different aspects of the language, or different dispositions of the learners; it can be explicitly direct or subtly disguised, it can tactically allow for learner initiative. But it is always present as a defining feature of the subject. If it were not there, there would be no subject to teach.

In short, then, the language subject as a pedagogic construct is not like the real object language. It is not something teachers just naturally acquire but something they have consciously to learn about. That is what teacher education is for: to guide teachers into an understanding of the principles that define their subject. I am not suggesting that teachers should be instructed in technique and given specific directions to follow. On the contrary, for to do this would be to suppose that foreignness is a constant whatever the language and whoever the learners; and, as I indicated earlier, a language can be foreign in many different ways, calling for different kinds of manipulation. My argument is that it is the principal purpose (the principle purpose) of language teacher education to get teachers to understand the nature of these differences and so to establish a general rationale for their particular practices. In this way they achieve the pedagogic competence which, as I suggested at the beginning, gives warrant to their professional authority.

For what other basis for authority can there be? To be sure other kinds of authority are claimed. It is not hard to find people assuming the role of teachers, and teacher trainers and teacher trainer trainers, typically native speakers, claiming expertise based on experience, but who have had no experience of English as a foreign language whatever, and whose knowledge of the language subject is minimal. They may be gifted individuals who inspire enthusiasm, and I would not wish to say they do not have a place in the scheme of things, and do not perform a useful service, but we should not mistake them for authorities in the subject.

I think we have a clear, if difficult, choice to make. At the moment it seems as if almost anybody with the status of native speaker of the language can get instant qualification as an English teacher, any Tom Dick or Harry (rather than Ramon, Stefan or Jean-Marie). But if we want a pedagogic profession, then we have to stake out a clear area of expert knowledge that enables us to define our subject with professional authority.

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Reflexive language in language teacher education

Peter Grundy

Introduction

Few language teaching methodologists would disagree that the rationale on which teachers base course content and classroom method should derive at least from their knowledge of language, their knowledge of the language acquisition process and the theory of instruction which they espouse. In this chapter, I will argue that most teachers' language knowledge does not include a conscious awareness of the reflexive nature of language and that their methodology is the poorer for this omission. This omission is hardly surprising given that language teacher education literature is predominantly pedagogic, as is evident in the work of Candlin, Freeman, Nunan, Richards and others.[1]

Reflexive language

Most of our utterances contain not only propositional content, but also instructions to those we address in how to understand that content. I recently overheard a British woman say to an American woman with whom she was sharing a table in a restaurant in Florence:

(1) we're only about thirty miles from London.

I was able to distinguish the proposition that the speaker lived thirty miles from London from the reflexive comment 'about', indicating that thirty miles might not be a fully reliable estimate, and from the further reflexive comment 'only', which caused me to infer that living about thirty miles from London was to be admired. Thus in using 'about' and 'only', the speaker was able both to gloss the reliability of the information she was conveying and to indicate the illocutionary force that she intended her addressee to recover.

When Bill Clinton was re-elected President of USA, he expressed his gratitude with the memorable utterance:

(2) I can't say how grateful I am.

In explicitly encoding his awareness of the difficulty of conveying the speech act he had in mind, Clinton was both expressing his gratitude indirectly and at the same time commenting, or reflecting, on the linguistic resources available to him. By glossing its own pragmatic function in this way, his utterance operates at a metapragmatic level.

It's not only native speakers who refer to the difficulties they have conveying pragmatic meanings. When Olivier Peslier won the *Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe* for the first time in 1996, he said

(3) I don't know how you say this in English, but for me it was ooh-la-la-la.

The first part of Peslier's utterance is both a reflexive comment on the second part and a presequence which projects the formulation that follows. 'But' marks not so much a contrast between the two propositions as between the two types of conversational contribution that the utterance contains. We could say that the use of 'but' here is metasequential. And in choosing 'you say' rather than 'to say' or 'one says' and in supplying the pragmatically redundant 'for me', Peslier encodes his awareness of the face wants of his interlocutor. His use of cataphoric 'this' refers not to an external referent, but to the illocutionary force he cannot express. Yet more obviously, in his coinage of 'ooh-la-la-la', Peslier shows both metalinguistic and metapragmatic awareness.

Despite its pervasive nature, linguistic reflexivity has been surprisingly little explored in the theoretical literature. Jakobson (1960) famously distinguished a *metalinguistic* function among the six functions he enumerated, while Babcock (1980) is, as far as I know, the first to use the term *reflexive* to describe this function. More recently, Hanks (1993) has termed it *diacritic*. Yet these are exceptions. In the generative paradigm, idealised utterances are stripped of familiar metalinguistic markers such as 'you know' and 'like', and there is virtually no attempt to represent any kind of reflexivity beyond the modality of sentences as represented in the IP node. Reflexive language is also largely ignored in the kinds of descriptive and pedagogic grammars available to teachers and learners of foreign and second languages. Language awareness courses in language teacher education typically focus on the morphological realization of the syntactic and categorial properties of language and on 'phonology' at the expense of the diacritic features of language which, as

Lucy (1993: 10) says, instruct audiences 'how to interpret the speech they are hearing'.

The literature that does deal with reflexivity tends to focus on only the most salient reflexive phenomena. So, for example, Schiffrin (1987) draws attention to 'metalinguistic referents' such as *the former* and *the next point*, to 'metalinguistic operators' or 'higher level predicates' such as *is right/wrong* and *for example*, and to 'metalinguistic verbs' such as *say, clarify,* and *argue*. Lucy says that 'Speech is permeated by reflexive activity as speakers remark on language, report utterances, index and describe aspects of the speech event, invoke conventional names, and guide listeners in the proper interpretation of their utterances' (1993: 11). Thus it is possible to mention words (e.g. *Sentences often begin with 'thus'*), to gloss words, to make comments about language, to quote and paraphrase the speech of others and to refer to speech events (e.g. *Why do you ask that?*). Lucy also discusses the reflexive properties of indexicals, characterizing them as 'forms which reflexively take account of the ongoing event of speaking itself, in terms of which we can use and understand their referential and predicational value' (1993: 10).

Yet as our few examples show, reflexive language is much more pervasive than the limited range of phenomena captured in these descriptions suggests.

Learners' reflexive language

Why is an understanding of reflexive language important in language teacher education? I suggest that awareness of reflexive language radically alters our perception of the productive skills of our learners and causes us to conclude that it could well be that it is language that teaches language, rather than teachers or even learners themselves.

In order to see how this might be, consider the following extract in which a higher-intermediate level class discuss whether or not Erich should go back to the university bookshop where he thinks he was short-changed in order to claim the refund which the bookshop has agreed to make as a goodwill gesture:

1	Student E:	and I knew that [θæt] I had three [srɪː] fifty pounds notes in the
2		on the wallet [wælɪt] and one ten pound and one one pound
3	Female student:	and the ten pound one's gone
4	Student E:	but I think it was [wɒz] it was [wɒz] my fault I had to clarify the
5		[zə] situation immediately and there are [zɛə ɑː] several reasons
6		[rɪːsəns] because I was [wɒz] unable to [tʊ] do this um maybe

7		of my poor English or maybe of some other
8	Teacher:	I said he was too nice a man he says his English is not good
9		enough I say he's too nice a man
10	Student E:	and I think [sɪŋk] um therefore [zɛəfɔː] I I suggest [sətʃɛst] to
11		[tʊ] forget [fɔːgɛt] about it
12	Male student:	I wouldn't go
13	Student E:	and er there [zɛə] was [wɒz] (?noth) information for me if [ɪːf]
14		the the check of the cash had [hæd] shown that there were
15		missing a greater sum of of ( ) then I would agree to to go and
16		say give me the five pounds but you said

When Erich comments reflexively on his 'poor English' (l.6), he is probably referring to the difference between the forms he uses and those used by native speakers, a difference that his teachers have probably made him all too aware of. These include features resulting from his prior knowledge of German, such as non-reduced vowels (*θæt* [l.1] *wɒz* [l.4, 6], *ɑː* [l.5], etc.), the alveolar realization of interdental fricatives (*srɪː* [l.1], *zə* [l.4]), word-final and word-internal devoicing (*rɪːsəns* [l.5], *sətʃest* [l.10]), and the transfer of the tense of *es gibt* (*there are*) [l.5].

The inconsistent realization of interdental fricatives ([*θ*] in *θæt*, [s] in *srɪː*) suggests an attended speech style in which self-monitoring is a prominent strategy. The spelling pronunciation (*wælɪt*) [l.2] suggests that Erich is to a degree self-taught. The modal *had to* [l.4] rather than the more expectable *should have* may represent an encoding of the speaker's membership of a culture where a sense of being obligated to act by others is strong.

There is also evidence that his knowledge of English is incomplete: for example, there is no intervocalic [r] at a phonotactic boundary (*there are*) [l.5], he has lexical selection problems (*because* instead of *why*) [l.6], he classifies *maybe of* [l.6, 7] as a conjunction, he selects an infinitive rather than gerund after *suggest* [l.10–11], his application of *there*-insertion (*there were missing* x) is incomplete and concord also breaks down [l.14–15]. This depressing list by no means exhausts the non-standard formal features of Erich's spoken English.

However, a very different picture emerges when we look at Erich's reflexive language. His talk includes:

– metapragmatic signalling (*but*, [l.4]) of the switch from his account of events to his formulation of the contribution of those events to the situation he found himself in;
– metapragmatic signalling (*I think um therefore I I*, [l.10]) of the switch from his explanation or account of why he did not immediately clarify the

situation to the proposed course of action, thus inviting a collegial contribution from a fellow student;
– maxim hedges (*I think,* [l.4, 10], and *maybe of,* [l.6, 7]), which advise his audience that his conversational contributions may not meet default expectations as to their quality;
– clausal implicature (*maybe of…*), again inviting a contribution from his audience;
– a counterfactual conditional presupposing the contrary of what is stated (*if the check of the cash had shown that there were missing a greater sum* [l.13–15]).

To summarise, the metasequential use of *therefore* [l.10] indicates that the presequence which motivates the proposed outcome is completed.[2] This presequence contains an account (*I knew…* [l.1–2]), a formulation (*…but I think it was my fault…* [l.4]), an implicit account that justifies the formulation (*…I had to clarify the situation immediately…* [implying that he didn't], [l.4–5]), and a further account which supports the veracity of the implicit account (*…and there are several reasons why I was unable to do this…* [l.5–6]). Moreover, this supporting account contains the metalinguistic, or more properly metasequential, term *reason*, which encodes the speaker's awareness of the conversational method that he is employing (i.e. reasons are realised in the form of accounts). It is at this point that metasequential *therefore* [l.10] occurs, and demonstrates that the speaker has got to the point by a conversational process well understood by his interlocutors. In fact, it shows that he knows what he is doing. (Lack of space prevents the kind of detailed analysis that these data warrant. For a fuller discussion, see Grundy, 1997.)

Interestingly, Erich's reflexive skills sometimes accompany, and maybe even contribute to, his formal deficiencies. For example, the repair (*in* → *on* [l.1]) moves in a direction away from the target language norm, but as a repair evidences the speaker's metalinguistic awareness. Similarly, the extended duration that occurs in *if* [l.13] may be a pragmatic means of encoding awareness of, or of intensifying, the counterfactuality of the following proposition, an effect which a native speaker might have achieved by pitch prominence.

This limited examination of a very small piece of classroom data shows how a teacher focusing on the formal properties of Erich's talk would be likely to take a negative view of his 'poor English'. However, looking at the same data from a reflexive perspective we see a truly competent speaker exhibiting control over a wide range of metalinguistic, metapragmatic and metasequential phenomena.

What Erich needs to learn is not at all altered by noticing how reflexively aware he is. What is altered, however, is the teacher's perception of Erich as a language user: it is no longer just his 'poor English' that is visible.

It isn't just teachers' attitudes to their learners that is at stake, however. Consider the case of Maryam, working in what is probably a much more typical kind of classroom situation where, instead of talking freely as Erich does, she finds herself presenting a semi-rehearsed script to her classmates:

1 as er you know our position we are trying to keep the *marriage er / together family*
2 together as much as possible / we *not erm / er we don't* want any marriage br*oe*k
3 br*ei*k / but if we come across to any case like that if the / marriage is already broken /
4 we coul*d er could not* do anything / of course we *are* we *do* our best to look after the
5 children / either on their mother's um / care or father / we will look after the
6 children / as much as we can / we do our best

(Maryam's discourse is set out in information units with slashes [/] indicating the boundaries between these units which are marked by momentary pauses in the speaker's delivery.)

What is notable about these data is the extent to which they exhibit self-initiated, self-completed repair. Moreover this process is operative at several different linguistic levels. At the lexical level, *marriage* is repaired to *family* [l.1–2]; at the syntactic level, *we not* is repaired to *we don't (want)* [l.3–4]; at the phonetic level, *broek* is repaired to *breik* [l.4]; we might hypothesize that the repair of *we could* to *we could not* [l.7] is dialectal — the speaker first produces the phonetic realization on the final segment of *could* appropriate to its occurring in standard English *couldn't*, and then repairs to the favoured (County Durham) local variety *could not*. However, the fact that we are reduced to hypothesizing shows that the learner operates at a level which is too sophisticated for the analyst (or, at any rate, for this analyst). Finally, the speaker repairs *of course we are* to *we do (our best)* [l.8]: is the repair to avoid the morphologically complex progressive form or does she decide that *we do our best* is more appropriate pragmatically than *we are doing our best*? Again, the analyst is uncertain.

Not only is repair a pervasive feature of Maryam's talk, but it becomes progressively less interrupting of the natural flow of information, so that although the first two repairs are marked by pauses in the information flow, the last three occur naturally within units of information.

The conversational method of self-repair is a reflexive phenomenon which shows the speaker's awareness of the effect of their unrepaired talk. It may also

be an important method in the acquisition of a second language. Whilst it is obvious that input is a necessary condition for second language learning, there is also a considerable body of research (Pica 1987, Pica, Holliday, Lewis and Morgenthaler 1989, Shehadeh 1991— see Lynch 1996 for an overview) which investigates the ways in which language learners modify their output so as to make it comprehensible. The pervasiveness of this method, as shown in the data examined above, suggests strongly that it does have an important role in the second language acquisition process.

In traditional classrooms, modified comprehensible output is the result of overt teacher intervention, with the teacher either initiating and completing the repair for the learner or initiating the repair and allowing the learner to complete it themself. Yet the evidence from native speaker talk is that repair is overwhelmingly a self-initiated, self-completed phenomenon (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks 1977). It is as though teachers recognize the importance of repair as a learning device but fail to recognize that learners too are capable of modifying their own output. It has been argued that a distinction can be made between low quality repair, which is teacher-initiated and teacher-completed, standard classroom repair, which is typically teacher-initiated and learner-completed, and high quality learner-initiated, learner-completed repair (Shehadeh 1991: 257–61). Teachers' over-concentration on teacher-repair is a direct consequence of their inability to recognize that second language learners have reflexive control over their own language. And in fact, the data provided by Erich and Maryam strongly suggest that learners have more control over the reflexive than over the formal properties of language, which also suggests that reflexive use plays an important role in second language acquisition.

This brings us to a consideration of how second languages are learned and to the relative roles of teacher, learner and language in the acquisition process.

SLA studies within the generative paradigm have been notably successful in accounting for and predicting learner data. They have also shown that learners know more than they are explicitly taught — what Bley-Vroman (1989) calls 'the logical problem of foreign language learning'. These results prompt the hypothesis that language is learnable but not teachable. As Wong Fillmore says: 'In current theories of language 'learnability', a principle of 'teachability' is unnecessary' (1989: 311). Thus the role of teacher becomes that of enabler or facilitator rather than instructor, and the role of the learner is foregrounded. Given 'comprehensible input' we are told (Krashen 1985), the learner will take care of the acquisition process. But 'comprehensible input' is a naïve notion which seems to mean no more than that input is comprehensible

when its propositional content is understood even though the linguistic form in which this content is presented may not yet be familiar. It's difficult to know why we have focused so much more strongly on the role of the learner as acquirer than on the role of language, and especially the role of reflexive language, as that phenomenon which makes language acquisition possible. In fact, it seems self-evident that more reflexive input is more likely to be comprehensible: it is the metalinguistic, metapragmatic and metasequential glosses which utterances contain that indicate how we are to understand their propositional context, their pragmatic force and their methodic contributions to the talk event. Thus it is that when we listen to Erich or Maryam acquiring language, it isn't totally absurd to claim that it isn't the teacher, or even the learner, who teaches language to learners — rather it is language that teaches language to learners.

Teacher education and reflexivity

So far I have argued that reflexivity is a core property of language which is little remarked on in teacher education. Furthermore, as the preceding discussion of Erich and Maryam's language shows, this reflexivity is just as visible in second language as in native speaker talk and plays a crucial role in enabling second language acquisition. In addition, teachers who recognize the reflexive competence of their learners tend to take a more positive view of them and to develop a heightened sense of their own pedagogic responsibility. One consequent expectation is that such positively evaluated learners will not perceive themselves as failing and refer to their language abilities in the negative way Erich does, with the attendant likelihood of lowering their motivation.

How, then, can teachers become more aware of the reflexive qualities of their learners' language? And how can teacher education programmes become more broadly based so that language education has a status comparable to that presently accorded to pedagogic skill? One problem that often occurs in teaching language awareness is the use of invented, and hence idealized examples which are frequently reflexively impoverished and whose relevance to the real situations in which language is used has to be taken for granted. In my own experience as a teacher of Pragmatics, this is particularly problematical since the pragmatic value of an utterance is dependent on the context in which it occurs, so that teaching which relies on decontextualized examples frequently results in students failing to develop an accurate understanding of pragmatic principles.

For all these reasons, Hiroko Itakura and I decided to base the MA Pragmatics module for which we were responsible at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University on learner data only. And more radically, we decided that the data would drive the course, rather than that we would work with the more familiar theory-driven pattern in which data are used to exemplify pragmatic principles. We were fortunate in that we were working on a part-time MA programme whose participants were regular teachers following the MA as an in-service development opportunity. This meant that they were able to analyse data provided by their own learners.

The students' work was assessed on the basis of four assignments involving

- the collection of a two-minute sample of learner talk from their own classrooms. This was submitted early in the course together with an account of the context in which the talk sample occurred. (The tutors' function was to confirm that this sample contained sufficient pragmatically salient data and check that it was transcribable from a technical perspective.)
- the transcription of the two-minute sample. (The tutors' function was to check the accuracy of the transcription and highlight some of the pragmatically salient data.)
- the production of an extended piece of writing proposing an analysis and indicating those features of the data that looked promising. (The tutors' function was to comment on the proposed analysis and to suggest additional approaches and directions.)
- the submission at the end of the course of a pragmatic analysis of their sample of learner talk.

Our first class centred on the short extract from the discussion of Erich's predicament analysed above. The use of a semi-technical metalanguage including terms such as 'account' and 'formulation' led naturally to work on the conversation analytic approach to language, and the use of terms such as 'hedge' and 'clausal implicature' to work on Grice's theory of conversational implicature.

As the students' own data became available in transcribed form, it increasingly became the data which drove the course. The students were naturally enthusiastic about sharing their data in class because the resulting discussion was likely to give them ideas for their own analysis.

It seems that students learn a lot more Pragmatics from this type of course than from the more traditional trundle through deixis, implicature and speech

act theory. Certainly, their final assignments reflected a more mature understanding. At the same time, they came to see their learners from a quite different perspective: each MA student had completed a detailed analysis of the language of three or four of their own learners and had as a result got to know them at a level of intimacy rare in large class teaching situations. More generally, they had come to see learner talk as infinitely richer than they had supposed it to be before. Writing in the *IATEFL Teacher Development Newsletter* of her experience in this class, one of the trainees, Annie Au, says:

> The talk I analysed showed me that second language learners have unconscious control over a wide range of pragmatic skills, so that whenever they had difficulty in conveying their message, they would be able to find another way out, by pausing, laughing and using self-repair strategies.
>
> It was really encouraging to see that the students' weakness at the level of syntax did not deter them from voicing their opinions, rather they made use of pragmatic strategies to deliver their messages. After the assignment, I have to admit that I had at times underestimated my students' language ability as far as expressing and conveying meanings was concerned. I used to think that students needed to be carefully taught various grammar forms and functions before they could communicate effectively. However, in their conversation, they were producing remarkable pragmatic features…. Now I begin to realize my learners' potential and am more interested in helping them to develop their pragmatic skills to produce more powerful metalinguistic effects and to use pragmatics as a language facilitator.
>
> … I was glad that I had taken this course and, most important of all, will be able to apply it to the real-life situation of everyday teaching. (Au and Grundy 1996: 16)

Not untypically, Annie's MA course experience gave her an understanding that her initial training had failed to provide. Her reaction therefore raises the question of how and when to teach students about reflexive language and how and when to sensitize intending teachers to these features of learner talk. There seem to be lessons here for those who draw up teacher training syllabuses.

Conclusion

The language awareness element of most language-teacher education courses provides much more information about the formal properties of language than about the reflexive interpretation cues which are equally a feature of the language we use. Since these interpretation cues tell us about the contextual value of the propositions which they surround, it is impossible to understand

language at any significant level without them. Ignoring so fundamental a feature of human language in the preparation of teachers and in pedagogic descriptions of language encourages teachers to look for failure in learner language by focusing their attention on the formal properties of learner talk, which will inevitably fall far short of native speaker norms. In addition, the form-driven approach to language teaching conveys to learners a strong sense of failure when in fact not being native-like at the formal level is the inevitable outcome of the process in which they are engaged. By way of contrast, exposure to talk rich in reflexive features enables learners to acquire language precisely because these reflexive features make the input comprehensible to them. And when reflexive language is part of their own productive repertoire, it encourages them to learn how to make their own output comprehensible to others.

We need to recognize that it is not only Presidents of the United States who know how to encode the fact that they are stumped for words. So do language learners.

Notes

1. This is not to say that theories of language do not have considerable indirect influence on methodology. Writing (if not publishing) before the communicative movement began to gather momentum, Diller (1978) drew attention to the relationship of empiricist theories of language and behaviourist teaching methods on the one hand, and mentalist theories of language and natural approaches on the other. And although no direct informing link can be traced between the dominant generative and cognitive theories of language and the neo-communicative approaches of today, the respect teachers have for the learner's 'in-built' syllabus (Corder 1978) derives from the innateness hypothesis that is at the centre of generative theory.

2. The use is described as 'metasequential' because 'therefore' indicates to Erich's audience that one conversational method (accounting) is now over and the next method (suggesting an outcome) is beginning.

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Training in instructional conversation

Scott Thornbury

Teacher-learner interaction

In their pioneering study of teacher-learner interaction, Sinclair and Brazil (1982) concluded that learners 'have only very restricted opportunities to participate in the language of the classroom'. In similar vein, Nunan (1987: 144) claimed that 'there is growing evidence that, in communicative classes, interactions may, in fact, not be very communicative after all'. The growing evidence Nunan adduces includes studies that characterise teacher-learner interaction as being almost entirely teacher-led and dominated, and as consisting largely of IRF (initiate-response-follow up) sequences, of which the initiating element is almost always a display question (as opposed to a referential one). Nunan (1989: 26), for example, claims 'it has been shown that teachers talk for up to 89 per cent of the available time' while Wells (1999) cites a figure of 70 per cent of all teacher-learner talk as being of the IRF type. Similarly, Long and Sato (1983) found that 79 per cent of teacher-learner questions were display questions.

In the light of such findings, the following sequence (from Nunan 1990) would seem to be fairly representative:

Extract 1: *Clothes*

T: […] Anything else? Hair. Height. What about this? (Gestures to clothing)
S: Clothes.
T: Clothes. Clothes.
S: (Inaud.)
T: What's the question? (Inaud.) Not colour. What's the question for clothes, you ask — the question — for clothes? What… The question. Come on, we did this last week. Can you remember? The question?
S: What clothes do you like?
S: What kind of clothes do you like?
T: Not like.
S: Wear.
T: Wear, yeah. What's the question? Wear.

S: What kind of a…
S: What …
S: Where do you buy …
T: Wear. No, not where do you buy. Clothes.
S: What clothes do you usually wear.
T: Good question — what clothes do you usually wear? What about now — what? What's the question now what…?
S: What do you wear?
T: What do you wear? No. What…? Question. Now. Me. What.
S: Clothes. What.
T: What's the question? Wear. What. Not do. Not do. What …? OK, let's think of the answer. What're these? (Gestures to trousers).
S: Pants. Clothes.
T: Trousers. Trousers.
S: Trousers. Trousers.
T: Colour?
S: Green.
T: Green, green, OK. Green trousers. Sentence!
S. What colour are you…
T: Not question, sentence!
S: You, you wear wear, you are wearing …
T. Joe.
S. You are wearing the green trousers.
T: Ok, I'm wearing … I'm wearing … green trousers. I'm wearing green trousers. What's the question? What…?
Ss: …are you wearing.
T: What're you wearing? What're you wearing? What're you wearing? Everyone.
Ss: What are you wearing?
[pp. 18–19]

A positive gloss of this extract would highlight the scaffolding of instruction that the teacher provides through her questions, and the way in which learners are actively involved in achieving an instructional goal. Better this dialogic mode than a monologic lecture on the form and use of the present continuous.

A less charitable view might wonder at the efficiency of this sequence relative to the (fairly trivial) goal achieved, both with regard to the time expended and the probable cost in terms of learner and teacher patience. Worse: if such sequences comprise the major part of all teacher-learner inter-

action, as the research studies suggest they do, it is hard to imagine where learning opportunities (or *affordances)* occur. Van Lier (2001: 96) observes that 'student's opportunities to exercise initiative … or to develop a sense of control and self-regulation (a sense of ownership of the discourse, a sense of being empowered) are extremely restricted in the IRF format'. Yet, according to Ellis (1998), it is precisely through having ownership of the discourse that learning opportunities are mediated. It is not enough simply to be *engaged* in conversational discourse; learners need to have opportunities to *control* the discourse, through, for example, *topicalization*: 'the process by which learners take up what the teacher (or another learner) has said and make it into a subtopic of their own' (Ellis 1998: 153). Ellis draws on both Long's (1983) interaction hypothesis and Vygotskian social-cognitive theory to support his claim that the way in which classroom discourse is constructed and negotiated can affect acquisition. Vygotskian theory in particular, and its belief that learning opportunities are maximised when the learner's performance is *scaffolded* by a more capable other in the *zone of proximal development*, suggests why learner control of the discourse is so important: 'It provides the teacher with information regarding what learners are capable of saying on their own. This helps the teacher to identify what speech forms may lie within the learners' zone of proximal development and provides a basis for determining the kind of scaffolding needed to assist the learner to use and subsequently internalize more complex language' (ibid.:162). (See Grundy, previous chapter, on the importance of teacher awareness of learners' reflexive language.)

Discourse vs metadiscourse

Why, though, do teachers seem so reluctant to relinquish the reins of classroom talk? Why are instructional sequences like *Clothes* so common? There are a number of related reasons, but perhaps all can be traced to issues of control and, ultimately, power. Faced with the *unpredictability, multidimensionality* and *simultaneity* of the classroom ecology (Doyle 1977), teachers — especially inexperienced ones — opt for behaviours that minimise the potential for disruption, even at the cost of student involvement and motivation. One behaviour typically associated with high teacher-control is the transmission of subject matter knowledge. In a transmission model of education the goal of instruction is seen as 'an act of transmitting existing knowledge [and] minimising the part actively played by pupils' (Barnes 1976: 149). In the case of

language teaching, 'existing knowledge' is essentially grammar. Elicit-and-drill routines, such as the one cited above (*Clothes*), are symptomatic of a classroom culture that is fixated on grammatical form. Despite the superficially interactive nature of the exchange, the teacher's and students' efforts are wholly directed at (re-)producing linguistic forms. With this purpose in mind, the teacher (in the *Clothes* extract) controls the direction and content of the interaction and her questions are all display questions. The aim is the accurate (re-) production of preselected linguistic forms. Metalinguistic terms are used to shape the interaction. The teacher's response to learners' utterances is confined solely to feedback on their accuracy or appropriacy within the elicitation framework she has established. Reference beyond the immediate instructional context is limited to reference to previous instruction ('We did this last week'). (Significantly, the teacher's comment encodes previous instruction in terms that both reify lesson content, and construe the learning process as consisting of an accumulation of incremental steps, as in *We did the present perfect; we covered the third conditional,* etc. See Thornbury (2000).

The discourse that characterises grammar-driven teaching, and of which *Clothes* is a representative example, is not so much discourse as metadiscourse (Scollon and Scollon 1995). Teachers and their students don't 'talk language'; they talk *about* language, and even so-called production activities are, as Johnson (1996, citing Prabhu), points out, less production than *re*production activities. As Legutke and Thomas (1991: 8–9) observe: 'Very little is actually communicated in the L2 classroom. The way it is structured does not seem to stimulate the wish of learners to say something, nor does it tap what they might have to say. … Learners do not find room to speak as themselves, to use language in communicative encounters, to create text, to stimulate responses from fellow learners, or to find solutions to relevant problems.'

Whether intentional or not, this preoccupation with grammatical form is also consistent with what Giroux (1997: 21) has called the *culture of positivism.* According to a positivist view, 'knowledge … becomes not only countable and measurable, it also becomes impersonal. Teaching in this pedagogical paradigm is usually discipline based and treats subject matter in a compartmentalized and atomized fashion'. The effect of such an approach is to construe the learner as being at the receiving end of a production line of transmittable 'facts':

> There is little in the positivist pedagogical model that encourages students to generate their own meanings, to capitalize on their own cultural capital, or to participate in evaluating their own classroom experiences. The principles of order, control, and certainty in positivist pedagogy appear inherently opposed to such an approach (ibid.:25).

Whether motivated or not initially by the teacher's need to control the direction of the lesson, a teacher-driven, grammar-focused pedagogy is readily accommodated into an educational culture that prioritises control, discipline, assessment and cultural reproduction. This culture of positivism is further reinforced and perpetuated by the global marketing of teaching materials that are predicated on a compartmentalized and atomized view of language. In using these materials, teachers become — wittingly or unwittingly — complicit in a grammar delivery system that threatens to reduce the learner to the role of consumer of 'grammar McNuggets' (Thornbury 2000). If authentic language use occurs at all in such a pedagogy, it is in the interstices and marginalia of lessons. The net effect is best summed up in the words of one student who complained: 'Our teacher never talks to us.'

It has been argued (e.g. by Seedhouse 1996, Cullen 1997) that teachers *cannot* talk to students, that the sociocultural nature of the classroom precludes real talk of the kind advocated by, for example, Legutke and Thomas, and that the interactional style of the kind exemplified in the *Clothes* extract is a specific institutional variety of discourse designed to fulfil specific institutional goals.

It is exactly these goals that I am questioning. If it were simply the case that language teaching was the transmission of discrete items of knowledge, then perhaps — just perhaps — the reliance on elicit-and-drill sequences might be appropriate. But language teaching — if it is to provide opportunities for *languaging* (cf. Joseph, this volume), i.e. the proceduralization of language knowledge — requires more than this. Metadiscourse without discourse is like meta-swimming without swimming.

Goals, context, and discourse

If, as Seedhouse (op. cit.) argues, the institutional goals determine and constrain the nature of the discourse, then perhaps the goals need to be changed, or, at least, re-negotiated. Goals that are formulated solely in terms of the transmission of grammar 'McNuggets' are incompatible with a view of language learning that prioritises 'language socialisation' (Roberts 2001). If, on the other hand, it is the sociocultural nature of the classroom that determines the way the discourse is managed, then the classroom context, including the relationship between its interactants, may need to be critically examined, even at the most basic level. Do, for example, the learners know each others' names?

Are they sitting so that they can see one another? Is the teacher seated with the learners? and so on.

If, conversely, one takes the view that it is the discourse that determines the sociocultural nature of the classroom, serving both to establish and maintain a non-symmetrical classroom culture, then maybe the discourse should be changed. This is the thinking underlying Wells' (1999: 10) concept of dialogic teaching in which a Hallidayan perspective is adopted in order to effect changes in the classroom discourse formations: 'Teachers are not entirely constrained by traditional definitions of the situation types that constitute a typical 'lesson'. By making different choices from their meaning potential, particularly with respect to tenor and mode, they can significantly change the register and genre that prevail and thereby create different learning opportunities for their students.' At the level of question types, the effect of training teachers to ask a greater number of referential questions was examined by Brock (1986: 55) who found that 'learners' responses to referential questions were on average more than twice as long and more than twice as syntactically complex as their responses to display questions, which led her to conclude that 'such questions may be an important tool in the language classroom, especially in those contexts in which the classroom provides learners with their only opportunity to produce the target language' (ibid.:56).

Training for 'a pedagogy of possibility'

The approach we take on the in-service Diploma courses we run at International House, Barcelona, acknowledges the interdependency of goals, context and discourse, and attempts both to examine how these elements work and to explore the extent to which they might be re-worked, in the interests of what we call big-C CLT (Thornbury 1996a). Nevertheless, we recognise that educational goals, contexts, and discourses are nested within larger cultural, political and ideological constructs, and that the approach we have taken may not easily translate to other contexts. At the same time, in attempting to shape curriculum change our perspective has always been from the vantage point of the learners themselves, inasmuch as we can locate it, and a starting point in training is to encourage trainees to gauge their learners' responses to instruction, through, for example, the use of interactive learner diaries (see Gray 1998). It is from one of these that the following comment comes:

> I enjoy more when a teacher sits down in front of us and explains a real thing that happened to him/her and then he asks us for similar situations that we can have gone through…

The *goals* of teaching EFL we address primarily in the course content, through contrasting, from the outset, form-driven and meaning-driven models of instruction. A basic distinction is made between error pre-emptive, discrete-item, grammar-driven models, where instruction is premised on what learners *don't know,* and a learner language responsive, task-based model, where instruction is premised on what learners *can do.* In the former model, since there is always something that the learners don't know, a culture of dependency is created. In the latter, since there is always something that the learners can do, a culture of possibility is nurtured (cf. Widdowson, this volume, on the learners' need to invest in meaning *potential*).

At the same time, we attempt to shift the teachers' perceptions of the goals of instruction from a concern for transmission of the (native speaker) *user's* grammar, to a concern for fostering the emergence of the *learners'* grammar (Cook 1999). This involves analysing examples of learner interlanguage in terms of what the learners achieve (rather than what they fail to achieve) and through studying the inherent systematicity of their interlanguage, as opposed to its lack of conformity to privileged native speaker norms. It also involves a critical analysis of coursebook prescriptions regarding grammar, particularly where these provide evidence of a restrictive, deficit model of pedagogy and/or make false claims about usage, as in the following examples:

> Don't let the false beginners dominate the real beginners or pull you along too quickly… Encourage [the false beginners] to concentrate on areas where they can improve (e.g. pronunciation) and don't let them think they know it all! (Oxenden and Seligson 1996: 15).

> Some false beginners may want to use *will* to express the future. Explain that we use *going to* for plans. It's the most useful future form. *Will* is taught in [book] 2. (ibid.:109).[1]

Translating a pedagogy of possibility into the classroom *context* is realised through the teaching practice component. We take the view that the classroom is 'an arena of human interactions' (Prabhu 1992: 230) in which, as Kumaravadivelu (1993: 13) puts it, 'teachers and learners are co-participants in the generation of classroom discourse'. It is our experience that materials — especially those designed to reinforce a grammatical agenda — often interfere in this process. Instead of over-relying on materials, teachers are encour-

aged to exploit the content that the co-participants bring to the classroom. This may take the form of *reconstruction* tasks, where the teacher's text (such as a personal anecdote) is reconstructed by the students, or *reformulation,* where the students' texts (e.g. their stories) are reformulated by the teacher (Thornbury 1997).

Such an approach does *not* mean that the teacher takes a 'back-seat' role in the classroom, abdicating his or her authority and expertise. As van Lier (2001: 104) points out: 'The answer to a disproportionate amount of highly controlling and depersonalized teacher talk is not to minimize all teacher talk per se but to find ways to modify it in more contingent directions.' Hence, the teacher's role is construed less in 'transmission' than in 'interpretation' terms (Barnes 1976: 144), where a defining characteristic of the 'interpretation' teacher is that he or she 'perceives the teacher's task to be the setting up of a dialogue in which the learner can reshape his knowledge through interactions with others'.

Instructional conversation

At the *discourse* level, such an approach requires 'basic conversational processes, adapted for the formal, public nature of the classroom' (Jarvis & Robinson 1997: 220). This seems to approximate both to Barnes' (op. cit.) notion of 'exploratory talk', and to what Tharp and Gallimore (1988: 111) call 'instructional conversation':

> 'Instruction' and 'conversation' appear contrary, the one implying authority and planning, the other equality and responsiveness. The task of teaching is to resolve the paradox. To most truly teach, one must converse; to truly converse is to teach.

Note that such a classroom discourse is not *simply* conversation. Instructional affordances are embedded within the talk 'as when the teacher side-tracks to explain the meaning of a lexical item or deal with a grammatical problem' (Ellis 1990: 171). The joint construction of meaning is not incompatible with a focus on form, but the form need not be pre-selected much less the primary vector of the lesson. Rather, a form focus is realised by means of what Cazden (1992: 14) terms an *instructional detour,* i.e. 'the prior establishment of a main road of meaningful language use, to which the detour is a momentary diversion when needed'.

Teachers need to be alert to whatever opportunities arise to take these instructional detours and capable of responding spontaneously and efficiently

(which assumes sophisticated language awareness and error analysis skills). They need to be capable, too, of relaxing their hold on the lesson, in the interests of devolving greater learner control: 'Opportunities for giving learners control of the discourse will arise naturally in the course of a language lesson. The extent to which teachers grasp these opportunities, for example by permitting learner topicalizations, may well prove more crucial for creating the optimal conditions for acquisition to take place than any planned decisions they make.' (Ellis 1998: 166).

Reactive teaching can be trained, to a certain extent, but it assumes a willingness on the part of the teacher to relinquish a degree of 'planned-ness' in their teaching, to *teach* less, even to *talk* more, responding to the on-line needs of their learners as they engage in meaningful, message-focused, tasks. At the same time, it requires of the teacher an awareness of the discourse features of supportive, scaffolding teacher talk. This is the object of a 'teacher-talk' project (described in Thornbury 1996b), in which trainees record, transcribe and evaluate a segment of teacher-fronted classroom talk. The following extract from one of these projects demonstrates well, I think, how classroom talk can achieve the 'contingency' (to borrow van Lier's term) of naturally occurring conversation, while at the same time it can incorporate an explicit instructional component. Note the learner-initiated topic shift (turn 3); the number of referential questions on the part of the teacher (turns 4, 6, 12, 14, 20, 25); the clarification requests (turns 8, 14, 23); the learner-initiated questions (turns 15, 25, 28) and the embedded instructional 'detours' (turns 10, 17, 20). The talk is supported ('scaffolded') by the teacher, but not in the traditional IRF framework. Moreover, topic control is entirely learner-initiated and driven. It is, in short, instructional conversation:

Extract 2. *'Barrancking'*

S1: What about go to mountains?
T: What about…?
S1: What about going to mountains, we can do 'barrancking' [Ss laugh]
T: What's 'barrancking'?
S2: Is a sport.
T: Yes, but what do you do exactly?
S3: You have a river, a small river and [gestures]
T: Goes down?
S3: Yes, as a cataract
T: OK, a waterfall [writes it on board] What's a waterfall, Manel? Can you give me an example? A famous waterfall [draws]

S1: Like Niagara?
T: OK. So what do you do with the waterfall?
S4: You go down.
T: What? In a boat?
S4: No, no, with a … ¿como se dice cuerda?
S3: Cord.
T: No, rope, a cord is smaller, like at the window, look [points]
S4: Rope, rope, you go down rope in waterfall.
S2: You wear … 'black clothes' [mispronounced]
T: Black clothes. Repeat [student repeats] … […] This sounds dangerous, is it dangerous?
Ss: No no
S3: Is in summer, no much water
T: Sorry?
S3: Poco … poco … little water, river is not strong
T: OK … and you have done this? What's it called in Spanish?
S4: Barranquismo. In English?
T: I don't know. I'll have to ask somebody.
S2: It is good, you come? ¿Como es dìu? Let's go together.
T: I don't think so [laughs]
S4: Yes, yes, you come, we can go in summer
T: Well, in the summer, not now, it's too cold
Ss: No no
[author's data]

Note

1. On the basis of corpus evidence, Biber *et al.* (1999: 490) demonstrate that not only is *will* the most common modal verb in English, but that it is by far the most common way of expressing future time across all registers. While g*oing to* is relatively common in conversation, it 'is rarely used in written exposition'.

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Part 2

Working with language in language teacher education

In Part 2, the emphasis shifts from the broader conceptual issues of Part 1 to the practice of working with language in language teacher education. There are two central themes:

– language as it relates to the improvement of teachers' personal language skills, including use of the language in the classroom;
– language as it relates to language awareness, interpreted here as explicit knowledge about language and how it works, including language use in the classroom.

Of the eight chapters in Part 2, the first five focus on the latter and the last three primarily, though by no means exclusively, on the former.

The chapters vary in their approach to these themes. Some describe how and why the language component of training has been handled in a particular way; some provide more discursive accounts of the content and function of language awareness in language teacher education; others report on empirical investigations of the impact of the language awareness component or of the perceptions of trainees undergoing training. Throughout, however, it is practice, and reflection on practice, that is foregrounded.

Inevitably, the sampling of practice is limited: a volume of this size cannot possibly visit all contexts and countries. Included nonetheless are discussions of both pre-service and in-service courses, short courses and long courses, courses based in the UK and overseas (Switzerland, Hong Kong, Tanzania). Also, and significantly, given the historically unfortunate professional division between EFL/ESL teaching and modern foreign language teaching, there is a chapter (by Barnes) which addresses the issues of language skills maintenance for modern foreign language teacher trainees.

The opening chapter by Wright explores and illustrates appropriate content for language awareness in three domains — those of the 'user', the 'analyst' and the 'teacher'. Wright is especially concerned that awareness activities should be so designed as to link newly acquired knowledge about language

to classroom practice. This connection, he argues, has not been sufficiently strongly made in most teacher education materials.

Like Wright, Ferguson is interested in identifying an appropriate content for language awareness work, this time in the area of teacher preparation for English for Specific Purposes teaching. He argues that trainees should be encouraged to adopt a discourse perspective on language in specific purpose teaching and see genre as a central organising concept for awareness work.

Reflecting the trend in language teacher education towards enquiry-centred approaches focusing on actual classrooms, the chapters by Pennington, Cullen, and O'Donoghue and Hales all make use of transcripts of classroom discourse, but for interestingly different purposes. Pennington's chapter presents a scheme for the classification of classroom discourse into different communicative frames, the ultimate aim being to raise awareness of classroom dynamics. A particularly interesting feature is that attention is drawn to the significance of the 'commentary frame', a layer of discourse where students make 'off-lesson' remarks about the lesson, about other students and about the world at large. Pennington argues that teachers ignore this talk at their peril, for it can develop into a disruptive 'counter-discourse'.

The chapter by Cullen also looks at classroom language, but in this case the focus is specifically on the language used by teachers. Cullen shows how lesson transcripts can be exploited both to raise awareness of the pedagogical role of different types of teacher questions and to improve trainees' proficiency in formulating questions that are pedagogically useful.

O'Donoghue and Hales' use of transcript data is as input for one of a series of grammar awareness activities for teachers taking a short pre-service course. In this case the data are, to an unusual degree, self-generated in that they consist of trainees' recordings of their own conversations transcribed by the trainees themselves (rather than by course tutors). The act of transcription itself is seen as an awareness raising activity, as are the tasks that trainees write for each other using this self-generated data.

Barnes looks at the hugely important matter of language skills maintenance for modern foreign language teacher trainees taking a postgraduate certificate in education course (PGCE). Her discussion focuses on the rationale, content and development of innovative elements of the PGCE programme, specifically the language refreshment classes and the independent language learning sessions. Of particular interest is the author's account of how these elements complement other more conventional components of the PGCE programme — the methodology classes and the school placements, for example.

The chapters by Lavender and Murray both report empirical studies using data collected from the authors' own trainees. In this respect they might be considered examples of action research — teachers or trainers investigating and reflecting on their own practice with a view to achieving a better understanding of it. Through an investigative apparatus of diaries, interviews and questionnaires, Lavender tracks trainees' and tutors' changing perceptions of the language improvement component of a short training course. This leads to reflections on the importance of personal language skills for teachers and to guidelines for the design of the language improvement component of training. Murray focuses on the little discussed, even unfashionable, area of training for error identification. Her chapter describes a study tracing the improvement made by trainees in identifying and classifying errors over the duration of a part time CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) course. She concludes with a commentary on the type of activities developed to help her trainees identify and classify errors with greater linguistic sensitivity.

Looking at Part 2 as a whole, it is possible to identify a number of pervasive themes:

a. *Impact*
   Teacher educators, like teachers, are frequently unsure about the effect they are having on their students. The chapters by Murray, Lavender and Barnes exemplify this concern in their focus on investigating, indeed evaluating, the trainees' response to their training programme and its effect on their skills, practices and beliefs.

b. *Transfer — the link between training and classroom practice*
   The chapters by Wright and Ferguson are concerned with whether and how language awareness work with trainees may influence, or transfer to, the way they teach language in their classrooms. Wright, while not claiming to offer a complete solution, suggests ways in which language awareness activities may be designed in such a way as to facilitate the subsequent transfer of resulting insights to classroom practice.

c. *Identifying the kind of knowledge about language that is most relevant and useful to teachers*
   The content and scope of the language awareness curriculum in teacher education are central concerns in the chapters by Wright and Ferguson.

d. *Personal language skills — their role in effective classroom teaching, and in trainees' and teachers' self-image*

The chapters by Barnes, Cullen, and Lavender, concerned as they are with ways in which language skills may be maintained or extended, testify in different ways to the importance of high levels of language proficiency, both for teacher self-confidence and for pedagogical competence.

e. *The significance of classroom language*
Several chapters (e.g. those by Cullen, Barnes, Pennington) highlight the distinctiveness of classroom discourse, arguing that its particular features can and should be the focus for both language improvement and language awareness work.

f. *The use of classroom derived data*
As indicated above, the chapters by Pennington, Cullen, and O'Donoghue and Hales all describe the use of transcribed classroom discourse as input for work on language awareness or language improvement. They make the point that data alone is insufficient; for effective use it needs to be properly structured, and appropriate tasks need to be devised for working with it.

g. *Emphasis on naturally occurring discourse data, and inductive, discovery-oriented task work*
Nearly all the chapters describe language awareness or language improvement work with naturally occurring, primary data — newspaper articles, journal abstracts, car maintenance manuals, recorded conversations, etc., as well as lesson transcripts — rather than with what O'Donoghue and Hales refer to as 'tidied-up' language. The underlying assumption, questioned in Part 1 in relation to language teaching, appears to be that naturally occurring language has a particular role in teacher education precisely because it is 'real' and undoctored and therefore presents a more challenging and satisfying foundation for professional language study.

From these chapters there emerges a strong methodological preference for inductive, discovery-oriented awareness activity: trainees are encouraged to explore language for themselves, rather than absorb what Wright calls 'expert input'.

Educational practice is culturally embedded and consequently varies from place to place. Inevitably, each form of practice described here is contextually specific and not straightforwardly replicable in other places. We need to be, and the authors of these chapters are, sensitive to the wider implications of our work, and to the lessons or principles that may be read into our particular experiences. The work described here documents experience in a way that

enlarges, albeit vicariously, the experience of teacher educators elsewhere, and this, surely, is a useful function, for an increased sum of experience is an invaluable source for enriching practice.

Doing language awareness

Issues for language study in language teacher education

Tony Wright

Introduction

Becoming a language teacher involves a number of related processes, in particular learning to create connections between the linguistic, or 'content', and the methodological, or 'teaching', aspects of language teaching. In this chapter, I shall address issues involved in linking these two aspects in language teacher education (LTE) programmes, both pre- and in-service. I shall examine various dimensions of the issue of content knowledge and consider how 'content knowledge' can be linked to the practical realities of classroom teaching. I shall then examine 'language awareness' as an approach to the acquisition and development of content knowledge that provides a means of connecting content knowledge and teaching methodology and will illustrate this with examples of language-focused teacher training activities. These activities are based on training principles which enable trainers to create the contexts for exploring language and teaching.

Subject knowledge for language teachers — issues

Though it is self-evident that all language teachers need expertise and proficiency in the language they teach, the precise definition of this is not so straightforward. For example, a native speaker teacher of English — or 'NEST' (Medgyes 1994) — may be thought to have a head start on colleagues for whom English is a second or foreign language, simply by being fluent in its use on a day-to-day basis. But being a fluent mother-tongue speaker does not, of course, guarantee successful practice as a language teacher. (On this point, and on the general issue of what it is a language teacher needs to know, see also the

chapter by Widdowson.) Another teacher may have the apparent advantage of having successfully completed courses in syntax and semantics. But knowledge of linguistics does not in itself lead to successful language teaching practice. This latter issue has raised considerable debate, especially between those classroom practitioners who argue for a 'practical' approach and those academics who argue that knowledge of content necessarily involves some knowledge of linguistics.

A helpful position on this is the 'educational linguistics' position advanced by, among others, Brumfit (1991, 1997) and van Lier (1996). Brumfit (1997: 167) identifies four main areas of interest in a 'comprehensive study of teachers as linguists':

- teachers' knowledge and beliefs about language, language acquisition, and the role of language in society, learning, and power structures
- teachers' practices in classrooms, and within their institutions
- children's' developmental beliefs and practices in the above
- learners' practices and beliefs in their roles as pupils/students.

The first two of Brumfit's areas can be formulated as issues for language teacher education as follows:[1]

1. The delineation of content knowledge for language teachers. What do language teachers need to know about language, what do they need to be able to do with language, and what attitudes towards language seem appropriate for language teachers?
2. The linking of content knowledge with teaching expertise, so that content knowledge is actively used as a basis for teaching plans and the content of language lessons. This linkage is not always made explicit either at the course design level or in training sessions on language issues. It may not be clear, for example, whether a component entitled 'teaching grammar' contains an element of language analysis.
3. Precisely *how* are the connections between subject knowledge and classroom methodology in training programmes to be made?

Language awareness in teacher education for language teachers

Language awareness, both in a broad sense (as a goal of language teacher education) and in a narrow sense (as a method), is a way of addressing the issues identified above and, in particular, of bringing about a closer relation-

ship between content knowledge and classroom methodology in LTE courses. Language education practitioners are involved, not in language and teaching (separately) but in 'language teaching' (or teaching language) and language learning. An approach based on language awareness offers ways of enabling teachers to focus on language learning in the classroom.

Language awareness has achieved a distinct role in both language teaching and language education (i.e. teaching about language), as is well documented in James and Garrett (1991) and van Lier (1995) among others. In teacher education, however, the role of language awareness is less well developed. Early papers by Edge (1988), Bolitho (1988) and Wright and Bolitho (1993) are attempts to clarify its role, and in this chapter I shall attempt to build on this work.

Language awareness as methodology and goal

One issue is whether language awareness is to be considered as a goal of LTE or merely a method — a task or activity type. As method, we can see how language awareness activities engage the student in working with language data. A task is set up in such a way as to enable the student to notice patterns, inconsistencies, anomalies, etc, in the linguistic data presented. The approach is, by and large, inductive and discovery-oriented (either 'closed' or open-ended). The aim is that the students will acquire insights about particular features of the language. Such activities have also been described as 'consciousness-raising' by American practitioners (Rutherford 1987) and SLA researchers (Ellis 1997) and, in the context of grammar teaching, as 'collaborative and exploratory tasks' (Nunan 1998). Whatever we may choose to call them, their common features are induction and the employment of 'noticing' (Batstone 1995; Thornbury 1999) on the part of the student.

Seen as a goal of LTE, language awareness provides us with a wider view: the aim of developing a teacher's overall 'sensitivity to language'- their linguistic radar, as it were. A linguistically aware teacher not only understands how language works, but understands the student's struggle with language and is sensitive to errors and other interlanguage features. The linguistically aware teacher can spot opportunities to generate discussion and exploration of language, for example by noticing features of texts which suggest a particular language learning activity.

If language awareness is a goal, then not only language awareness tasks but also more conventional means, such as tutor talk or tutor demonstration, may

be exploited in pursuing it. Experience has shown that an inductive language awareness approach is particularly effective when participants are exploring, reorganising and consolidating their existing knowledge of language, redressing misunderstandings created by over-dependence on often flawed 'rules' of grammar or usage (Wright and Bolitho 1993). The availability of a multitude of sources of linguistic data, e.g. via the media and corpora of 'real' language (CANCODE, COBUILD etc), provide abundant opportunities for this sort of linguistic exploration. Where an inductive approach may be less successful is in exposing trainees to areas of language, and methods of language description (features, for example, of pragmatics or discourse), with which they are not familiar. In these cases, the cognitive effort of grappling with new data without the benefit of 'maps' containing even the most rudimentary theoretical background and terminology can be very daunting, to the point where participants may simply 'turn off'. One solution may be to focus participants' attention on features in data that they have already been exposed to by course tutors in a 'modelling' or demonstration mode.

What language knowledge in language teacher education?

A second major area of debate in LTE programme design concerns the kinds of linguistic knowledge that language teachers need. Should teachers be introduced, for example, to generative linguistics? to stylistics? to Gricean pragmatics? A strictly utilitarian response might be 'no'. There simply isn't time or need for this sort of thing; what teachers need is a good pedagogic grasp of the language basics — mainly grammar and lexis — to enable them to plan and implement the activities that facilitate learning. An alternative response would be that this is an overly 'functional' view of teaching language, which divorces it from wider considerations of the role of language in human communication and thinking. Teachers without an understanding of these issues have an expertise and an awareness deficit in areas which might be critical for their understanding of their role. One such might be 'language and play' (Crystal 1998; Cook 1999) the importance of which is graphically illustrated by van Lier and Corson (1997):

> 'When we ask children about their best and worst subjects in school, they will very often include language (native and foreign) among their most difficult and hateful (i.e. 'boring') subjects. Yet, these children, out of school, will entertain you with word games, puns, examples of slang expressions, deadly accurate imitations of regional accents, and a thousand testimonials of keen language interest and skill.

> This illustrates a deep paradox about language and education: even though language is fascinating to children and grownups alike, and a constant focus of attention and comment, in school it is stripped of precisely those things that make it interesting.' (1997: xii)

The process of designing training activities and programmes for language teachers must necessarily address these issues, and, in order to do so, I propose the following points as a guide:

1. The goal of the 'language component' in LTE has to be to provide the teacher with the tools for the job of creating learning opportunities in the classroom and to manage that task with confidence. It will necessarily lean towards the utilitarian or functional aspects of teaching if time and resources are limited. With the luxury of more time on an LTE programme, trainees can be moved beyond this relatively limited goal.
2. Teachers have to feel confident both in their use of the L2 and in their knowledge of the systems and use of the language (cf. the chapter by Lavender). They need to have effective strategies for linking proficiency and knowledge with appropriate teaching methods.
3. Participants on LTE programmes also need to deepen their relationship with language, to become autonomous explorers of language, to begin to develop a lifelong interest in language, and to develop their sense of fun and play with language (cf. O'Donoghue and Hales in this volume).
4. Language awareness is not just a method but a principal goal of LTE. Language awareness activities are a means of reaching this goal. While most language awareness activities attempt to promote involvement and engagement with language data, and the generation of knowledge inductively where participants examine their current knowledge about language, there must also be room for other types of activity which involve participants in applying new knowledge and rules introduced by tutors. Regardless of which type of activity is used, the emphasis must ultimately be on participants *doing*, rather than passively absorbing expert 'input'.

Domains of language awareness

Successful language teaching requires proficiency in language use, knowledge about language, and knowledge of teaching methods (Edge (1988), developed by Wright and Bolitho (1993, 1997)). Each of these three areas may usefully be conceptualised as a domain within which language awareness can operate in

teacher education.

The *user* domain involves not only the ability to use the language appropriately in a variety of situations but also an awareness of the social and pragmatic norms which underlie such appropriate use. The *analyst* domain covers knowledge of language — knowledge of how language in general and the target language in particular work. This might be described as a technical knowledge of language, expertise comparable to that of the knowledge of physics possessed by a physics teacher. It includes understanding of the forms and functions of language systems — grammar, vocabulary and phonology. The *teacher* domain involves awareness of how to create and exploit language learning opportunities, the significance of classroom interaction and of learner output.

To illustrate these ideas, in the next section I shall use one text to show how such data may be exploited for language awareness work with trainees in all three domains. It will be seen that language awareness work can go beyond raising awareness about knowledge already in mind to the development of new knowledge, or more refined knowledge.

Language awareness and the 'user' domain

In teacher education programmes for non-native speaker teachers, language improvement courses traditionally dominate the 'user' domain. Spratt (1994) is a good example of this type of programme in published form. Cullen (1994 and this volume) discusses the main issues of work in this domain, and stresses the importance of linking this type of work with 'methodological' training, an issue to be examined later in this chapter (see also Hales 1997).

Apart from the need for language improvement, however, there are other needs in the 'user' domain which are important for both native and non-native teachers.

a. the maintenance and refinement of basic curiosity about language use;
b. exploration of attitudes towards different varieties of language and how these are used, and an awareness of the spectrum of opinion, particularly when working in multilingual or multicultural contexts;
c. sensitivity to issues of power, gender, and 'linguistic imperialism' (Phillipson 1992);
d. awareness of strategies for repair and reformulation; these are vital elements of communicative competence and are often neglected by teachers in programmes for beginners — precisely the learners who may have the most need for them.

Trip to Turkish delight ends in Torquay by night

Gary Younge

IT IS a mistake anyone could make at night in a foreign country. Kumiko Tsuchida, a Japanese tourist, arrived at midnight in a seaside town on the Devon coast and thought she had landed in the cradle of European civilisation 2,000 miles away.

She wanted to go to Turkey. She ended up in Torquay. And at first glance she could not tell the difference.

The trouble began earlier in the evening when she had asked at Reading how to get to Turkey, where she recently moved with her family.

Mrs Tsuchida, aged 40, who speaks very little English and with a strong accent, was misunderstood and instead of being directed to Heathrow was ushered on to the 8.15 train to Torquay, which arrived at around midnight.

By the time the police found her it was two in the morning. They called in social services, who put her up for the night in a nearby old people's home.

"She told officers in broken English that she had been on the train so long, she genuinely believed she was in Turkey already. She even thought she had been through the Channel tunnel," police said.

A social services spokesman said: "Our out-of-hours team received a call from the police at 2am to say they had a lost and exhausted lady from Japan who needed a bed for the night. We had a bed available and were happy to oblige."

Yesterday morning a care assistant took her to Thomas Cook in Torquay where manager Claire Gibbs took over. She said last night: "Mrs Tsuchida was very frightened and could hardly speak any English, so we had to talk to her via the Japanese embassy in London."

Finally, the embassy arranged for Mrs Tsuchida, who had been staying with a friend while on a short holiday in this country, to be put back on a train to Reading where arrangements were made for someone to meet her and take her back to Heathrow to catch a plane to Istanbul.

[The Guardian 13/6/97]

Developing an insight into these issues — awareness of the socio-cultural context of language use — should be a key part of the education of language teachers.

Activities:
The activities which follow in Sets A and B are designed to focus initially on *user* awareness. The first two questions in Set A invite the reader's response to the story as a user of English. They aim to find out:

> Can the reader relate to the events described in the story as a language user?
> Are there wider implications about language use?
> What are the implications for language teachers?

Activities 3–6 move the participants towards consideration of broader theoretical issues and issues of classroom practice.

Set A
Individual Activity

1. Read the text through quickly. What are your immediate feelings about what happened to Mrs Tsuchida?
2. Has anything similar to what happened to Mrs Tsuchida happened to you or anyone you know when you've been using a foreign language?

Be ready to share your responses with a partner, and later the whole group.

Notes: Questions 1 and 2 can raise both positive and negative responses. Be prepared as tutor to tease these out and to discover the attitudes or intuitions behind the responses.

3. What does this story tell us about communicating in foreign languages?
4. Do you see any messages for teachers in this story?

Notes: Questions 3 and 4 can be addressed in small groups or pairs, and would normally be followed by a plenary discussion which would aim to draw out the key themes. The tutor would add their own thoughts on the activity to those of the group.

5. Examine the language teaching materials provided to see if (and how) they handle native/non-native speaker exchanges, especially with weak L2 speakers. (either speaking or listening activities)

Notes: Question 5 is designed to link the material generated in 1–4 to classroom issues.

6. Examine the extract of classroom data
   a. identify errors the students make
   b. describe how the teacher deals with the errors.

The second set of 'user' activities ' explore the issues raised in Set A in more depth and with a closer linguistic focus. They aim to raise awareness of how labels are applied to particular varieties of language and to uncover attitudes towards these varieties.

Set B

1. In lines 24/5, it says that Mrs. Tsuchida 'speaks very little English', 'with a strong accent'. What do you understand by these two phrases? What do you think of people who speak English with 'very strong accents'?
2. In line 38, the police are reported as having said she spoke 'broken English'.
   a. What *exactly* do you think she said to the police in Torquay when she met them?
   b. What is your understanding of the term 'broken English'? What do you think about the term?

Notes: These activities would be managed in the same way as in Set A, with a combination of individual, pair and group and plenary work.

3. As a teacher, what is your policy towards students who are trying to practise their spoken English and who make a large number of mistakes?
4. How do you prepare students with low but developing levels of proficiency to deal with misunderstandings or miscommunications?
5. Devise an activity for classroom use which would enable the students to gain some experience of practising specific strategies for dealing with miscommunications.

Language awareness and the'analyst' domain

This domain includes all areas of language description from phonetics to pragmatics. It is thus also the domain of descriptive linguistics, and a recurring issue is the extent to which, and ways in which, descriptions used in language teaching will either draw on or diverge from those of linguists.

Related issues are

- the extent to which the linguist's analytical skills should become a part of the teacher's working system, or'pedagogic content knowledge' (Richards 1990; Borg 2001). Few would dispute the importance of a sound knowledge of the ways in which the target language 'works' — it is a key source of a language teacher's expertise and confidence (Wright 1991), as well as the basis of a metalanguage with which to discuss language points with students. What is at issue is the extent to which teachers should know about different theories of grammar (transformational, systemic) or be proficient in textual analysis;
- the directness of the relationship between specialised knowledge of this sort and *teaching* issues. Here the domains of the analyst and teacher start to overlap;
- the role of authentic data in language analysis. The growth of areas of study such as pragmatics and discourse analysis has provided new tools for teachers to approach language. The use of this type of data also enables links between user and analyst domains to be established. Significant advances in our understanding of how native speakers use spoken language in natural settings have been made possible by researchers like Carter and McCarthy (1997) using corpora of naturally-occurring spoken discourse.

Activities:

The activities which follow direct trainees' attention to phonological and grammatical aspects of the language system. Other activities in this domain could focus on textual features such as cohesion, and lexical relations. Set C engages the user with the phonological aspect of the story of Mrs Tsuchida. It assumes some prior knowledge of the phonological system and skills to use reference works. Set D assumes some formal grammatical knowledge, and again, the ability to use reference grammars.

Set C

1. What listening error did Mrs Tsuchida (or the railway official at Reading) make? Try to say what Mrs Tsuchida said. Ask a partner to notice what you say and how.
2. Write down the phonetic transcriptions of 'Turkey' and 'Torquay'. What is the stress pattern of each word?

3. How do you think these differences contributed to the misunderstandings reported in the story?
4. Can you think of any other pairs of words in English which might cause similar trouble?

What are the phonological rules that inform these differences?

5. How might you help beginner or elementary students spot differences and work towards more intelligible pronunciation?

Notes: All the above questions should be done in pairs or small groups. Dictionaries and phonetic alphabet charts should be available for reference. For question 4 there might need to be some sets of minimal pairs available for the group to examine.

Set D

1. In line 1, it says 'anyone'. Could this be replaced with 'someone'? What would be the effect on the meaning if you did replace it as suggested?
2. In lines 73/4, it says 'someone'. Could you replace this with 'anyone'? What would be the effect on the meaning if you did?
3. On the basis of your responses to questions 1 and 2, what is the difference in meaning between 'someone' and 'anyone', as they are used in the text?
4. Check your response in a reference grammar or two. Can you formulate a rule for the use of someone and anyone?

Notes: A further question could be to examine a course book exercise on the use of the two items to see what students might and might not learn from the exercise. This type of grammar focus exercise could be used with any contrasting items in the text. Again, pair and group work are helpful once individuals have done nos. 1–3.

Language awareness and the teacher domain

Teaching a language requires an immense sensitivity to the problems of students struggling to learn a new code and the rules for its appropriate use. This sensitivity needs to be both linguistic and pedagogic. For example, errors will be diagnosed by teachers using their linguistic knowledge; their treatment is, however, a teaching issue. (See the chapter by Murray for a discussion of language awareness and error detection.)[2]

The development of this domain of language awareness is likely to include the following:

a. tasks which enable the trainee to examine learner language;
b. exposure of teachers to classroom talk data (see the chapters by Pennington and Cullen). This type of awareness-raising could also be a way of creating classroom action research opportunities for language teachers, using linguistic data — active 'doing' work on data, raising awareness and stimulating growth in pedagogic knowledge;
c. examination of teaching materials to see how linguistic content is handled — the authenticity and range of the data samples, for example;
d. 'language improvement' work which works from authentic samples of language use, coupled with awareness-raising tasks.

Activities:

The sequences of questions in Sets A-D above all contain ways of connecting the 'doing' work with language to teaching issues. The sequences are organised to take participants from consideration of language to classroom teaching. I have argued that this link is not always made in LTE courses. A Language Awareness approach to LTE takes it as axiomatic that links between language awareness and knowledge and the classroom will be made. Set E is a series of questions which invite an immediate discussion of the relevance of Mrs Tsuchida's story for classroom activity. With an in-service teachers' group, this may in fact be a starting point. It would not be entirely suitable for new initial trainees.

Set E

1. How would you set about trying to help Mrs. Tsuchida improve her English?
2. How would you help British Rail and the Police address some of the language issues raised by the story? What sorts of language instruction would you recommend for them?
3. What, for you, are the most significant language-related issues raised by the text? What knowledge and skills do you need to deal with these in a classroom setting?

Language awareness as methodology

A cycle for doing language awareness

The sample activities for doing language awareness (Sets A-E) are based on principles of active learning (McGill and Beaty 1993; Weinstein 1995) or experiential learning (Dennison and Kirk 1990) which draw on Kolb's earlier work on learning (1971). In this section I shall discuss the main stages of language awareness activities designed to connect the user and the analytical domains to the teacher domain, following the process as it might unfold in a training session. Figure 1 shows how the phases of learning activity relate to the sample activities (A-E).

LA Activities / **Stages**	*Set A*	*Set B*	*Set C*	*Set D*	*Set E*
Stage 1 'DOING'	Activities 1-2	Activities 1-3	Activities 1-3	Activities 1-3	
Stage 2 REVIEWING	All activities would include a reviewing stage where participants' feelings and responses to the processes, and their initial insights are sought — organised in small groups and plenary.				
Stage 3 MAKING SENSE	Activity 3 (Plus tutor input or reading on errors)	Tutor input or reading on attitudes to L2 speakers or 'foreigner talk'	Tutor input following participants' explorations	Activity 4	
Stage 4 LINKING	Activities 4 & 5	Activities 3 & 4	Activity 4	Activity 5	Activities 1 & 2
Stage 5 TO THE CLASSROOM	Activity 6	Activity 5	Activity 5	Activity 6	Activity 3

Figure 1. LA Activities and stages in learning

Stage 1. Working on language data

A cycle of language awareness activity usually begins with work on language data, or on a language teaching issue which involves language, such as dealing with errors in L2 use. In a language awareness session, participants draw on their experience and knowledge as user, analyst and teacher to engage with the issues in two ways:

– exploring their previous experience, attitudes or concepts;
– working with linguistic data.

The activities involve participants working in different modes — individual, pair, group and plenary — in a shared training room experience which encourages them to discuss their perceptions, insights and opinions with each other.

Stage 2. Looking back – reviewing
The second step is to invite participants to think actively about the processes they have just experienced in stage 1. At this stage feelings about the activity can be explored — often a language awareness activity will challenge existing concepts about a language item and there needs to be an acknowledgement of the potential destabilising effects of new insights or disturbed ideas (Borg 1994; Pohl 1994). The process cannot continue until these have been talked through. In addition, initial insights on the data are shared, but not finalised. This is essentially a reviewing or 'reflective' stage.

Stages 1 and 2 together comprise the awareness-raising process. It is this combination of activities that can open the way for participants to gain new insights into the language system, to see, for example, new patterns of use, or to revise existing ideas in the light of new data and insights. The process is often dynamic and exciting — a shift of perception is often the outcome of a successful awareness-raising activity.

Stage 3. Making sense
The next stage involves 'making sense' out of the initial insights derived from the work on the linguistic data. The aim is to formulate rules about the language which can be of practical value for classroom work. This stage requires further activities — working with, for example, dictionaries and reference grammars — to explore the initial insights generated in the awareness-raising tasks, refine categories, test hypotheses and so on. The trainer has a key role at this stage in providing additional insights, asking questions to encourage participants to think about the issues, pointing them to useful reference material. As in stages 1 and 2, participants are organised into groups to facilitate talk; by articulating their emerging ideas, they are able to develop and refine them, drawing on feedback from their colleagues. Typical outcomes of collective work at this stage would resemble the sort of material which appears in the 'commentaries' of widely-used language awareness materials such as *Discover English* (Bolitho and Tomlinson 1995) and *About Language* (Thornbury 1997).

Stage 4. Linking

The next stage, that of transfer of new or refined linguistic knowledge to the classroom domain, is often a problematic one for both trainers and trainees (see also Ferguson in this volume). A further shift is required, from thinking about language to thinking about the practical side of working with language for teaching purposes. In LTE courses where language and methodological studies are conducted separately, this stage and Stage 5 are missing. There appears to be an assumption in these courses that the connection between language knowledge and classroom activity will somehow take care of itself. I would argue, however, that the linking step is vital, and that language awareness activities are the way to bring this about. Examining existing teaching materials to see how the language points covered in stages 1 to 3 are handled is one way in which this can be done. The process shifts participants towards classroom realities.

Stage 5. To the classroom

The final stage in the process before moving on to a classroom situation (in training this may be a peer or micro-teaching activity) is to plan learning activities which reflect the new insights gained through the language awareness activities. When adapting and developing existing classroom activities or even devising new ones, linguistic knowledge is given pedagogic relevance. The process is now complete, at least until the class has been taught: perhaps new linguistic data is the outcome; perhaps the teacher will have to return to the grammar books for further work.

Towards principles

This process depends on a number of principles, which can be summarised as follows (based on Wright and Bolitho 1993):

– *LA work needs data.* This may be language data, data on teaching problems, samples of teaching materials, etc. Participants need to work on authentic data as far as possible, although appropriate activities specially written to raise awareness of discrete points, such as those devised by Bolitho and Tomlinson (1995), are also helpful.
– *LA work needs talk.* Promote talk between participants to aid processing of ideas and exploration. Articulating initial and more refined perceptions about linguistic data with colleagues is a means of enabling real learning to take place (Argyris and Schon 1974).

- *Integrate participants' responses (intellectual, emotional) to LA issues.* Stage 2 of the training procedure is critical as it acknowledges the importance of both emotional as well as intuitive and analytical responses to the data.
- *Provide time.* Rushing participants through a sequence of activities in order to 'cover a syllabus' is no substitute for in-depth development of thinking and conceptualising skills.
- *Build on participants' initial responses.* The early insights gained at stages 1 and 2 of the process need to be refined by a series of thinking and conceptualising tasks in Stage 3 designed to move participants towards the framing of rules.
- *Give help with rules and metalanguage.* Do this through questions which connect participants' discoveries with their existing knowledge. Questions such as 'What would you now say (as a result of these tasks) to a group of students about *item x*?' help participants to look back on previous knowledge and to begin to think about how to use this knowledge.
- *Be ready with 'expert' input.* This may be needed to enable participants to make sense of their data. Trainers should have worked-out responses to LA tasks they set. They should also be in a position to contribute their insights at the appropriate point in the process, when participants' responses are strong enough to disagree with the trainer if necessary.
- *Look for a payoff in terms of classroom practice.* This may be achieved either directly or indirectly, by using activities which enable participants to focus on classroom and teaching/learning issues. Creating a shift from new knowledge to classroom reality is the vital stage in the LA learning cycle. Any questions which require participants to look, in concrete terms, at teaching issues must be featured after the conceptualising stage. Here lies the greatest challenge. Materials published so far (e.g. Bolitho and Tomlinson (1995) and Thornbury (1997)) have not always successfully made the needed links (cf. Ferguson, this volume).

Concluding remarks

Language awareness activities aim to initiate and develop in trainees and teachers a spirit of inquiry: an enthusiasm for and abiding interest in both the target language and language in general. This attitude of curiosity and openness is one which both teachers and teacher trainers can model for their students. There should not, therefore, be an over-dependence on 'expert' sources.

Doing language awareness is a way of becoming reflective about language. As we have seen, however, it is more than simply awareness raising; it is a process that aims to create and develop links between linguistic knowledge and classroom activity, closing the content/methodology gap and establishing relevance for language study in LTE.

Notes

1. To date, there has been little movement towards bringing the learner into language study in LTE (cf. Brumfit's second two points).

2. Teachers' need for professional language skills goes beyond the classroom. Wright and Bolitho (1997) explore the notion of the language teachers need for professional purposes, including reading and attendance at conferences. Such an expanded view of language study and development for language teaching professionals would entail a blending in teacher education of all three domains, strengthening the argument for an integration of analytical and methodological study on training courses.

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Language awareness in the preparation of teachers of English for specific purposes

Gibson Ferguson

Despite continuing debate over the place of explicit grammar teaching in language learning, there is a considerable measure of agreement over the pedagogic and affective value of language awareness components in language teacher education curricula. Pedagogically, explicit knowledge about language (KAL) is said to help teachers introduce new language more effectively, give more cogent explanations, field learners' enquiries more confidently, and adapt materials that have descriptive shortcomings. Affectively, it is said to give teachers greater self-confidence and professional self-respect. One might add that in any other subject area it would be regarded as deplorable for teachers not to have a well-developed understanding of, or intellectual curiosity about, the object of their teaching.

Of course, these justifications are hardly new. The point of re-stating them here is to suggest that they not only apply to general language teaching but equally, and perhaps more strongly, to a branch of language teacher education where, as far as I am aware, language awareness has as yet been relatively little discussed, namely English for Specific Purposes.

One reason for regarding language awareness as particularly important in ESP teacher training is that the language content of ESP courses usually differs from that presented on general language courses. This does not mean that ESP teachers teach a distinct kind of English; it simply acknowledges that those learning English for business, medical, legal, academic and other specific purposes wish to improve their proficiency in particular kinds of discourse in English, and that it is natural, therefore, that the language content of their courses reflects the particular linguistic features of these discourses.

In the rest of this chapter, then, the issue of justification is put aside and attention focused on how language awareness in an ESP teacher education context might be construed and what content it might be given. An answer to these questions will involve some further consideration of (i) the nature of the

language variation at the core of ESP teaching and (ii) the skills and knowledge that teachers bring with them when they enter an ESP teacher education course. Let us consider the latter first.

Language knowledge and the background of the ESP trainee-teacher

The profile of the ESP teacher trainee tends, in the context with which I am most familiar, to be somewhat different from that of the general language teacher trainee in that their career trajectory typically brings them into ESP work with several years experience of teaching general English, and, especially if they are non-natives from the ESP growth areas of eastern and southern Europe, a university degree in English literature, philology, or English linguistics. Consequently, many already possess a fairly well-developed explicit knowledge of English grammar, and their years spent teaching tenses, articles, relative clauses and the like on general courses have usually equipped them with the ability to explain some of their intricacies to learners.

Where they are less secure, however, is in their understanding of the nature of language variation by use,[1] especially in the following areas:

a. First, though ESP teacher trainees may have heard of such terms as 'register' and 'genre', they are frequently uncertain of what they precisely denote, of how they relate to the lexico-grammatical system, and of their relevance to language teaching.
   Again, though they may be aware that certain constructions occur with greater frequency in written academic or scientific English, they tend to be unsure of the details of this skewing. For example, they sometimes assert a common mistaken view that the passive is a prototypical feature of scientific or academic English with higher frequency of occurrence than the active.[2] And, conversely, they neglect to mention a far more truly prototypical feature, namely its highly nominal style.
b. Second, although ESP trainees are familiar with form-function relationships in 'general English',[3] they are sometimes less aware of the different functions forms may assume in an academic or scientific context.[4] To take a simple example, the past tense which signals past time in a narrative may in an expository text such as a literature review be used to signal psychological distancing from the viewpoint under discussion.
c. Third, and perhaps most significantly given the importance of the discourse dimension in ESP, most trainees seem unfamiliar with a view of

> language as discourse and with an orientation which sees the lexico-grammatical system as a resource offering choices for the expression of particular meanings and for constructing texts.[5]

These lacunae in the knowledge base of the typical ESP teacher trainee have, of course, only been identified on the basis of personal experience of trainees in a particular setting, and it might be that a more formal and geographically extensive audit of ESP trainee teachers would paint a different picture. However, we presently lack this information, and in its absence the profile above at least has the merit of suggesting a possible content and orientation for language awareness work in ESP teacher education. It does so only in very general terms, however; so to fill out the missing detail we need to examine more carefully from a theoretical standpoint which aspects of language variation are a suitable focus for language awareness work in ESP teacher education.

Language variation and the design of language awareness activities in ESP teacher education

The kind of variation most relevant to ESP practitioners — variation by use as opposed to variation by user (e.g. social dialects), with which we are not concerned here — is complex, multifaceted and not easily encompassed in any single teacher education course. On the one hand, there are the differences between the different discourses found in business, law, medicine, molecular biology, and the many other disciplines. On the other, there are broader brush differences between what may be viewed in aggregate as scientific or academic English and what is sometimes referred to as everyday English, itself an entity of uncertain status positioned somewhere between actuality and convenient fiction. Cutting across both these dimensions there is the perhaps more fundamental contrast between spoken and written language. And, finally, much of this variation is manifested at the different levels of lexis, grammar and discourse.

As these latter categories commonly feature in the thinking of ESP course designers and materials writers, they are perhaps a convenient starting point for investigating options for language awareness work in ESP.

An initial point of some importance here is that these categories should not be presumed to have equal status. It is preferable, as McCarthy (1994: 69) suggests, to see lexis and grammar working in the service of the discourse-creating process.

> …….learning another language is ……an engagement with the process of creating discourse using the formal resources of the language. Thus, the discourse headings in a syllabus are seen now not as separate from things such as grammar and lexis but as ever-present concerns, in which grammar, lexis and phonology play the realising role.

We may, therefore, conceive the language awareness component in ESP teacher education as directing the attention of teachers to the process of discourse-creation and to the contribution of lexis and grammar to that process. This is not to say that lexis and grammar are ignored but rather that trainees are encouraged to see them in a different light as resources for creating the particular professional discourses of interest to ESP.

At this juncture it is worth recalling a related concept which in recent years has become central to much ESP research and practice: genre (see Dudley-Evans and St John 1998). Genre is important in ESP for several reasons. First, much of the communicative behaviour of different professions is organised through genres whose conventionality is a useful, economising device in that it liberates the busy writer or speaker from pondering each time anew how to organise a particular kind of message. At the same time the expert user, as opposed to the neophyte, may manipulate these conventions to achieve their particular rhetorical goals.

Second, recent work in discourse analysis (McCarthy and Carter 1994, Bhatia 1993) has indicated that there are powerful links between higher order features of text structure and lower level lexico-grammatical choices. In other words, grammatical and lexical choices are constrained by how the discourse is staged at a macro level, which, in turn, is influenced by the communicative goals of the genre[6]. An example (Bhatia 1993) is legislative writing in English, where the high frequency of nominalisation produces noun phrases that offer syntactic slots for the qualifications necessary to make the writing explicit, encompassing and unambiguous. Similarly, choices of tense and aspect in the research article are conditioned by the rhetorical purposes of the different sections (Swales 1990).

The point here, then, is that the study of genre can illuminate better the motivation for particular lexico-grammatical choices, and hence can offer a path to an improved understanding of the distinctive language of particular professions.

A third and perhaps more practical reason for regarding genre as an important concept in ESP is that students enrolling on an ESP course often express their needs in terms of genre. They seek not so much an improvement

in their global language proficiency but, given the limited duration of most ESP courses, greater proficiency in producing or understanding particular genres such as business letters or reports, research articles, academic essays, conference presentations, etc. Sometimes, these purposes are reflected in the titles given to ESP courses: for example, English for Report Writing, English for Medical Congresses, Writing Examination Answers, and so on. Thus, given this salience of genre in students' perception of their needs, it seems appropriate for an ESP teacher education course to seek to equip trainees with some skills in genre analysis.

So far the discussion has emphasised the desirability of encouraging prospective ESP teachers to view lexis and grammar as resources for creating specific kinds of discourse. This does not mean, however, that there is never any occasion on which it is useful to focus attention on any one of the linguistic levels in its own right. A case in point is lexis where differences between occupational varieties of English are most obviously, and perhaps most superficially, manifest. Indeed, so salient are the differences in the specialist vocabulary of law, medicine, engineering, business and so on that it is easy for the novice to exaggerate their importance for ESP teaching. One useful function for an ESP teacher education course, therefore, may be to disabuse the trainee of the notion that teaching technical terminology is an important part of their task. It is not — because (i) such terminology is often learnt as part of the subject rather than in the English lesson, (ii) the technical terms are often internationally intelligible, and (iii) technical vocabulary usually has a more determinate sense than 'general' vocabulary and is hence easier to learn. The well-established distinction between general, semi-technical and technical vocabulary can, with all its difficulties, be a useful starting point for exploring with trainees the learning-teaching problems posed by technical vocabulary on the hand and 'general' vocabulary on the other.

The discussion has now reached a point at which a set of possible aims for language awareness in ESP teacher education may be discerned. This can be summarised as follows:

A language awareness component should endeavour to:

i. encourage the trainee to see lexis and grammar as resources for creating discourse, in particular the types of discourse relevant to ESP practitioners. In terms of methodology, this implies the study of authentic texts in language awareness work;
ii. develop an awareness of genre as a conventionalised way of accomplishing

communicative goals in the world of work and the professions, and an appreciation of how these goals may shape the structure of the genre and influence lexico-grammatical choices;

iii. develop skills in genre analysis and an understanding of how genre may be applied to teaching. Trainees should, however, be led to understand that genres should not be presented to learners as if they were rigid, prescriptive templates for constructing text;

iv. develop an awareness of distinctive features of academic or specialist writing, such as its nominal style, and the implications these have for teaching and materials writing. Specialised vocabulary is included here.

All that said, the list above remains sketchy and says little about the process of developing language awareness. Since process and content are not easy to distinguish in language teacher education, this is an omission which needs to be rectified shortly. First, however, we need to consider two specific problems in the management of the language awareness component in ESP teacher education.

Two problems in designing language awareness activities in ESP teacher education

The two problems have to do with (i) the heterogeneity of orientation of trainees who may teach very different professional groups, and (ii) the subject knowledge gap between the ESP teacher and the learner. Let us consider these in turn.

Choice of curricular content — in this case language awareness — is never easy but it is particularly problematic in language awareness for ESP when we are dealing with trainees who may be working with different professional groups: if we have one trainee involved with medical English, another with business English and a third with civil engineering, how can we reach a principled decision on which genres or discourses to focus on?

One possibility is to run a course for teachers working with a single professional group. Quite often, however, this is difficult to arrange for practical financial reasons such as a low course enrolment; it may also be impractical for those seeking career flexibility, and finally it may even be undesirable in unduly stressing specificity over commonality.

The second problem — that of subject knowledge — creates, in turn, a methodological problem peculiar to ESP, which is that the common 'loop'

technique (see Woodward 1991) of inviting trainees to experience and reflect on materials or teaching activities as they might be employed with actual learners is precluded by their lack of the subject knowledge possessed by these learners. This, naturally enough, makes their response to the material utterly different from real learners and consequently an inadequate basis for reflection.

To this heterogeneity of background on the one hand and relative inability to see activities from the standpoint of the learner on the other, there is a possible twofold response: first, to emphasise the development of transferable skills of language analysis rather than the provision of information about any particular genre, and second to work for the development of these skills with genres that are familiar to the trainees themselves rather than their learners.

This latter solution, however, seems to presuppose transfer of learning — transfer from the teacher education course to the teacher's classroom practice, and as this is not, as Freeman (1994) suggests, an unproblematic concept, it seems to merit some discussion here (see also Wright in this volume).

From language awareness to classroom practice: the question of transfer

The question of how language awareness on a teacher education course relates to change in classroom practice is problematic enough for teachers of 'general English'. With prospective teachers of ESP it is more difficult still — especially given the recommendation above that a focus on genres familiar to the trainee rather than the eventual learner may be the best way of proceeding initially.

On the one hand, it may seem heroically optimistic to assume that the analysis of one type of discourse in a teacher's course will develop skills in analysing, let alone teaching, the different genres employed in a different profession. On the other, it is possible to argue, that all education, but particularly teacher education, is predicated on a belief in transfer — that what is learnt in one setting is capable of being applied in another.

Resolution of these tensions is certainly difficult, but in response to this question of what language awareness on a training course can realistically accomplish, what impact it may have on subsequent practice,we will consider three points: (i) the theoretical question of what kind of activity we consider teaching to be, (ii) the question of how teachers come to change their classroom practice, and (iii) the more practical issue of the context of the teacher education course. Adducing reasons from these sources, the conclusion is that we need to be circumspect and modest about what language awareness (LA)

can achieve in terms of changed classroom practice. Let us first consider the nature of teaching.

Freeman (1994) argues fairly persuasively against the assumption of transfer in language teacher education mainly on the grounds that teaching is much more than putting knowledge in the shape of pedagogical theory or language awareness into action in class. It is, he suggests, more fundamentally interpretative in that teaching, being highly context-bound, involves knowing-in-action rather than the application of knowledge to action.

Acknowledging the plausibility of Freeman's argument need not, however, invalidate the kind of oblique LA activity suggested above. It means, rather, that we need to recognise that LA activity does not lead directly to change in classroom practice. By getting the trainee to see the language of ESP from a different perspective we put in place but one of the many conditions necessary for change to occur. Language awareness is, in short, a necessary but far from sufficient condition for change in trainees' classroom practice.

This point is, if anything, strengthened when we consider what is known about the process of educational change. The literature (see for example Ferguson 1993, Fullan 1982, Hurst 1983) suggests that awareness of alternatives is but one pre-condition of change and that its actual implementation depends on the following conditions — among others:

i. because change in teaching requires nothing less than a kind of resocialisation (Fullan 1982), training and support must not only occur prior to but also during the implementation process;
ii. training for change is more effective the closer it takes place to the actual site of implementation — i.e. the school itself;
iii. training for change is more effective to the extent that it targets not merely the individual teacher but the group or department within which the individual teacher is socially located;
iv. training for change is more effective to the extent that it allows experimentation with, and adaptation of, the innovative idea in its context of proposed use.

As many of the ESP teacher courses I teach do not — inevitably — meet these conditions, it seems advisable to exercise caution regarding the eventual impact of LA work on classroom.

A third consideration here is the context of the teacher education course. Lavender (in this volume) has proposed a very useful framework for thinking about how the context of training potentially affects the conduct and subse-

quent impact of the course. An adaptation of her framework is presented below:

1. Training course in trainees' setting. Trainees come from a homogenous range of institutions	2. Training course in trainees' setting (i.e. country or institution) Trainees come from a heterogeneous range of institutions
3. Training course in **trainer's** setting (e.g. UK). Trainees come from homogenous range of institutions (and possibly from same country).	4. Training course in **trainer's** setting (e.g. UK) Trainees come from heterogeneous range of institutions (and possibly from different countries)

Figure 1. Contexts of teacher education: A framework

The relevance of this framework here is that as one moves from cell 1 to cell 4 there is progressively less scope for establishing a direct, explicit link between language awareness on the teacher education course and the trainee's own classroom. To put it another way, as the distance between training course and trainee context of work increases so the trainee has to work harder to interpret the implications of language awareness on the teachers' course for her own classroom practice.

The conclusion, then, as before, is that language awareness is a necessary but not sufficient condition for change. Its immediate aim is to increase trainees' knowledge about language rather than change their behaviour in class, and to expect more of it may be to misconceive the nature of the innovation process in teaching.

That said, the expectations of trainees and the responsibilities of trainers do not permit total neglect of the implications of language awareness activity for classroom teaching. Trainees can, and probably should, be encouraged to reflect on implications for their own teaching, and one way of promoting this is to seed LA activities with intimations of how they might be translated into activities for learners. To see, finally, how these might be incorporated into language awareness, we need to turn to a consideration of process.

The process of language awareness in ESP teacher education: An example

The final part of this chapter describes one of the language awareness activities employed on a short ESP teacher education course attended by teachers of diverse nationality working with different occupational groups. The descrip-

tion is intended to illustrate the application of some of the principles discussed above.

The aim of the activity described below is to introduce participants to the principles of genre analysis and to the idea that communicative purposes or goals motivate particular lexico-grammatical choices. The genre chosen for study is the journal abstract because (i) the texts are conveniently short — hence manageable in class discussion, and (ii) the genre is usually familiar to participants. In keeping with the principles mentioned earlier, the subject-matter of the abstracts — in this case applied linguistics — is also familiar for the trainees.

The activity proceeds as follows:

Step 1: Participants are asked to (i) to think about, and distinguish, the purposes of different kinds of abstract (e.g. journal abstract, conference abstract, abstracting journal abstract), and (ii) to think further about the purposes of the journal abstract in particular.

Step 2: Drawing on their own experience and the preceding discussion, participants are next asked to think about the elements of information that a typical abstract might contain, and the characteristic sequencing of that information. Subsequent elicitation usually establishes a list similar to the schema suggested in Weissberg and Buker's (1990) textbook, viz.: *Background Purpose Methods Results Conclusion.*[7]

Stage 3: Next, three applied linguistics abstracts are distributed (see the abstracts in Appendix 1) and participants are asked to consider (i) how they differ from each other in terms of structure, and (ii) the extent to which they conform to the Buker/Weissberg scheme.

Participants find that they both differ from each other and from the recommended scheme, and this leads to the useful conclusion that within a genre there is scope for individual variation and that undue prescriptivism in teaching should be avoided.

Step 4: At this stage, attention is focused on the lexis and grammar of the abstracts. Participants are reminded that abstracts have to be concise, and that they are usually impersonal and formal in tone. They are then asked to study the abstracts for grammatical or lexical features that contribute to conciseness and impersonality.

With some guidance, participants usually come up with the following:

a) Features contributing to conciseness/economy:

Feature	Example	Comment
appositive constructions	e.g. 'This paper reports a study of the implementation of the Bangalore Project, *an attempt at methodological innovation…*' (abstract 1, line 2)	non-restrictive, adds information economically
'reduced' relative clauses	many examples: *e.g. 'accounts of their experiences written by the Bangalore teachers'* (abstract 1, line 2)	
nominalisations, noun compounds and complex noun phrases	many examples: • *learners' accuracy in question formation* (abstract 2, line 2) • *3 experimental classes of beginner level francophone ESL classes* (abstract 2, line 3)	Nominalisation collapses clauses into noun phrases; it also allows deletion of participants making the message shorter, more abstract and more formal. Highly nominal style compresses propositional information.

b) Features contributing to impersonal style

Feature	Example	Comment
passives	many examples: *e.g. learners ….were exposed to* (abstract 2, line 4)	agent deletion
'inanimate subject + active verb' construction	many examples: *This paper reports that ……* *Results show……..* *The results indicate that*	achieves deletion of human agent without recourse to passivisation
anticipatory 'it' construction with passive	*It is found that* *It is argued that* (abstract 1, line 4)	again, achieves deletion of human agent
nominalisations and complex noun phrases: a nominal style	*e.g. This paper reports a study of the implementation of the Bangalore project, an attempt at methodological innovation* (abstract 1, line 1)	achieves deletion of participants and compression of information

Elicitation and discussion of these features is followed by a number of further activities. For example:

i. participants may be asked to focus on the co-occurrence of lexical and grammatical features with any of the informational elements of the abstract (*background, purpose, methods, results, conclusion*) and report whether there are typical lexico-grammatical realisations of those elements
ii. participants' attention may be drawn to the stereotypical vocabulary of abstracts (e.g. such lexical verbs as *investigate, find, argue, show, indicate, report*), and to grammatical features not previously mentioned, viz.: the high frequency of epistemic modal operators in the conclusions of abstracts, pseudo cleft constructions for contrastive emphasis (e.g. *What has been missing is…*), thematic re-ordering devices for highlighting items of particular interests (e.g. *Of particular interest is ……*).

Step 5: Discussion now switches to teaching; in particular, to ways of teaching learners to write abstracts, and ways of teaching genres in general. Reflection on the preceding activity generates the following proposed teaching sequence, which, of course, takes account of the fact that most ESP learners are well-educated professional adults:

i. Ask learners to think about the communicative behaviour surrounding the genre, the setting, and the purposes of the genre.
ii. Elicit probable content and how the content elements might be sequenced.
iii. Distribute authentic examples of the genre for learners to check their predictions of content and sequence. Draw attention to lexico-grammatical features.
iv. Introduce activities to raise learners' awareness of the typical content and organisation of the genre (examples of such activities are restoring scrambled sentences or elements to their original sequence; labelling different stages in the sequencing of the text).
v. Part Practice: This involves focusing on particular elements (or 'moves') and asking learners to practice writing them.
vi. Whole Practice: At this stage learners are asked to produce a whole text rather than elements (e.g. background, purpose or methods) in isolation. Preferably, the text will be one the learners need to produce in their actual working lives.

Step 6: To conclude this cycle of language awareness work, a final optional activity involves distributing abstracts from disciplinary areas that participants

work with in their ESP teaching. They are then invited to attempt an analysis similar to that they have recently carried out with the more familiar applied linguistics abstracts. An example of such an abstract is in Appendix 2. Participants subsequently report back their conclusions.

It seems useful, finally, to highlight a few features of the above activity that may have a wider application to language awareness work in ESP teacher education. These are:

i. the use of authentic text. Participants can only get a sense of how lexis and grammar function as resources for the creation of specific kinds of discourse if they become accustomed to analysing authentic texts that permit exploration of the motivations for particular lexico-grammatical choices (step 4).
ii. the close link made between language awareness and the teaching of writing (step 5). In ESP work explicit knowledge about language is perhaps most directly utilised in the teaching of writing. For example, the teacher's knowledge may be drawn on to explain why a particular stretch of text, though well-formed grammatically, reads strangely, or why a particular lexical or grammatical choice obstructs the reader's comprehension. The general point is that in ESP language awareness, genre and writing are closely bound.
iii. the use of a mainly inductive, activity-based methodology where participants study texts and report their conclusions. An inductive methodology is generally agreed by most teacher educators (e.g. Wright and Bolitho 1993) to provide the best preparation for autonomous investigation of language. It also helps make the class more interactive and interesting. That said, it also seems important not to eschew direct input altogether; some participants expect it, and on a short course with time at a premium it is unrealistic to make everything inductive.
iv. the progression from subject matter familiar to participants (e.g. applied linguistics abstracts) to subject matter relatively unfamiliar to participants but relevant to the learners they will eventually work with (e.g. molecular biology abstracts). The analysis of genres dealing with familiar subject matter allows participants an opportunity to develop confidence in their ability to think about language in discourse terms and to analyse genre before they meet texts with a more forbiddingly unfamiliar subject matter.

Conclusion

This chapter has combined reflections on the place, aims and content of language awareness in ESP teacher education with an example of an awareness activity used on a short teacher education course. The main thrust of the first part of the chapter has been to argue that given the educated, though traditional, view of grammar and lexis of most trainees, it seems appropriate to introduce them to a perspective which gives priority to discourse and to the contribution of lexis and grammar in making discourse. Though this approach is not new in applied linguistics (see McCarthy and Carter 1994), it is novel for most trainees and fulfils one of the purposes of teacher education, which is to encourage what Freeman (1992: 2) calls 'cognitive reorganisation'.

A further reason for adopting this approach is that the language variation lying at the heart of ESP is perhaps best understood in terms of discourse. That is, the differences between the language used in law, business, medicine, engineering, and between these professions and 'general English' is better conceptualised as variation in discourse and genre rather than in terms of discrete categories such as lexis and grammar. After all, it is genre, with its links to professional purpose, that conditions the choice of grammar and lexis. Moreover, genre is a concept that speaks directly to many ESP learners' conception of the purpose of their learning.

The activity described in the latter part of the chapter illustrates an attempt to modify participants' perception of language in the direction indicated above; in this particular case to see how certain lexico-grammatical resources function to create conciseness and an impersonal tone — qualities which are not, of course, unique to applied linguistics abstracts.

There are two final points: first the description of the activity above is intended to provoke reflection rather than provide a model for imitation. Clearly, there are numerous ways of pursuing similar objectives. Second, it should not be thought that the above is the sum total of language awareness activity on the course in question. Other sessions focus, for example, on motives for nominalisation in specialist prose, on the functions of tense and passive constructions in scientific texts, on specialised lexis and its implications for teaching, on hedging, politeness and the interpersonal as opposed to ideational dimension of academic or professional texts.

Space, however, precludes further discussion of these. All that one can add here is that though they differ in their focus, they deal with issues of language analysis relevant to a range of professional/occupational discourses. They also

share a similar general aim — to encourage a reshaping of the way teachers think about language in ESP. On the whole, this aim seems to be achieved on most occasions. The eventual impact on classroom teaching is far more difficult to judge.

Notes

1. There are, of course, other kinds of language variation — e.g. social and geographical dialect variation, variation by gender and age etc. However, as these kinds of variation are not central to the concerns of the ESP teacher, they are not discussed in this chapter.

2. In fact, the passive is more frequent only in a limited number of specific types of text such as descriptions of processes, or methods sections of journal articles.

3. 'General English' is, of course, a convenient abstraction or construct — a way of talking about a more complex phenomenon.

4. Form-function correlations in scientific and professional writing have been a popular field of investigation for ESP researchers. The findings are now a useful resource for materials writers.

5. They tend to subscribe to a discrete item view of grammar — what Batstone (1994) calls a product approach.

6. As Swales (1990) and Martin (1985) have pointed out, genres are 'goal-oriented social processes'. Their communicative purpose shapes their macro-structure or staging.

7. It is worth making two points here: (i) Weissberg and Buker's scheme is primarily intended for abstracts of articles reporting experimental-type research, and (ii) there is work (e.g. by Anderson and Maclean 1997) showing that for some disciplines such as medicine the scheme is a considerable oversimplification. That said, it does seem to be a pedagogically useful first approximation.

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Appendix 1: Three applied linguistics abstracts

Abstract 1

Implementation of the Bangalore Project
Alan Beretta
Michigan State University

This paper reports a study of the implementation of the Bangalore Project, an attempt at methodological innovation based on unconscious learning strategies. The data are detailed accounts of their experiences written by the Bangalore teachers. The accounts are analysed and rated according to defined Levels of Implementation (L1s). It is found that 'regular' teachers failed to come to terms with the demands of the project, but that a sense of 'ownership' of the project promoted a commitment to classroom behaviour that was perceived to be consonant with the project's principles. It is argued that this has implications for those interested in pedagogic innovation, in terms of the degree of

conformity that is desirable or feasible and the conditions that may be necessary for the introduction of fluency-based approaches. A major purpose of the paper is also to alert evaluators of educational innovations to the critical issue of monitoring implementation

Applied Linguistics 11/4 1990

Abstract 2

Input Enhancement and L2 Question Formation
Lydia White, Nina Spada
McGill University
Patsy Lightbown, Leila Ranta
Concordia University

In this study, we **investigate** the extent to which form-focused instruction and corrective feedback (i.e. 'input enhancement), provided within a primarily communicative program, contribute to learners' accuracy in question formation. Over a two-week period, three experimental classes of beginner level francophone ESL learners (aged 10–12 years) were exposed to a variety of input enhancement activities on question formation. Their performance on paper-and-pencil tasks and an oral communication task was assessed on a pre-post test basis and compared with an uninstructed control group. The results indicate that instruction contributed to syntactic accuracy and that learners who were exposed to the input enhancement activities significantly out-performed the uninstructed learners. These results are interpreted as evidence that input enhancement can bring about genuine changes in learners' interlanguage systems.

Applied Linguistics 12/4 1991

Abstract 3

Second Language Reading: Reading Ability or Language Proficiency?
Patricia Carrell
University of Akron

The extent to which reading in a second language is a function of the transfer of first language reading abilities or of language proficiency in the second language has been a matter of debate for some time (Clarke 1979, 1980; Alderson

1984). Although studies of this question have been carried out, a major problem in the design of these studies has been their failure to gather sufficient information. What has been missing is sufficient information on reading ability in the first language, reading ability in the foreign or second language, and information about the foreign or second language proficiency of the same individuals (Alderson 198421).

The study reported in this article investigated the first and second language reading comprehension of adult native speakers of Spanish and English who were foreign or second language learners of the other language at different proficiency levels. Results, reported in terms of second language reading as a function of first language reading ability, and second language proficiency, show both to be statistically significant factors. Of particular interest is the difference in the relative importance of each factor for each group of readers.

Applied Linguistics 12/4 1991

Appendix 2: A molecular biology abstract

Vascular Endothelial Cells Synthesize Nitric Oxide from L-Arginine

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Nitric oxide (NO) released by vascular endothelial cells accounts for the relaxation of strips of vascular tissue and for the inhibition of platelet aggregation and platelet adhesion attributed to endothelium-derived relaxing factor. We now demonstrate that NO can be synthesized from L-argenine by porcine aortic endothelial cells in culture. Nitric oxide was detected by bioassay, chemiluminesence or by mass spectrometry. Release of NO from the endothelial cells induced by bradykinin and the calcium ionophore A23187 was reversibly enhanced by infusions of L-arginine and L-citrulline, but not D-arginine or other close structural analogues. Mass spectrometry studies using N-labelled L-arginine indicated that this enhancement was due to the formation of NO from the terminal guanidino nitrogen atom(s) of l-arginine. The strict sub-strate specificity of this reaction suggests that L-arginine is the precursor for NO synthesis in vascular endothelial cells.

Nature Vol. 333; No 6174, 16th June 1988

Examining classroom discourse frames

An approach to raising language teachers' awareness of and planning for language use

Martha C. Pennington

Introduction

Over the last two decades, the study of classroom discourse has been incorporated increasingly into language teacher education. By the end of the 1980s, a research base of classroom studies had been established in second and foreign language acquisition (for review, see Chaudron 1988) and was having a major impact on language teacher education practices (for excellent examples, see the papers in Richards and Nunan 1990). In the 1990s, the research base was expanded considerably, by more and more classroom discourse studies (for review, see Johnson 1995) and in particular by studies of teachers learning to teach second languages (e.g. Freeman and Richards 1996). During this period, language teacher education came to be seen as a matter of helping teachers to develop the skills needed for lifelong learning and reflective practice (e.g. Nunan and Lamb 1995; Richards and Lockhart 1994) to continually build their knowledge and professional expertise (e.g. Johnson 1999; Woods 1996). Among the skills needed by a new generation of 'teacher-researchers' are those for the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data from their own and their students' real contexts of use (McCarthy 1991; Nunan 1993).

The attempt to move away from de-contextualised prescriptions and towards more data-based and inquiry-centred approaches to language teacher education parallels the increasing reliance of all branches of linguistics on an 'experiential' base gained from corpus studies, discourse analysis, and field work on a variety of languages (Pennington, forthcoming a). With the goal of increasing teachers' awareness of classroom language use, in the decades of the 1980s and 1990s, language teacher education has started to make significant use of classroom discourse data in the form of audio and video recordings as

well as lesson transcripts. While discourse data derived from real contexts of use, including second classrooms, offers a valuable starting point for reflective practice (see also Cullen, this volume), such data is not in and of itself a curriculum for teacher education. In order to be most effective in increasing teachers' understanding of classroom dynamics, such data must be incorporated into a structured sequence of activities designed to enhance teachers' professional skills and awareness. This chapter offers an orientation to classroom discourse data that is explicitly geared to increasing language teachers' professional skills, awareness of their own and their students' language use, and understanding of classroom dynamics.

The task of developing classroom data

Access to real contexts of language use does not, in and of itself, guarantee an enlightened perspective on the dynamics of interaction in those contexts. Every system for recording interaction is necessarily a compromise requiring decisions on the part of the individual researcher (Roberts 1997). The method of recording an interaction crucially determines the content and value of discourse-based research and ultimately the purposes to which it is put. Further elements of judgement and interpretation are added in the continuing development and analysis of the data (Pennington 1999a). As a result, many factors have a role in determining the insights gained from investigating classroom discourse.

Researchers making use of discourse data are faced with a number of difficult decisions about the limits of the data — i.e. what to record or count as data — and the form of the data — i.e. how to record and represent the data. Decisions in both of these areas require trade-offs, as researchers attempt to steer a *defensible* course between competing goals. The process of creating representations of spoken interaction 'creates the same kind of tension as occurs in other kinds of data-based research, i.e. is the constant pressure to trade off between the goals of reliability and validity' (Pennington 1999a: 86) in terms of:

- **practicality** vs. **reality** or **truth**;
- **feasibility** vs. **representativeness** (i.e. what is practical and feasible in terms of data collection vs. what is a true or representative picture of the phenomenon of investigation);

– **consistency** vs. **comprehensiveness** of representation; and
– the **accessibility** (or transparency) of the mode of representation vs. its **authenticity** (or complexity).

There are many issues in the gathering and use of 'authentic' classroom data. First among these is the fact that once an observer or a recording device is introduced, the data is no longer authentic: a context is always affected by the introduction of any new factor, and a context of human interaction is especially affected by participants' awareness of being observed or recorded. In addition, a host of 'technical decisions' affect the nature as well as the quantity and quality of the data that can be gathered, such as the characteristics and placement of the observer(s), the microphone(s) or video camera(s). An observer who has a higher status or supervisory role over the instructor or context of observation is likely to impact the data gathered in a classroom context quite substantially, as will an observer who sits in a prominent and highly visible place in the classroom (Pennington 1989). When teachers gather data in their own classrooms, there is a potential for this activity to change the nature of the classroom interaction, especially if a recording device is used. Whenever using such a device, its type (e.g. small or large, stationery or mobile) and placement (on/near teacher, among a group of students, at front of room, at back of room) has an impact on the classroom dynamic as well as the form of the data obtained.

There are also issues surrounding the further development and analysis of second language classroom data, such as whether and what type of transcription to use (Roberts 1997). If transcription is to be carried out, should the focus be phonological or lexical? What is the appropriate degree and type of detail to be included? If a phonological transcription is wanted, should this be a narrow phonetic or a broad phonemic transcription? Should intonation, hesitations and pauses be included in either a phonological or a lexical transcription? Is it better to use a commonly known system of conventions for transcribing data — e.g. IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet), CA (Conversation Analysis), or Yale romanization (for Chinese data) — or to make use of a customised system such as one that incorporates special conventions for second language data (Pennington, forthcoming b)?

Table 1. Issues in developing classroom discourse data

RELIABILITY	vs.	**VALIDITY**
Practicality		Truth
Feasibility		Representativeness
Consistency		Comprehensiveness
Accessibility		Authenticity
DATA	vs.	**ANALYSIS**
Fact		Interpretation
Reality		Theory
Phenomenon		Context
Foregrounded event		Background (pre-ground or post-ground)

There are other necessary trade-offs in deciding what is to be considered *data* and what is to be considered *context* or *analysis* of that data:

> The issue of how far to go in incorporating context is a perennial concern of classroom researchers — What is data and what is context? The question of where data ends and context begins can equally well be asked as a question about where data ends and analysis begins. (Pennington 1999a: 86–87)

The question is sometimes phrased as a question of the distinction between fact and interpretation, or reality and theory.

> The question may alternatively be phrased as one about the limits of the phenomenon of investigation, or object of study. Natural limit-points are provided by audio recordings, which define a boundary for developing data that does not include visual phenomena; by the spatial boundaries of individual rooms; by temporal boundaries in defined periods of activity; and by various sorts of interactional or discourse boundaries as might be defined by specific participants, topics or speech acts. Although these natural or preexisting limit-points offer assistance to researchers in deciding what and how much information to include as data, they generally serve more as focal points or flexible parameters for developing data rather than as hard and fast boundaries defining a phenomenon as against its context. In developing a … representation of classroom discourse, the researcher is thus continually involved in negotiating a boundary between context and data — i.e. between 'invisible' background (or 'pre-ground' and 'post-ground') and 'visible' (fore)ground — that presents the phenomenon of investigation accurately and thoroughly, with attention to the concerns of both reliability and validity. (Pennington 1999a: 87)

There is no question of a perfect solution: 'In all cases, researchers choose some middle ground that seems for their purposes to be a logical and reasonable compromise within these research parameters' (Pennington 1999a: 86).

Potential pitfalls of using classroom data

At the same time as there is no perfect system for recording and analysing classroom events, there are some potential pitfalls to be avoided, such as the exploitation or disadvantaging of the teacher and/or the student participants, or any type of misrepresentation of the data or its context. To avoid the first type of problem, every effort should be made to not merely take something from the research context but also give something back of equal or greater value. Thus, any research on classroom discourse should result in useful outcomes for the investigated classroom context as well as potentially other classroom contexts. To avoid the second type of problem, the researcher must make every effort to examine a specific context on its own terms, performing a close, detail-oriented analysis and incorporating as much of the context into the analysis — i.e. as data — as is necessary to gain a clear picture of the dynamic of the interaction in that setting. In particular, the researcher needs to be aware of the potential for a pre-existing bias, agenda or viewpoint to influence the gathering, analysis or interpretation of the data.

Two examples, each representing a different type of interpretive bias, will serve to illustrate the misrepresentation of classroom discourse data or its context. These can be seen as two unfortunate traditions of the past that we can now dispense with in our development and use of classroom discourse data in second and foreign language teaching and teacher education.

Classroom discourse used to support pre-existing educational agenda

One of these 'unfortunate traditions' is a carry-over of the prescriptivism of the past, but dressed up in a new guise of 'objectivity' and/or 'political correctness'. In this tradition, pieces of lesson transcripts are used to reinforce preset agendas, often political ones, with the supposed objectivity of the data making the case. An example can be found in a study by Guthrie and Guthrie (1987) of a bilingual Cantonese-English class in the United States (for further discussion, see Pennington 1995: 21–28). The authors purport to show, in their examination of discourse data from this class, the value of the mother tongue in English language instruction. Many of the lesson segments they present as illustrations of this point, however, do not demonstrate what the authors are claiming and in fact would seem to illustrate cases in which the teacher's use of the mother tongue has not been helpful in solving a classroom problem.

The excerpt below is an example from an English reading lesson, where Guthrie and Guthrie (1987) observe that one advantage of the teacher's knowledge of Cantonese is that '[b]y using the students' first language, she was able to ferret out those areas of confusion and misunderstanding' (p. 224) and assist their learning.

Ex. 1	[The students are reading aloud English vocabulary words from the board.]
Student C:	Little…
	Like…
	Likes…
Teacher:	Likes **dim gaai a?** ('What does 'likes' mean?')
Student C:	**Dang.** ('Light.')
Teacher:	**Ha?** ('What?')
Student D:	**Hoi dang.** ('Turn on lights.')
Student C:	**Dang.** ('Lights.')
Teacher:	No. **Mhhaih.** ('No.')
	It's not the lights.
	Likes
	He likes the dog.
Student C:	**Ngoc Jungyi.** [sic] ('I like.')
Teacher:	Okay
	Ngoc Jungyi. ('I like.')[1]
	(Guthrie and Guthrie 1987: 224)

Far from illustrating the value of the mother tongue, I would say that this classroom excerpt is an example of at best an unproductive side-sequence and at worst a counterproductive exchange.

The exchange between teacher and students begins when Student C appears to stumble over the word *likes*. The teacher's way of responding to the student's trouble is to request a translation equivalent through the question, 'Likes **dim gaai a**?' ('What does 'likes' mean?') Yet at the point that the student stumbles over the word *likes*, it is just as likely that his problem is one of pronunciation as one of word meaning. Indeed, one can assume that such a common word as *like* would be among the first words learned by non-native speakers. The student's incorrect answer of '**Dang.**' ('Light.') immediately reinforces the likelihood that the problem is one of pronunciation rather than word meaning. Yet the teacher persists in focusing on word meaning in the sequence:

No. **Mhhaih**. ('No.')
It's not the lights.
Likes.
He likes the dog.

Moreover, the student shows that he knows the meaning of *like* when he states '**Ngoc Jungyi**.' [sic] ('I like.').[2] The teacher's response of 'OK' to this remark shows that she is focused on the meaning of words, and the students' ability to supply translation equivalents from Cantonese, rather than on students' productive use of English. The student's repetition of **Ngoc Jungyi** at the end of this exchange shows that he has learned that this class is about working out the meanings of English words in relation to the mother tongue. But what remains unclear is whether he has ever heard the distinction, much less whether he is able to make the distinction himself, between the pronunciation of *lights* and *likes*.

If the student's problem here is related to pronunciation rather than meaning, the switch to Cantonese to elicit synonyms would seem to be at best an indirect way of responding to that problem. There are several possible reasons for this, such as: (1) perhaps the teacher does not realise that the problem could be one of pronunciation; (2) perhaps she does not know how to deal with problems of pronunciation; or (3) perhaps she simply automatically defaults to Cantonese translation or lexical matching as a main approach to handling students' problems with English. At any rate, it seems clear that this teacher-student exchange from Guthrie and Guthrie (1987) does not in any obvious way show the value of using the mother tongue with bilingual pupils in an English reading lesson. It is rather a good illustration of the use of classroom data to push a predetermined, political ('politically correct') agenda, in a case of what Lemke (1995) decries as 'the transformation of discourses of expert knowledge into discourses of social policy' (p. 58). However much one may agree with a particular agenda, such as in this case to argue for use of the students' mother tongue in instruction, one nevertheless has a right to object when the data claimed to support it do not hold up under scrutiny.

Classroom discourse interpreted from centre-stage perspective

Another type of bias arises from the habit of presenting classroom discourse from the point of view of front-of-the class position or 'centre-stage' (Pennington 1999a,b). To the extent that the teacher commands the front-of-the class or centre-stage position, a focus on interaction emanating from this

point underrepresents the students' perspective. Even when students command centre-stage, as in a roleplay, a narrow focus in classroom recording and transcription on lesson activity misses out on whatever interaction is occurring 'in the wings', outside of the lesson structure and often outside the teacher's control as well. A centre-stage focus thus omits a significant part — often the *most* significant part — of the students' communication. It therefore misses important information that helps to define the interaction which occurs at 'centre-stage'. For the 'inner' and 'outer' layers (Sinclair and Brazil 1982; Willis 1992) of classroom discourse are mutually interactive, and a knowledge of the 'outer layer' of interaction is essential for understanding the dynamic of the 'inner layer'.

Framing classroom discourse

A way to avoid the centre-stage bias of much classroom data and to gain a more comprehensive and accurate view of the classroom is to examine classroom communication — or interaction more broadly — as occurring in different frames (Goffman 1974). A system of *classroom discourse frames* has been developed in Pennington (1999a, b), based on an analysis of data from Hong Kong bilingual secondary English classes, supplemented by observation of classes in primary and secondary schools in Britain (Pennington 1997a). The frames of classroom discourse can be modelled as concentric circles (Figure 1). Each frame is enclosed in the figure by a dotted line signifying that it is permeable to influence from the other frames.

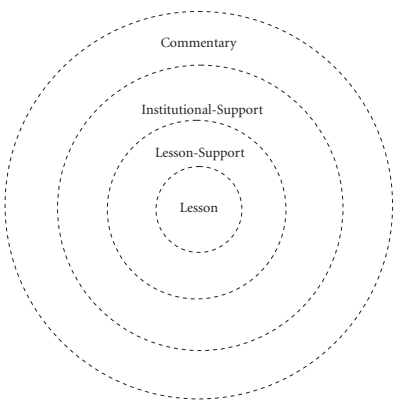

Figure 1. Classroom Discourse Frames (Pennington 1999b: 56)

The *lesson frame* is the innermost frame through which the content of the curriculum is presented or developed. It is the frame which is most removed or 'sheltered' from outside influences and so the frame which most supports the use of the second language. A *lesson-support* frame acts on the lesson frame to maintain a lesson structure by clarification, repair and disciplining moves. An *institutional-support* frame, through which information is presented in relation to the larger school agenda, acts on these to maintain a broader educational structure. The lesson-support and institutional-support frames can therefore be thought of as helping to maintain the classroom genre of 'lesson' and the institution of education. A fourth *commentary* frame is identified as the outermost frame, signifying that it is most permeable to influences outside the institution relating to popular culture and vernacular language. In this frame participants express opinions and reactions in relation to both the classroom context and the world at large. It is also the frame through which new influences, both linguistic and informational, are brought into the classroom. The remainder of this chapter offers suggestions and illustrations of how such a system of classroom discourse frames can be used in language teacher education courses or in-service programmes.

Applying classroom discourse frame analysis in language teacher education

Classifying turns into frames

One way to use this analytical system in teacher education or in-service is to have teachers analyse their own or others' classroom discourse, classifying turns as occurring in one or another of the suggested frames. Because the classification of turns into communicative frames is not entirely straightforward, it may be of value to start from an analysed sample of bilingual discourse such as that provided below.[3]

Analysing turns in each frame

Once there is a reasonable degree of agreement on the classification of turns into frames, as a next step, teachers can analyse the content, functions and participants in each frame. For the discourse segment below, in the lesson frame two students (S1 and S2) perform an interview roleplay, with S2 acting

Ex. 2 Segment of a Hong Kong Secondary English Class (based on Pennington, Lee, and Lau 1996)

Two students, S1 and S2, have been instructed by their teacher, K. K., to roleplay an interview with a teacher about his 'lifestyle', while other students watch on.

		Lesson Frame	Lesson-support Frame	Commentary Frame
1	S1	Excuse me Sir. We wants to make a interview for you. Do you mind to answer, some questions?		
2	S2	No, I don't mind. Please ask.		
3				Ss [indistinct student voices mainly speaking in Cantonese]
4			KK Sshh!	
5	S1	How do you think about, your students?		
6	S2	I think — I thought that in the, class, the public [examinations] or the result of them are always are very kind; but some can be always very unkind. And I think that it, in- in the word truth the public [examinations] had been very see the — not the many very important. I think this, thing must be stopped.		
7	S1	Did you have any, hap happy time or, things in your school life?		
8	S2	In my school life in this year I think, my happy time is, in sport day. [[4] Because I uh we have seen many — [laugh] many students bring in prize.		
9			S3 [*On.*	
10			S4 [*On.*	
11			KK [*On* <a>. ('It's o*n.*')	
12			S5 [*On* <a>. (It's *on.*')	
13			S6 [*On* <dihng> *of* <a> Sir? ('*On* or *of,* Ah-Sir?'[5])	
14	S1	How do you think the other teachers?		
15				Ss [laugh]

16			KK	Sshh!	
17	S2	I think that's it they are quite good. But someone like Mr. X [name of a teacher] is very unkind.			
18					S3[6]<Ngòh! Néih séi là. Mr. X yàn gàan…> ('Oh! You're dead. Later, Mr. X…')
19					S4 <Góng yùhn.> ('Finished talking.')
20			KK	Any others?	
21	S2	And another teacher, quite good, like Mr. Y [name of a teacher].			
22	S1	Mr. Y.			
23					S3 <Keúih mè yi sì a?> ('What is he on about?')
24					S4 <Keúih jùng yi chaat hàaih.> ('He likes to apple-polish.')
25					S5 Mr. Y <hóu> cheap. ('Mr. Y is so cheap = has no class at all.')
26					S6 <Chaat hàaih. Keúih chaat hàaih ga.> ('Apple-polishing. He's apple-polishing.')
27					S5 Mr. Y <hóu> cheap. ('Mr. Y is so cheap = has no class at all.')
28					Ss Cheap.
29	S1	Thank-you.			
30	S2	Not at all.			
31			KK	OK, thanks very much. OK for this group. At least you did a very good performance.	

as a 'teacher' being asked questions by S1 as 'interviewer'. Their roleplay consists of what appears to be a fairly artificial question-answer sequence in English with increasing grammatical incoherence as turns become longer. The roleplay students appear to be talking about things related to school which both teachers and students have an interest in, including opinions about students, public examinations, happy times in school life, sports day and opinions about teachers. All the while, these two students 'are in fact cooperating to exploit the lesson frame to develop a "layer of meaning" that comments on their own (real) school life in a sort of "play within a play" (Pennington, 2000). Thus, within the roleplay, S2 seems to maintain the 'teacher' role while at the same time giving some of his own (real) opinions, based on the questions he is asked by S1. Under the guise of the roleplay, S2 is therefore able to exploit what Bakhtin (1935/1981) calls 'double-voicing' to express different messages, including some of his own views that are critical of students and teachers and that represent his true opinions.

After the opening sequence of the roleplay, a commentary frame develops as a backgrounded channel of communication in which a number of students are talking at once (turn 3), triggering the teacher's move to quiet them down (turn 4). The teacher's 'shushing' of the students, which seems to have the desired effect, can be considered to be a lesson-support move. After S2's third turn, a student outside the roleplay appears to pick up on S2's prepositional error, 'in sport day' (turn 8), correcting *in* to *on* (turn 9). This correction is immediately echoed by another student (turn 10) with teacher confirmation (turn 11) and repeated by a student (turn 12) in code-mixed form as '*On* <a>.' ('It's o*n*.'). The correction of *on* is then requestioned (turn 13) by a student as '*On* <dihng> *of* <a> Sir?' ('*On* or *of*, Ah-Sir?'). This sequence of five moves which respond to the lesson-frame move of turn 8 and which aim to clarify a point of language can be considered lesson-support, though students remarking each others' mistakes also represents criticism of peers by peers (see discussion in Pennington, 2000).

After this sequence, S1 continues in his role as interviewer, asking a question (turn 14), 'How do you think the other teachers?' (i.e. 'What do you think of the other teachers?') that makes other students laugh (turn 15) and the teacher 'shush' those other students (turn 16). The students' laugh can be seen as occurring in the commentary frame and K. K.' s 'Sshh!' as being a move to support the lesson in the face of this laugh-commentary. The students' laugh suggests both the sensitivity of this question and their anticipation of what might follow, which is a negative statement about a teacher (turn 17), a point

immediately taken up in the commentary frame (turn 18) by a student outside the roleplay, who says, '<Ngòh! Néih séi là. Mr. [name of a teacher] yàn gàan…> ('Oh! You're dead. Later, Mr. [name of a teacher]…'), with a possible reinforcement of the sense that S2's criticism of Mr. X will bring consequences (turn 19) stated as '<Góng yùhn.>' ('Finished talking.'). The point is also immediately taken up by K. K. (turn 20), who makes a supportive move[7] ('Any others?') that seems indirectly to ask for a positive comment about another teacher. S2 seems to recognise K. K.' s purpose, as he responds (turn 21) by making a positive comment about a teacher which is immediately confirmed (turn 22) by S1.

The positive comment made by S1 and S2 about a particular teacher elicits commentary from a student outside the roleplay (turn 23) who appears to be questioning the motives of S1 or S2 (the reference of <kéuih> 'he' is opaque) in asking, '<Keúih mè yi sì a?>' ('What is he on about?'). A second student outside the roleplay answers this question (turn 24) by implying that one of the roleplay students is trying to gain the teacher's approval '<Keúih jùng yi chaat hàaih.>' ('He likes to apple-polish'), presumably, by making positive remarks about their teachers. From the point of view of the peer group, 'apple-polishing', trying to win favour with the teacher or supporting the educational institution, is something to be remarked and criticised. The idea of apple-polishing is picked up and repeated (turn 26). In the meantime, a student (turns 25 and 27) opposes the opinion of Mr. Y followed by a critical comment in code-mixed form 'Mr. Y <hóu> cheap. ('Mr. Y is so cheap = has no class at all.'), followed by echoes of 'cheap' from other students (turn 28). Neither the teacher nor either of the roleplay students respond in any way to this critical commentary. Rather, S1 and S2 simply complete the roleplay (turns 29 and 30), with a final remark by K. K. (turn 31) in the way of a formulaic closing and an evaluation which suggests that he was not wholly satisfied with what has occurred in the roleplay. Since it is closely related to the regulation of this roleplay, as well as those of other students to follow (see Pennington 1999a, for more details), the teacher's turn is classified as lesson-support.

K. K. never makes a direct response (other than twice shushing the students) to any of the negative messages in the students' discourse. His attention seems to be focused only on the roleplay that is being performed at 'centre-stage'. In this respect: 'The teacher seems to be handling students' off-lesson remarks or behaviours by a sort of "ignorance-is-bliss" strategy of not acknowledging their uncooperative or oppositional verbal or non-verbal behaviour' (Pennington 1999a: 108). Such non-acknowledgement may represent a 'face-

saving' pretence of normalcy or a 'survival strategy' for coping with students' uncooperative behaviour. However, teachers ignore students' off-lesson messages at their peril, as the longer they are ignored the more they are likely to develop into a separate line of talk which 'hijacks' classroom discourse to their own (sometimes oppositional) purposes.

Summarising the patterns

This transcript provides a clear example of a lesson frame linked to but separate from both a lesson-support frame and a commentary frame. Everything that is said in the lesson-support frame is related to what occurs in the lesson frame; this is a matter of how the discourse of this class (and many others in bilingual situations) is defined, as a content-oriented frame where English occurs and a regulatory frame oriented to classroom process where the mother tongue is used. Everything that is said in the commentary frame is also related to what occurs in the lesson frame. Although a common pattern in classrooms, this is not a necessary pattern, as students' talk may be more or less related to what is occurring simultaneously in the lesson frame. At the same time as the lesson-support and commentary frames are both linked in this class to the lesson frame, each frame nonetheless has an independent status in terms of participants and language. The patterns in each can be summarised in a number of ways. The pattern of interaction in each frame might be summarised in a table (e.g. Table 2), as a succinct representation that can be compared across other lessons and classrooms.

Table 2. Main interactional formats and languages in frames (Pennington 1999a: 104)

Lesson	Student-Student	English
Lesson-support	Teacher-Student	English and Cantonese
Commentary	Student-Student	Cantonese

The moves and their associated functions, language(s) and participants in each frame might be listed as in Table 3, as a way to focus attention on the different kinds of talk, language choice and participants in each frame.

Table 3. Functions, languages, and participants within each frame

Frame	Functions	Languages	Participants
Lesson	Roleplay = 'realistic' communication	English	S1, S2
Lesson-support	Form-focused reflection on talk in lesson frame	Mixed code, English	KK, S3–6
	Prompt to maintain appropriate talk in lesson frame	English	KK
	Closing lesson activity	English	KK
	Reflection on talk performed in lesson frame	English	KK
	'Shushing' students	N/A	KK
Commentary	Critical remarks about roleplay students	Cantonese	S3, S4, S6
	Critical remarks about teacher (Mr. Y)	Mixed code, English	S5, Ss
	Query about 'true' meaning of talk in lesson frame	Cantonese	S3
	Background talk	Cantonese	Ss
	Laughing	N/A	Ss

A further mode of representation is given in Table 4, which shows clearly the different types of orientations exhibited by different participants in each frame, including their:

– Spatial orientations

Centre-stage: the place where the roleplay is occurring, at the front of the class
Side-stage: the place where the teacher and other students are watching the role-play and interacting with it (in a limited way)
Off-stage: the place where students are interacting with each other at some physical distance from the roleplay

– Orientations to talk

Institutional: interacting according to school- or lesson-defined roles and status
Vernacular: interacting according to community roles and status
Mixed (*Institutional* + *Vernacular*)

– Language orientations
English
Cantonese
Mixed code

– Role orientations
Ratified: that which is an accepted or conventional role for a certain context
Non-ratified: that which challenges role conventions for a certain context
Primary: the main role orientation for a certain context
Secondary: a role other than the main role orientation for a certain context e.g. *Student as roleplay participant* — 'interviewer' or 'teacher' — is their primary ratified role in this lesson context, as it has been assigned for the roleplay; *student as individual or follower* are secondary but accepted roles in this context whereas *student as peer* is not ratified in this context, nor in general is a role that is tied to (non-ratified) use of a language other than the official classroom language of English.

Table 4. Frame-space for illustrated segment of classroom discourse (Pennington 1997b)

FRAME LABEL	ORIENTATIONS				PARTICIPANTS
	Spatial	**Talk**	**Language**	**Role**	
Lesson	Center-Stage	'Institutional'	English	Primary-ratified *Student as 'interviewer'* *Student as 'teacher'* Secondary-ratified *Student as individual* *Student as follower* Secondary-nonratified *Student as peer*	roleplay Ss S1 S2 roleplay Ss roleplay Ss
Lesson -support	Side-Stage	Mixed	English Mixed code Mixed code Mixed code English	Primary-ratified *Teacher as controller* Secondary-nonratified *Teacher as helper* Primary-ratified *Student as initiate* Secondary-nonratified *Student as authority*	T T S6 S3,S4
Commentary	Off-Stage	Vernacular	Cantonese Mixed code English	Primary-nonratified *Student as peer, leader, authority*	S3, S4, S6 S5 other Ss

The information gained by analysing classroom discourse in terms of communicative frames can also be the basis for modifying the circle diagram of

Figure 1 to represent the discourse of a specific class or lesson segment (e.g. Figure 2). Figure 2 highlights the fact that the outermost (commentary) frame, where mainly Cantonese is spoken, is linked to a community discourse frame where mainly Cantonese is spoken as well, whereas the innermost (lesson) frame is 'sheltered' from this influence. The intermediate (lesson-support) frame shows the influence of both of these frames in the form of language that occurs.

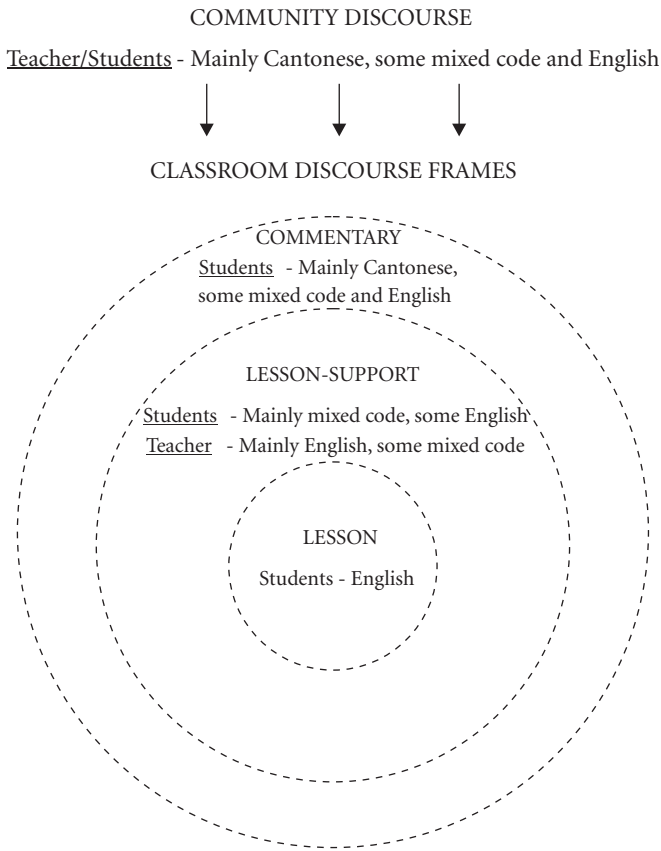

Figure 2. Frames and context of discourse, language, and participants (Pennington 1999a: 99)

Or, the pattern of interaction in each frame might be represented as a turn-graph (e.g. Figure 3). The graphic of Figure 3 'shows a recursive cycling of the discourse out of the lesson frame, under the influence of the students, and then back into this central frame from other discourse frames, under the influence of the teacher, in a 'zigzag' pattern which to a large extent parallels the movement of talk between the two language poles of English and Cantonese' (Pennington 1999a: 102). Any of these forms of pattern display may be useful for helping teachers raise their awareness of classroom discourse frames.

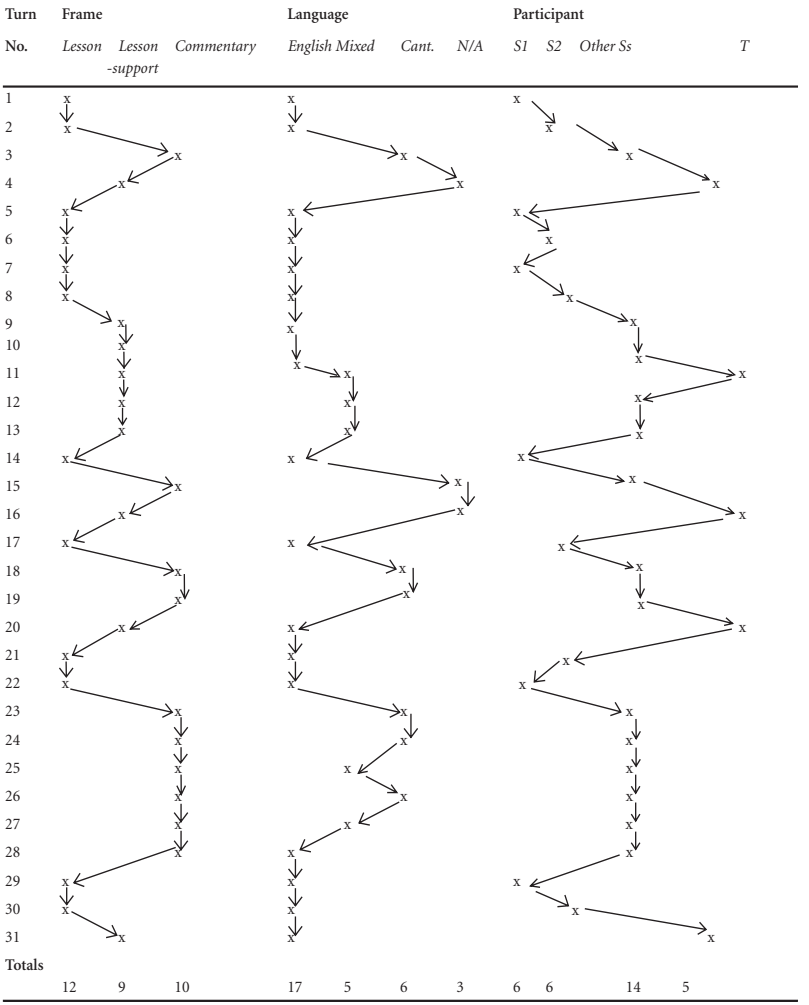

Figure 3. Progression of frames, languages, and participants (Pennington 1999a: 103)

Suggesting alternatives

After summarising the patterns of classroom discourse frames, alternatives can be suggested that might have produced different (and possibly better) results. With regard to the lesson segment presented here as an illustration, it could be suggested that students other than S1 and S2 be given definite tasks to perform as a possible way to keep other students from making unproductive commentary. The possibility of exploiting the potential third-move response ('follow-up') slot that exists in classroom exchanges (Brazil and Coulthard 1992; Sinclair and Brazil 1982; Sinclair and Coulthard 1975) to involve these students has not been taken up here. Rather than making use of this institutional slot as part of the communication that occurs in the lesson frame, i.e. within the roleplay itself, or as a way to give feedback on the roleplay in the frame of lesson-support, the 'third-move response' slot is instead developed by the students in a separate frame of Cantonese talk directed at each other as peers.

Students other than those performing the roleplay might be assigned a range of monitoring tasks, with 2–3 students performing each. Some possibilities are monitoring the roleplay performance for:

- intonation
- vowels
- consonants
- grammar
- vocabulary
- question and answer patterns
- discourse coherence
- politeness
- topics
- interest level
- eye contact, facial expression
- gestures, movement

If students are monitoring the roleplay for specific features, they will be more involved in the lesson and will be more likely to focus their comments on it. Such monitoring would also lead into a useful interaction following the roleplay. In both being more involved in the lesson as it is taking place and leading to useful follow-up interaction, this type of focused monitoring of the roleplay would bring much of the talk that occurred outside the lesson frame into that frame.

The roleplay task could be changed so that it involved several students: one student could be interviewed by a group of three student interviewers. Another possibility would be to change the task so that students would be more likely to express an authentic voice and their own opinions. A suitable format might be one in which the person being interviewed, and the interviewer(s), were students, as in trying to obtain information about how students spent their holiday for a school newspaper article. In either case, the roleplay would generate more interaction both while it was being performed and in follow-up discussion.

Another suggestion would be for the teacher to more explicitly acknowledge the students' negative messages. This could be done in different ways. One form of acknowledgement is to respond with behaviour modification or disciplining moves that directly respond to those messages. For example, K. K. might warn S2 to be careful what he says about his teachers when other teachers can hear. A second approach is generally to invoke the lesson-support frame more, as a way to try to minimise the commentary frame or to keep it from developing at all. More attention to lesson-support in the way of structuring and monitoring students' behaviour does seem to have this preventative effect, as observed in primary and secondary subject area classes in Britain (Pennington 1997a, 1999b).

In these British classes, commentary frames were seen to evolve quickly and to become increasingly foregrounded during classroom periods where teachers spent little time on lesson-support. In such cases, lesson-support was usually given primarily in the way of on-the-spot reactions to major breaches of discipline. In this sense, most lesson support was 'compensatory' rather than 'strategic', as these terms are used in Pennington (1995, 1997b). In contrast, in those classes where teachers provided strong support for the lesson from the beginning of the period and continued to monitor progress with repeated explicit lesson-support moves throughout the lesson period, students spent more time on task and there was less unproductive or counterproductive off-lesson talk.

A different sort of approach is to neutralise students' negativity, or lessen its effect, by making a humorous remark. In the case at hand, the teacher might joke that students' high or low opinion of a teacher is often related to their grade. Another alternative is to respond to the content of the students' talk in a way that acknowledges their point of view and their right to speak while at the same time attempting to link their comments to the lesson frame. K. K. might, for instance, ask S2 whether he is speaking as another teacher (i.e. in role) or as

himself (i.e. out of role) when he criticises his teacher. K. K. might also build time into the lesson for the students not performing the roleplay to express their point of view. A final approach might be to express solidarity by relating a similar opinion or experience. In the present case, K. K. might comment that everyone has teachers that they like more or less than others and mention one of his own least favourites. This last approach is one in which the teacher exploits the commentary frame as a way to express a shared experience and a common purpose with the students.

All four of these latter approaches to handling students' negative or off-lesson commentary were observed in classes in Britain (Pennington 1997a, 1999b). While they were not as effective in maintaining on-task behaviour as was the strategy of strong and constant lesson-support, they offer an important alternative route for keeping students from developing a counterdiscourse disruptive of the educational process while at the same time allowing them to participate fully and to develop a real voice in the classroom. When students' voices are 'accommodated within the institution, they provide the grounds for the growth of more rounded, three-dimensional relationships' (Rampton 1995: 80) between teacher and students, thereby avoiding the unrealistic isolation of lessons from real-world roles and discourses.

Conclusion

The scheme presented here for looking at classroom events in terms of discourse frames, which was developed on the basis of lesson transcripts and observations in Hong Kong and Britain, offers a tool for describing and investigating participation patterns and language use within and across contexts. The approach to analysing classroom discourse in terms of frames of communicative activity can help move apprentice teachers away from a limited, unrealistic and often idealised centre-stage view of the classroom. In so doing, it can help raise their awareness of the real dynamics of classrooms in relation to their larger contexts, as an aid to instructional planning and in-process decision-making. As an aid to both thinking about and describing instructional contexts, this frame analysis can help to sensitise teachers to the different 'layers' and directions of communication that might take place in a classroom, and how these might be exploited or modified to achieve different effects. Although the process of gathering and analysing this type of data is time-consuming and also somewhat challenging from a technical point of view, requiring some way

of recording students throughout the classroom, I think it is well worth the effort, like other attempts to broaden teachers' views beyond their own limited and personal perspective.

Notes

1. The transcript is cited exactly as given by Guthrie and Guthrie (1987).

2. This is an odd transcription, as the normal romanization for Cantonese 'I like' would be **ngoh jungyi**. Since Cantonese often omits pronoun subjects, perhaps **ngoc** is not 'I' but rather an interlanguage rendition of 'dog'. In fact, it seems more likely that the student said 'I like the dog' than just 'I like', given that the teacher has just said (in English)'I like the dog'. The capital letter in '**Jungyi**' may unwittingly represent what the transcriber heard as a prosodic break between the two words. If so, this would reinforce my suspicion that what the student said was a topicalised 'dog' (**ngoc**) followed by the comment, '[I] like' (**Jungyi**). Such topic-comment patterns are common in Cantonese.

3. The lesson segment and illustrated suggestions presented here derive from an analysis which I developed in Pennington (1999a).

4. This turn overlaps with the next turn, and there is then partial overlapping of a rapid sequence of turns up to turn 14.

5. Cantonese <a> affixed to a name or title symbolises respect or positive regard.

6. 'S3'-'S6' are used to indicate different voices distinct from those of S1 and S2, though I am unable to reliably determine from the tape recording how many students other than S1 and S2 are actually involved in the discourse that goes on outside the lesson frame.

7. This move functions to support the lesson frame but also supports the institution, in that it indirectly suggests that students must not criticise a teacher during class time or in front of another teacher. It could therefore be said to have a secondary function of institutional support. Other than this possibility, there are no instances of institutional support, such as announcements from the school office, included here.

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What was that you said?

Trainee generated language awareness

Clare O'Donoghue and Tom Hales

Introduction

There has been much interest in recent years in the way in which the language system is introduced to trainee teachers on teacher preparation courses. For example, Wright and Bolitho (1993), Kerr (1993, 1996), Andrews (1994), Hales (1997) and Hales and O'Donoghue (2001) all question aspects of the current orthodoxy in the spirit of improvement in English Language teacher preparation. This volume, then, is a welcome drawing together of concerns which have been a live issue in recent years.

This chapter looks at past and current models of a course component which attempts to develop the ability of trainees on intensive, 4-week, pre-service teacher education courses to teach the language system. Some of these courses were UCLES (University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate) Certificate courses, others were validated and awarded by the University of Wales Swansea. We then go on to look at the possible benefits of a more 'trainee-based' approach, in which trainees are essentially language researchers, but with pedagogical aims still paramount, thus maintaining a link between the *analyst* and the *teacher* (Edge 1988, Wright this volume).

Models of language awareness/analysis instruction on pre-service teacher training courses

There are several possible models for the language awareness component of teacher education courses. These tend to reflect the explicitly stated aims or implicitly held beliefs of the course providers about the role and purpose of the language awareness element of their course.

Knowledge transfer

In this model the transfer of grammatical information about the language is the primary goal of the sessions. The trainee is seen as a recipient of information found in standard pedagogical grammars such as Thomson and Martinet (1986), Sinclair (1990) or Swan (1995). The role of the teacher educator is to impart this knowledge as efficiently as possible.

The most efficient way of achieving this aim is often perceived to be the lecture. However, although this may convey a considerable amount of descriptive information in a short time, it has the drawback that trainees who have no solid grammatical grounding can quickly become lost, demoralised and frightened of grammar. A lecture format may also allow a split to develop between the input on methodology and the input on language, which, in turn, may lead to the use of inappropriate methodology during the trainees' teaching practice, with, for example, the trainees treating their students to grammatical lecturettes.

Demonstration

In this model the teacher educators aim to develop trainees' teaching expertise by using a methodology for language awareness on the teacher education course that they would like the trainees adopt in their teaching practice classes. In this respect, the teacher educators are treating their trainees as if they were advanced foreign students of the language — even though they may be native speakers.

Experiential teacher education, by its very nature, covers less information in an explicit way than does a model of teacher education based on information transfer. This is justified on the grounds that while the input may be less, the uptake may be greater, especially if a reflective cycle is implemented (Wallace 1991, Woodward 1991) (see also Wright, this volume). Furthermore, the uptake will be not only the content of the session but also the manner in which the session was delivered, and in this way, not only is the uptake of information greater but it is also more multifaceted than it would be from input delivered in a lecture format.

The authors have no argument with this view of the benefits of experiential teacher education. The drawbacks of this model are rather to do with the quantity and quality of language information the trainees receive on their

course. If the language description input is only limited to the material found in current coursebooks, the teacher educators will limit the trainees' study of language. Thus, while this approach challenges the trainees to work things out for themselves, it does so only on the evidence of the tidied up language typical of coursebooks (Willis 1990) and does not invite them to research language through the critical use of pedagogical grammars such as Thomson and Martinet (1986), Sinclair (1990) or Swan (1995); nor does it challenge them to analyse examples of language that do not fit the standard coursebook paradigms.

However, even when teacher educators produce worksheets containing more complex instances of the language feature in question, this is often still only 'advanced TEFLese', by which we mean the coursebook-based variety of English that has sometimes been criticised for the limited preparation it gives students for the language of the real world (see, for example, Sinclair 1997, Mindt 1997 and Petrovitz 1997).

Limited trainee investigation

In an effort to encourage trainees' research skills, many course providers now complement course book and demonstration based input sessions with limited trainee investigation. The trainees usually work in small groups using a variety of pedagogical grammars and other reference books to investigate language points taken from their forthcoming teaching practice programme. Typically these sessions culminate with the groups giving a poster presentation of their findings. Possible criticisms of this approach are:

- an unfocused group may get little out of this procedure in the time available;
- the language points from the teaching practice programme may not be the most useful or amenable to this kind of group investigation, or they may not be particularly difficult and therefore not merit valuable input time;
- the main criticism is that the trainees are still only researchers of received wisdom looking at tidied up versions of language. This will not help them when it comes to answering students' queries about acceptable language constructions that do not appear in coursebooks, nor will it help them to appreciate that pedagogical grammars are only a partial description of the language.

Designing the language component of a pre-service teacher education course

A question worth considering with regard to pre-service teacher education programmes is: 'How far is someone truly *aware* of language if they are simply asked to learn a limited and tidied up set of facts pertaining to a limited variety of a language (e.g. course book language)?' A useful skill we can develop on teacher development courses at any level is the ability to produce materials based on authentic naturally occurring language, and to adapt and compensate for shortcomings in textbook materials.

We, therefore, designed the language awareness component of a teacher education programme in such a way that it would serve the following goals.

- Trainees should become familiar with the way current coursebooks approach the teaching of language structures.
- They should have examples of good classroom practice that they could imitate.
- They should have experiential training.
- They should become confident users of pedagogical reference grammars.
- They should be able to use their knowledge of English as users of the language with insight.
- They should have the confidence in their own abilities to analyse examples of authentic language.
- They should realise that pedagogical grammars do not tell the full story.

The main design conflict was the tension between the desire to promote good classroom practice in the exploitation of coursebook materials and the desire to develop the trainees' independence as language researchers in only twelve contact hours of dedicated language awareness input sessions within a 110 hour course.

In the table below we give an outline of the kind of sessions used. In summary, in the first part of this nine-session component, the trainees are familiarised with basic language description terminology, and introduced to typical coursebook formats for dealing with language structures. In the second half of the course the focus is on authentic spoken and written language data and how this compares with the descriptions found in pedagogical grammars. Trainees work both on the investigation of the language and on the production of peer teaching materials. As we shall see, the use of authentic data allows the language input sessions to cover a much wider range of issues than those normally covered on teacher education programmes that limit themselves to

Table 1. Outline of sessions for a language awareness component (LA) of a pre-service teacher training course

Stage of the course	Session number	Session content
Before the course		A pre-course task aimed at familiarising trainees with the basic terminology (for example, parts of speech, structure names, synonymy, antonymy, phonological features and the phonemic alphabet) has proved to be extremely beneficial. This was omitted in the first course reported on here.
Early	**1**	A consolidation of the basic terminology and an introduction to investigating language by means of a discovery task in an unknown language.
	2	A demonstration approach to LA using teaching materials (e.g. a session on past forms). This is in an effort to help trainees appreciate the coursebook writers' design of material and how to exploit it. The trainees are encouraged to try to work out the paradigms using their knowledge of the language, albeit on tidied up coursebook language as well as checking these kinds of structures in pedagogical grammars. This second session reinforces the methodology input on possible lesson formats.
Middle	**3**	Introduce the trainees to analysing examples of 'real language' by completing tasks based on concordance lines as well as other discovery based materials.
	4	Towards the end of the first half of the course, this session includes approximately half an hour of hands-on instruction in using concordancing tools. At the end of the session a group concordancing research task is set to be completed by the final week of the course.
	5	This session returns to the format of the second session, that is, a focus on coursebook materials based session. This is in an effort to reinforce the link between language investigation and knowledge with teaching methodology. In order to preview the work done on authentic dialogues, some of the activities in this session are based on coursebook dialogues.
	6	Introduce the trainees to the analysis of spoken language with a tutor prepared task. The trainees then prepare similar tasks on their own conversations which were recorded in the first quarter of the course and which they have been transcribing for homework over a two week period.
Later	**7**	The trainees use their concordancing research to prepare materials for their colleagues.
	8	The trainees complete each other's dialogue tasks.
	9	The trainees complete each other's concordancing tasks.

the type of language description found in EFL coursebooks and many pedagogical grammars.

Tasks for the language awareness component

Dialogue tasks

Procedure

In the task as originally designed (Hales 1997), trainees were recorded early in the course discussing a topic (for example, their future plans). The course tutor then transcribed sections of these conversations and designed tasks which focused trainees' attention on various features of future time reference, phonology, and differences between spoken and written language.

We came to realise, however, that the tutor-prepared tasks did not really encourage trainees to initiate their own language research. We, therefore, modified the tasks so that instead of the tutors transcribing the tapes, the trainees were asked to do their own transcriptions for homework. This is not too onerous as we ensure that the conversations are not too long — approximately fifteen minutes, and the transcription is divided up amongst the three to four participants in each conversation so that each trainee only has to transcribe five minutes of conversation. Each trainee is given a recording of their conversation and they have approximately two weeks in which to transcribe their section. The act of transcribing the tapes gives trainees opportunities to notice differences in the structures of spoken and written English. Their personal involvement adds to their interest in the task.

By setting different conversation topics the tutors can also elicit frequent but spontaneous use of a number of particular language features — future forms or certain past forms, for example. Successful topics used have been:

- Future plans
- Childhood holidays
- What they would be doing if they weren't doing the course
- A funny story or a joke.

It is important that the trainees do not know why they are being recorded, because when we have told them, they have tended to distort their language, speak in full sentences, over-enunciate, or overuse structures they think will be the topic of study. Inevitably, this undermines the value of the project for the

trainees. Trainees should also be reassured that only they hear the tapes.

Preparing the trainees for the dialogue tasks
Below we briefly note some of the measures needed to prepare trainees for undertaking the dialogue tasks

- A suitable pre-course task is necessary to improve trainees' capacity to set their peers questions on concepts rather than on grammatical labels.
- Trainees need to see a model of the kind of worksheet they are to prepare on the dialogue tasks in order to get some idea of what to do.
- The layout of the tasks that the trainees produce is important if they are to be used successfully by their peer group, and so the importance of clarity and layout needs to be emphasised before the trainees start to design their tasks.

Concordance tasks

The trainees were grouped randomly and were given instruction on how to use Wordsmith concordancing tools (Scott 1996). There was usually at least one group member who had used a word processor. Each research group had access to one PC and a printer, and two corpora chosen on the basis of availability (see below for corpus details).

The tutors allocated the words to be investigated. These were:

- *when / while*
- *that*
- *if*
- *quite / rather*

These were chosen because they were known to be discussed in pedagogical grammar books and also to be present in the corpus in sufficient numbers to make investigation viable. The tutors had not made a detailed study of the occurrence of these words in the corpora, and there were therefore no preconceived ideas as to what the trainees might discover in the course of their investigation. In addition, the tutors did not give the trainees any instruction on their words prior to or during their investigation.

The first cohort to do a concordance research task were instructed to prepare a 30 minute peer presentation, but all three research groups interpreted this to mean a lecture format with some interactive phases. Subsequent

cohorts were therefore asked to use their research to produce a set of materials for peer instruction, and, therefore, more emphasis than usual was placed on guided discovery materials in the previous language awareness input sessions. For example, when looking at course book materials we used extracts that adopted a guided discovery approach such as the Longman *Matters* series and *Language Issues* by Gillian Porter Ladousse, contrasting these with more deductive materials. We also used guided discovery materials made specifically for our input sessions in order to demonstrate how such material could be exploited. Loop input (Woodward 1991) ensured that the trainees were sensitive to the design, purpose and implementation of such materials.

The table below summarises some of the principal practical considerations that had to be borne in mind in devising small-scale corpus research tasks.

Table 2. Some practical considerations in devising small-scale corpus research tasks

– Each cohort had access to a computer, including access outside class hours.
– Instruction on using concordance tools was planned to occur at about the half way point in the course in order to allow the trainees enough time to find interesting patterns in their concordance lines and then to research these features in pedagogic grammars.
– Aston (1997:52) points out that there are 'pedagogic advantages in using relatively homogeneous, domain-specific corpora' and for this and other practical reasons of access, we decided to use a one million word financial corpus and a 100,000 word technical corpus of car maintenance manuals. A more general corpus might have meant that trainees would have had to search and manipulate vast quantities of data in order to find significant patterns

Implementing the language awareness tasks: a report on five pre-service courses

This chapter reports on five 4-week pre-service courses. Although the structure and overall aims of the courses were similar, the language awareness component was not identical and developed gradually over time, as is indicated in the summary table below.

Table 3. Summary of the sequence of development in the language awareness (LA) component

Courses	Nature of language awareness component
Course 1	Dialogue tasks only. There was no pre-course task, therefore basic terminology was covered during the course
Courses 2 and 3	Pre-course task and dialogue tasks
Course 4	Pre-course task, dialogue tasks and corpus investigation leading to a presentation of their findings to their peers
Course 5	As course 4, but the corpus investigation led to the production of concordance based instructional material for their peers.

There have been two very noticeable factors contributing to the quality of the tasks set by the trainees as measured by their linguistic depth and complexity.

a. The importance of a pre-course task. The first cohort of trainees did not do one, and as a result the quality of their dialogue tasks was very limited, being restricted often to the giving of names to forms. By contrast, those trainees who had completed a pre-course task asked about the concept expressed by the form and possible formal substitutes for expressing that meaning. This indicates the potential benefits of such a pre-course task.
b. The investigative nature of the concordancing task seems to have resulted in more complex dialogue tasks, even though the questions set are not directly related to the concordance words being investigated. It appears that the concordance investigation and research using pedagogic grammars has led the trainees to become more aware of the complexities of authentic language and how it does not always match the neat grammar presentations of course books and reference works.

In general, as the focus has moved to more research based work, trainees' tasks have increasingly tended to display the following characteristics:

– a move away from merely asking for the names of forms towards asking for the use of a form
– a focus on a greater variety of linguistic features
– greater attention to discoursal features,

and where concordance tasks were used:

– more research into grammatical forms not normally covered on pre-service courses (Kerr 1996), nor found in the majority of ELT coursebooks
– a greater focus on lexical features, particularly lexical chunks
– greater detail in the dialogue based tasks.

Examples of tasks devised by trainees

As indicated above, the focus of trainees' tasks has tended to shift over time away from what we call 'traditional' areas of grammar, by which we mean areas frequently covered in course books, to less frequently covered features, which we refer to here as 'non-traditional' areas of grammar. The latter can be subdivided into advanced grammatical features not generally dealt with on an initial training course and not found in standard pedagogical grammars, discourse features (e.g. back channels, feedback, topic management and ellipsis), and lexis. Below we provide examples of tasks focusing on each of these three, starting with advanced grammatical features.

Advanced grammatical features

These featured in the trainee-designed tasks of all the later courses, and most frequently in the course that used corpus investigation as a basis for teaching peers. Below we present the instructional material designed and prepared by one group which was asked to investigate *when* and *while*. The material focuses on *when* and categories identified by the trainees.

First (Table 4), there is a selection of the concordance lines used as a basis for the two tasks appearing below the table.

Table 4. Selection of concordance lines used in task design

1) Wayne's World will find much to treasure here, though ageing hippies and other fogies may well feel like the character who, **when asked** to come to a party, declines by explaining he has less important things to do.
2) **When connecting** charger, connect leads first, then turn on charge.
3) There have been **moments when** it has embarrassed me, although at the moment it doesn't.
4) ... it escaped a bid from BTR in January 1987, **since when** outsiders believe they have witnessed a series of mistakes.

These lines suggest the following categories for a classification task to accompany a reading text:

1	2	3	4
When before a past participle (which replaces a passive voice)	when before a present participle (which replaces a present simple)	when after nouns with time reference (meaning 'in which')	when after 'since' used as a pronoun / noun meaning the time that something started happening

The same set of concordance lines was also used to produce an error correction task, based on two versions of the concordance lines, one the original, the other 'doctored':

Which of the following sentences are correct and which incorrect?
a. The new budget is overall tight when measuring against the ambitions of Maastricht.
b. The new budget is overall tight when measured against the ambitions of Maastricht.
a. It pushed the share price up to 90p, since when it has slipped back.
b. It pushed the share price up to 90p, when it has slipped back since.

Discoursal features

The number and detail of discourse-related questions asked increased markedly in the dialogue-based tasks when the language awareness component of the course became predominantly investigative. No input was given on discourse features on any course, yet trainees independently picked up on elements of cohesion and other features of conversation in the tasks they set, although they did not know the specific terminology for them.
The following set of questions in the task below provides an example of attention to cohesion:

[...]
D: Well, when I was younger I used to go[1] to Alderney which is one of the Channel Islands each summer. My grandparents used to own[2] a -uh sort of a part of a – well it was a castle you know. It[3] was sort of chopped up into about six houses and it had a big balcony overlooking[4] the sea there. That[5] was really nice actually [..]
1. How many events does this refer to?
2. How many events does this refer to?
3. What does 'it' refer to?
4. What is the time reference here? Function?
5. What does 'that' refer to?

Lexis and lexical chunks

Kerr (1993) has noted the divorce of grammar from other areas of the language system. In our data, phonology is rarely a focus, and lexis was not so frequently taken note of in the earlier courses. However, with the need to produce instructional material from concordances, attention to lexis increased. For example, from research into the word *quite*, a group of trainees developed concordance based teaching material based on Tribble and Jones (1990) to teach the chunk *quite apart from*.

Feedback and evaluation from course participants

Trainee-transcribed dialogue tasks have been set on the last five pre-service courses and feedback on them has been positive on all the courses. In fact, the predominant response is one of enjoyment in analysing their conversations and deciding which questions to set. The trainees are also interested in their peers' conversations because of both the challenge of the questions set and their personal interest in the tapescripts. The fact that all the tasks are constructed by the trainees pushes weaker course members to see the level of analysis they could be aiming for when they examine language; and because tasks are peer-designed, there is less of the excuse: '*I can't be expected to think like that yet. The tutors made this task and they've been studying language for years.*' The quality of the tasks produced is also useful in assessing the level of trainees' perceptions about language.

The trainees comment that they find these tasks an interesting way of revising previously studied language areas and of applying their textbook learning to authentic language data to see if the grammatical descriptions and coursebook paradigms hold true.

The feedback on the concordance-based investigation tasks was equally positive despite the fact that it was the first time many trainees had used concordancing tools. Because trainees worked on these tasks in groups, they were able to pool their resources (linguistic, time, creative) so that the combined effort was greater than the sum of individual strengths.

In the first concordance group, the trainees reported that they found their investigation more beneficial than their peers' presentations. It might have been preferable, then, to spread out the presentations over a number of days instead of having them all on the same day. In any event, as a result of these

comments, we made materials production rather than presentation the focus of the second course's concordance project as this was seen as the best way of avoiding listener fatigue and of providing trainees with reference material for the future.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have shown how it is possible to incorporate language research into the language awareness component of pre-service training courses. By encouraging trainees to examine authentic instances of language, to compare them with conventional pedagogical grammatical description and to evaluate their treatment in coursebooks and pedagogical grammars, we are helping trainees to consider themselves as researchers of language not just as consumers and transmitters of received wisdom about language. In this way we are helping to emphasise the link between Edge's (1988) analyst and teacher.

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Developing language awareness and error detection

What can we expect of novice trainees?

Heather Murray

Language teacher training involves the construction of new cognitive categories, many of which are language-related and constitute what could be called 'pedagogical language awareness', that is, the subject-matter knowledge of experienced language teachers. Part of this knowledge has to do with learners' language errors. This chapter, therefore, reports on an investigation of teacher trainees' ability to detect and classify language learners' errors. The trainees were attending a training course for teachers of English as a foreign language leading to the CELTA,[1] a pre-service certificate.

The importance of errors in language teaching

Pit Corder was among the first applied linguists to point out the significance of learners' errors for teachers. One of his key insights was that learners' errors are evidence of a developing but definite system of language and are themselves systematic (Corder 1967). Another was that teachers unconsciously monitor learners' errors almost continuously to construct a mental image of each learner's language learning process (Corder 1972). Leaving aside the complex and possibly futile area of error treatment, one can identify four ways in which teachers make use of learners' errors:

– as indicators of the level of difficulty of a particular exercise or activity. For example, the occurrence of a larger number of errors than expected may indicate that a particular exercise is too difficult for the learners;
– as indicators of learning success or failure. Fewer errors of a specific kind may signal to the teacher that learning has taken place;

– as a diagnostic device. By paying attention to the types of errors made and classifying them, teachers develop an image of learners' interlanguage. This in turn, may enable teachers to sort individual learners into groups of roughly similar proficiency, and to decide what to teach next;
– as a means of assessment. Part of teachers' evaluation of a learner's language proficiency is based on their errors.

However, in order to use errors in these ways, teachers must first notice and then analyze them; this is no easy matter, for as Ruth Wajnryb (1988: 187) notes, rightly, acquiring error analysis skills 'is one of the more difficult tasks that confront the beginning teacher'. However, before analysis can be undertaken, errors must be detected, a far from simple process that can be broken down into a number of mental operations as follows:

– while monitoring learner utterances, the teacher decides if an utterance is well-formed;
– almost simultaneously, the teacher decides whether the meaning of the utterance can be made sense of;
– the teacher then tries to make a well-formed reconstruction of the learner's utterance interpretation based on his or her interpretation of the learner's intention, making a mental note of the difference between the ill- and well-formed versions in order to be able to categorize the error.

Corder (1972) notes that teachers may categorize the errors they perceive in one of several ways. At a superficial level, they may characterise errors as 'errors of omission' (where some element is missing), 'errors of addition' (where some extraneous element is present), 'errors of selection' (where the wrong item has been chosen), and 'errors of ordering' (where the elements are in the wrong order). At a more descriptive level, teachers may use linguistic categories — phonological/graphological, grammatical and lexico-semantic — to classify the errors they perceive, identifying the error as part of the linguistic system. This obviously entails a certain amount of analytical linguistic knowledge on the teacher's part.

Research on error perception

Over the past 25 years, dozens of studies in the field of foreign language learning have been devoted to investigating differences in perceptions and

judgements of language learners' errors (cf. James 1998). Much of this error perception research involves giving native or non-native language teachers, or teachers and non-teachers, the somewhat unrealistic task of evaluating sets of sentences containing one error each. Most studies are concerned with written error, but a few have been based on recordings of spoken language. When native-speaker and non-native-speaker teachers' judgements of learner error are compared, native speakers are usually found to be significantly more tolerant (see Porte 1999; Sheory 1986; McCretton and Rider 1993). Other studies indicate that teachers and non-teachers judge the gravity of linguistic errors differently, with non-teachers tending to be more lenient in their judgements (e.g. Schairer 1992; Hadden 1991). Taken together, a majority of studies suggest that native-speaker non-teachers are the least severe judges of L2 error, one plausible explanation for which is that non-teachers just do not notice many learner errors.

These findings should give trainers of novice native speaker teachers food for thought. Since error plays such a major role in teachers' conceptualisations of learner language, teachers who are not aware of learners' errors and who do not know how to make use of them in their judgements about teaching can be significantly handicapped. It is thus worth looking more closely at this crucial aspect of teacher language awareness to see whether and how it develops during a pre-service teacher training course.

Learners' errors and pre-service teacher training courses

Given the importance of errors in providing teachers with feedback about learning, it is surprising how little attention is usually accorded to error detection and evaluation on pre-service teacher training courses such as the CELTA. The standard training textbooks (e.g. Harmer 2000; Scrivener 1994) devote more pages to telling trainee teachers how to plan, set up and manage activities, and how to choose and present tasks and materials than they do to telling them how to deal with learner language. This is especially true of spoken language, possibly because of the ephemeral nature of speech and the consequent difficulties involved in recalling and analysing learner utterances.

Neither is dealing with learners' errors a major area in the revised CELTA syllabus. The closest the revised syllabus comes to mentioning reactive (as opposed to proactive) teaching is in a section titled 'The monitoring and evaluation of adult learners', in which trainees should, with the help of the

course, be able to 'identify areas where the class as a whole and individual learners have made progress after lessons, and where additional support or supplementary work is necessary' (UCLES 1996: 11). This seems to be taking a great deal for granted, since considerable conceptual development is needed to get novice language teachers to a point where they can actually identify either the progress made by learners or their language needs.

The error detection study

The aim of the study reported here was, then, to investigate the ability of novice and experienced native speaker English teachers to detect errors made by language learners, and, in particular, to find answers to the following research questions:

- Do inexperienced (i.e. novice) teacher trainees notice fewer errors than more experienced teachers?
- Do novice trainees perceive more errors towards the end of a short training course than at the beginning, i.e. to what extent does a short pre-service course such as the CELTA improve novice trainees' ability to detect errors?
- What might account for improved error perception?

The study was carried out with the participation and consent of English native-speaker trainees on a part-time CELTA course in Switzerland. In this part-time course, the 150 course hours are spread over a period of six or seven months instead of being fitted into the usual one-month time frame of the full-time CELTA. Although they are preliminary training courses, CELTA courses in Switzerland often consist of a mixture of trainees with and without teaching experience.

The subjects in this study comprised 3 novices and 7 experienced native speaker trainees, all trainees on the CELTA course. The experienced teachers had been teaching English part-time for 3 to 15 years. All trainees had been living in Switzerland for at least 5 years, and were used to the sound of English spoken by native speakers of Swiss-German.

Data on error detection was collected at two points — in the seventh and the twenty-fourth weeks of the twenty-five week course. In the seventh week, as an introduction to one of the regular input sessions, the trainees were asked to watch a short (3.40 min) excerpt from a videotaped discussion among four intermediate-level Swiss learners and to note any errors they heard, just as

teachers monitoring a genuine classroom discussion activity might do. The video was shown twice, once as a preview so that the trainees could become accustomed to the speakers, and a second time during which trainees tried to note down as many errors as possible. This involved writing down the word or phrase containing the perceived error. The trainees were also asked to label the error, although not all of them managed to do this.

The same procedure was followed in the 24th week, but using a different excerpt of exactly the same length from the same videotaped discussion. This is because it was felt that using the same excerpt again would artificially boost trainees' detection rates. The author noted 38 errors in the first video extract and 35 in the second. These were of various types, i.e. at phonological, grammatical, lexical, and discourse levels.

It seems helpful at this point to record that for the purposes of this study an error was defined as an item of learner language deviating in phonology, lexis, grammar or discourse from the linguistic usage of a native speaker. The distinction often made between error and mistake, i.e. between deviance due to lack of knowledge and deviance due to failure to apply knowledge on a particular occasion, is not relevant here.

As my definition indicates, error judgements are subjective: not only do they depend on observers' notions of 'the linguistic usage of a native speaker' but also on their interpretations of what the learner intended to say. An additional difficulty is that it is often impossible to classify errors according to linguistic type (phonology, grammar, lexis, discourse) because these categories are not discrete. For example, in the video recording used here, a learner says what sounds like '*these kind*'. This could be interpreted as either a phonological error (mispronunciation of *this*) or a grammatical error of number. Or to take another example, '*he says us*' could be classified as either a grammatical or lexical error, depending on whether one is thinking of the grammar of '*say*' or the lexical misuse of 'say' in contrast with *'tell'*. Thus, to minimise this problem, only three error categories have been used: phonology, lexis/grammar, and discourse. Table 1 provides examples and numbers for each of these categories.

Table 1. Examples of errors occurring in the video excerpts presented to the trainees

Error category	Examples	Errors in Excerpt 1	Errors in Excerpt 2
Phonology	*orange* /ɔ ˈreindʒ/, *juice* /ʒʏ/, *how* /hɔʊ/	3	4
Lexis/grammar	– *investigations* (instead of *inventions*) – *applicate* (instead of *apply*) – *society who he came from* – *it's not more natural for us like for them* – *what means exactly this question*	34	29
Discourse	*also* (used as a discourse marker to mean *so*)	1	2

Results

Table 2 below shows the total number of errors detected on both the occasions data was collected. N1–N3 refer to the novice trainees, and Ex1–Ex7 to the experienced trainees. Errors are tallied as the total number of errors recognized ('Error total') as well as by type (e.g. phonology, grammar/lexis, discourse). No trainee noticed more than 12 errors, not a low number considering the limited time available, and one which would probably be typical for an experienced teacher.

Table 2. Errors detected by trainees in weeks 7 and 24 of course

Trainee	phonology errors		grammar/lexis errors		discourse errors		error total	
	week 7	week 24	week 7	week 24	week 7	week 24	week 7	week 24
N1	–	–	3	5	–	–	3	5
N2	2	2	4	7	–	1	6	10
N3	–	1	4	7	–	–	4	8
Ex1	**3**	**3**	**8**	**9**	–	–	**11**	**12**
Ex2	**2**	**1**	**6**	**5**	–	–	**8**	**6**
Ex3	**1**	**2**	**6**	**6**	**1**	–	**8**	**8**
Ex4	–	**2**	**9**	**5**	–	**1**	**9**	**8**
Ex5	**2**	**1**	**6**	**9**	–	**1**	**8**	**11**
Ex6	–	**1**	–	**9**	–	–	–	**10**
Ex7	**3**	**3**	**8**	**8**	–	–	**11**	**11**
Tutor	–	**4**	–	**9**	–	**1**	–	**14**

The error totals for Week 7 show (i) considerable variability between trainees in that some detected three times more errors than others, and (ii) that novice trainees as a group detected fewer errors than the more experienced trainees, a

mean of 4.33 compared with one of 9.17. The difference is significant at the 5% level (two-tailed t-test).

These results are a partial answer to the first research question: on the basis of this evidence novice teachers appear to detect fewer errors than more experienced teachers. Data has since been collected on two further occasions with classes of mixed novice and experienced CELTA trainees. The results in both cases agree with those presented here.

The number of errors detected during the second video showing in week 24 are also shown in Table 2 above. This time a CELTA trainer agreed to participate, providing a standard against which to measure the performance of the trainees. As expected, the tutor had the highest total of errors detected, but three trainees had totals fairly close to his.

Five trainees detected more errors on the second occasion than on the first, and all novice trainees made gains, with two doubling their earlier totals. Comparison of mean totals indicates that, as a group, the novices (mean = 7.66) have gone some way towards catching up with the more experienced trainees (mean = 9.43); the difference between the two means is no longer significant. The novice trainees are, however, probably not as consistently successful at detecting errors as the three most experienced teachers. This finding provides an answer to the second research question: novice trainees can significantly improve their detection of learner error on a course as short as the CELTA, although they may not become as proficient in detecting errors as their more experienced colleagues.

Although there was a greater degree of agreement on error detection towards the end of the course, with more trainees spotting the same errors in the second video showing, there was still little common ground regarding error classification. On the first occasion of data collection, only four of the nine trainees attempted to categorise the errors. Their category labels included: determiners, phonology, sentence construction, error of expression, misuse, pronunciation, vocabulary, word order. On the second occasion, seven of the eleven trainees used one or more of the following error category labels: intonation, construction, missing (third person) S, pronunciation, word order, tenses, vocabulary, lexis, no indirect object, demonstrative adjective. These results recall Corder's observations on teachers' superficial characterization of errors, and underline Wajnryb's point about the difficulty of error analysis.

How does error perception develop?

One way of explaining the novices' low error detection totals at the beginning of the course would be to say that their analytical awareness of language form was too rudimentary for them to segment the stream of learner speech into parts that were either incorrect or correct. They may have had fleeting impressions of incorrectness but were unable to retain any image of the precise segment of language that was incorrect so that they could write it down.

To trace the development of language awareness in this particular group of ten trainees, interviews were conducted at the beginning, middle and end of the training course, in which the trainees were asked to compare samples of language and find as many similarities and differences as possible. An illustrative sample is shown in Figure 1 below. It contains excerpts from two learner-produced written texts on the same topic but which differ considerably as to learner proficiency level.

Figure 1. An illustrative sample of learner language presented to trainees

Two students have been asked to write about being alone on an island. Here are excerpts from what they wrote:

A: I am alone on an island. When I got up I was on a beach. I was all wat and I was very hungrey too. So I walked toward a forest. I saw there was many fruit trees.

B: I am alone on an island. I don't know where I am, but I can hear birds calling in the distance. I arrived here last night, washed up on the beach after days on a board that swam. There are a lot of fruit trees nearby, which is good because I have the hunger of a wolf.

In the first interview one of the novice trainees (N3) had this to say about the two excerpts above:

> 'The author of A's observant. B's observant as well, but he's more descriptive in…eh — gives more information. … He has 'the hunger of a wolf' — sounds a bit romantic (laughs)'.

I think this shows us a novice trainee who does not know how to analyse learner language with any linguistic sophistication. Instead, she uses the only language-related categories available: evaluative categories derived from mother-tongue English classes at school, and possibly from reading about literary writing. However the same trainee's (N3) comparison of the same short texts midway through the course sounds quite different:

> 'Well, with A the person starts off in the present, 'I *am* alone on an island' and then changes tenses: 'I *was* on a beach', 'I was all wat …'. The pronunciation's not too bad — sorry, their spelling is bad, but not too bad. B's much better. I think he stays in the same tense all the way through. … And 'have the hunger of a wolf' — you'd have to clear that up'.

This time trainee N3 evaluates the two texts and their authors' abilities from a more sensitive linguistic perspective, explicitly mentioning tense, pronunciation and spelling as categories of possible error. Even from these very brief quotes, then, one can see that this trainee has begun to use error as a source of information about learners and to develop language-related categories (tense, pronunciation, spelling) with which to classify errors.

In some of the interviews one also notices how trainees' teaching practice and training experience help develop what we call schemata for error. By this, we mean that they mentally store frequently occurring errors and associate them with certain types of learner. Thus, they might construct a schema for 'typical beginners' errors' or one for 'typical French-speakers' errors'. Highly experienced teachers probably have extensive schemata for learners' errors, which means they are cognitively better prepared to notice, categorise and remember them for later treatment. However, teachers' error schemata may also lead to them to perceive 'errors' that are not in fact present. For instance, in the error detection study I have been describing, there were two instances of experienced trainee teachers claiming the detection of some typical German-Swiss learner errors, which were not in fact actually attested on the video tape.

Training activities which help to promote error detection

In order to detect language learners' errors, trainee teachers need to develop several types of knowledge and ability, namely:

- the ability to monitor learner output simultaneously for form and for meaning;
- appropriate concepts for the analysis of language;
- knowledge about the different types of errors that are possible;
- knowledge of the typical errors of learners of particular L1 backgrounds.

It seems highly probable that the formation of this kind of knowledge requires some explicit training, as Birdsong and Kassen (1988: 8–9) observe:

> Error detection, like other metalinguistic abilities (recognition of ambiguity and synonymy, appreciation of puns, metaphors and rhymes, etc.) is not possessed by all native speakers or even by all bilinguals. … It requires explicit, analyzed knowledge of language, along with a well-developed mental apparatus for retrieving and manipulating such knowledge. The degree to which these requirements are present in an individual can be enhanced by certain forms of linguistic training and experience.

In conclusion, then, I briefly describe some activities we use to help our CELTA trainees develop error detection and analysis skills.

a. *Observation tasks involving error detection*
One requirement of the CELTA is eight hours of guided observation of ESL classes. We now include an observation task that focuses trainees' attention not only on the teacher's treatment of error but also on the detection and classification of errors as a preliminary to treatment.

b. *Learner case studies including interlanguage analysis*
The CELTA requires trainees to produce a written assignment related to the needs of adult learners. In our original task, trainees each interviewed a Swiss adult learner and then produced a description of his or her aims, language learning background, expectations and learning preferences. However, because of trainees' difficulties with error detection, we have now expanded the task to include an analysis of this learner's spoken English. Trainees now record and transcribe a short sample of the learner speaking in pairwork or group work, and on this basis write up a profile of the learner's needs and language competence.

c. *Language analysis tasks which include learner language*
Short language analysis tasks, often based on model sentences or a model text, are given on most CELTA courses to help trainees develop their understanding of key concepts in English grammar and lexis (cf. O'Donoghue and Hales in this volume). Now, however, we have started to require trainees to analyse samples of learner language as part of these tasks.

d. *More than the minimum of teaching practice*
The CELTA course requires a minimum of six full hours' supervised teaching practice. This gives trainees some exposure to learner language and experience in reacting to it, but not enough to develop a sensitivity to error. We have, therefore, tried to increase contact with learners and learner language by encouraging trainees to teach small groups of learners — even individuals —

for at least an hour a week parallel to the CELTA course. This gives them 20–30 further hours of teaching practice, and thus many more hours of exposure to learner language.

e. *Diagnostic practice as part of training*

Placement testing of students for the teaching practice classes is also exploited as a training activity. Preparation for the activity involves trainees and tutors listening to tapes of learners and discussing possible indicators of learner level. This process of experience, discussion and pedagogical decision, it seems to us, is the essence of teacher training, because it results in the co-construction by trainers and trainees of categories in professional discourse (Murray 1998; Freeman 1992). With regard to learner language, this means not only categories for proficiency such as intermediate/advanced/elementary but also more language-related categories such as 'problems with word stress', 'fairly fluent', 'good control of past tenses'.

This combination of exposure to, and discussion of, learner language helps trainees construct new cognitive categories, a process which is, in turn, reflected in their gradual development of a professional teacher discourse. Without the development of these analytic categories, it seems unlikely that novice teachers will be able to make sensible teaching decisions on the basis of what learners say and do.

Note

1. CELTA stands for Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults. It is validated by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate.

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Maintaining language skills in pre-service training for foreign language teachers

Ann Barnes

In England, the competence of teacher trainees at the end of a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course is assessed according to Standards issued by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE 1998). A newly qualified teacher must show competence in each of four areas:

- Knowledge and understanding;
- Planning, teaching and class management;
- Monitoring, assessment, recording and reporting and accountability;
- Other professional requirements.

The first item in the above list, 'Knowledge and understanding', itself comprises many elements: subject knowledge, an understanding of the National Curriculum and examination specifications, and an understanding of how pupils learn. A significant part of subject knowledge is language proficiency, the required level of which is defined as the 'ability to teach confidently and accurately in Key Stage 3 (11–14 years old) and Key Stage 4 (14–16 years old) and post-16'.

Although subject knowledge — defined here as proficiency and confidence in the target language(s) — plays a deceptively minor role in the specification of required teacher standards, it in fact provides the essential foundation for most of the other prerequisites (see Jones 1997). Uncertain or incomplete knowledge of the target language (TL) will, for example, hinder the sound planning of teaching and learning objectives.

Modern foreign language (MFL) teaching, however, requires not only that teachers have the language proficiency to provide an effective language model to pupils but also the pedagogic competence to exploit this proficiency in the service of pupil learning. Trainees therefore need to maintain their language proficiency, to refine their explicit knowledge about the language, and to develop a methodological repertoire by studying a range of language learning

activities. (See the chapter by Wright on the role of awareness-raising in relation to each of these areas.)

To summarise: the subject knowledge required for MFL teaching, according to the Standards mentioned above, covers the following:

a. the ability to use the target language (henceforth TL) accurately, appropriately, confidently and with enthusiasm in teaching languages from Key Stage 3 to post 16 (i.e. the personal ability to use and understand the TL);
b. sufficient explicit knowledge about the language to plan and structure stimulating, effective learning activities, to assess competently and to cope with pupils' questions and misconceptions; this incorporates knowledge of how languages are learned (i.e. to be able to modify and construct the TL for teaching: see Shulman 1987);
c. cultural knowledge of the TL countries and speakers;
d. knowledge and understanding of subject specific legislation and examination requirements.

The language skills maintenance programme at the University of Warwick, which is described below, aims to include all the above aspects of subject knowledge. By working on a), b) is both explicitly and implicitly developed. The growth of professional knowledge for a MFL teacher must integrate their extant and developing knowledge of the target language (TL) as a user with their knowledge of the language as a learner and teacher, whilst c) is integrated throughout the course, not least through native speaker tutors and d) is more explicitly developed in school on a practical level.

Why is the maintenance of language skills necessary on a pre-service course?

Concern has recently been expressed about the language proficiency of MFL graduates, what language work they have completed during their degree and their ability to recognise gaps in their knowledge (see Meara 1994a, Scott-Clark 1996, Barnes and Murray 2000, Ife 2000). If adequate knowledge of the TL as user cannot be assumed (see Meara 1994a, 1994b), then suitable provision must be made during the pre-service course to ensure that trainees have the necessary proficiency for the concurrent development of pedagogical content knowledge.

It is a matter of debate, however, just how high the trainee's level of language proficiency needs to be for the development of this pedagogical content knowledge. Macaro (1997: 80) found that language proficiency was an unimportant factor in the teacher reverting to pupils' mother tongue in the classroom. Franklin (1990), however, found that 83% of teachers rated TL confidence as an important factor.

Clearly, then, the personal language proficiency of the pre-service teacher must be adequate, yet a definition of this adequacy remains elusive. Each teacher, tutor and mentor for MFL will have gaps in their proficiency (native speakers included), and each can point to perceived deficiencies in that of pre-service teachers. What is clear, however, is that this user proficiency must be maintained and refreshed throughout one's career (see Moys 1996, Smith 1995).

> 'We did lots of speaking to improve confidence. We were learning what we could use with beginners at the same time.' (PGCE trainee, 2000–2001)

The pre-service programme: the initial assessment of linguistic proficiency

On entry to the PGCE programme trainees' language proficiency is assessed by:

- undergraduate degree grade, where a substantial part of the degree must be language based (or native speaker competence with graduate status, preferably in a foreign language);
- references (these vary widely in their specificity regarding a trainee's subject knowledge relevant to teaching). The provision of subject specific guidelines for referees would help in the initial assessment of language proficiency;
- residence in a country where the TL is spoken of at least approximately 6 months;
- a short conversation in the target language(s) and a short written task in the applicant's chosen main TL (on a classroom based theme) at interview.[1]

At the same pre-course interview, a candidate's general suitability for the teaching profession must be evaluated. However, as this process is necessarily

restricted in time, there can be no guarantee of the required language performance in the classroom. In the classroom, there is no hiding place; in a conversation at interview, communicative strategies such as circumlocution are possible (and indeed entirely appropriate).

Attracting well-qualified entrants to the profession is not easy, but quality must be maintained and minimum standards specified for applicants to gain a place on a PGCE course. Reasons for rejecting applicants for the Warwick course — who have otherwise met the general criteria — have been almost exclusively language based, as it is felt their proficiency should already be of a sufficiently high standard to cope with the demands of teaching predominantly in the TL, particularly in their first foreign language.

Background: Trainees' linguistic confidence at the start of and during the PGCE

When asked about their worries prior to the start of the course, successive cohorts of trainees highlight a lack of confidence in a range of language areas.[2] Concerns include vocabulary gaps, 'haziness' with regard to grammar and occasionally a fear of having to use TL as the normal means of communication in the classroom. However, it is only when they are on the course itself that trainees begin to identify specific linguistic 'gaps'. The language maintenance component outlined below constitutes an essential part of this identification process along with the subsequent 'repair work'. Language begins to assume a new role in their minds: as a teacher, they must now understand the language exactly; it is no longer good enough to select familiar language or merely to have a 'hunch' with regard to a language pattern.

> 'I find myself thinking increasingly about the very nature of language and how it is learnt, interpreted and generated.'
> (PGCE trainee, 1997–8)

> 'It makes me reflect on language and forces me to develop teaching strategies.'
> (PGCE trainee, 1997–8)

> 'We covered some basic topics — such as imperfect tense, qué/cual, por/para and also covered subjunctive and other grammatical points. Topics we covered were good — introduced new vocabulary.'
> (PGCE trainee, 2000–2001)

Horsfall (1997) found that whilst trainees were apparently not very apprehensive about their language proficiency on application to the course, by the end of the first term, this was regarded by 43% of the cohort as an important concern, particularly for their second foreign language (FL2). Macrory too (1996) found trainees are anything but complacent with regard to their language proficiency, particularly with their FL2. It is also the case that in recent years, when up to one third of the trainees on the Warwick PGCE course have been native speakers of French, German or Spanish, English native speaker trainees have felt a degree of intimidation because of their perceived TL weaknesses (see also Lavender, this volume).

However, a study by the author has shown that from a low base the linguistic confidence of trainees gradually increases during the PGCE course such that by the end of the year no trainee's response falls into the 'Not very confident' category, as is shown in Figure 1 below.

To some extent this improvement may be attributed to the language skills maintenance programme described in this chapter.

Maintaining language skills on the Warwick MFL PGCE Course

Hansford and Swarbrick (1996) have pointed out that relatively low priority is usually given to language refreshment or enrichment in the course structure of

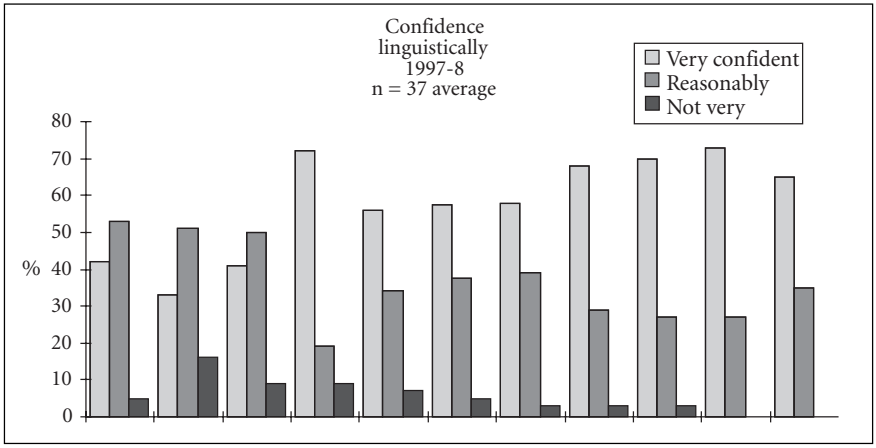

Figure 1. Trainees' linguistic confidence throughout the course

most PGCE courses as trainees have to learn and experience so much during the year that finding space for language input is very difficult. It is unsurprising, therefore, that emphasis tends to be placed on methodology rather than subject knowledge (Macrory 1996).

Secure subject knowledge, however, enables the trainee teacher to prepare motivating learning activities for the pupils and to be a good linguistic role model. A programme of language skills maintenance for all MFL trainees on the Warwick PGCE MFL (see Barnes and Powell 1995; Barnes 1996) was therefore introduced in September 1994 on the establishment of a link with the University's Language Centre. This programme has now run six times and has developed considerably from the first year as a result of detailed critical evaluation, the addition of Spanish as a third main foreign language and an increase in some years in the numbers of trainee teachers.

The language skills maintenance programme at Warwick covers the following — in addition to work in subject method seminars and school-based placements:

Term 1 (but also throughout the year):
- independent personal language learning (identifying linguistic weaknesses and areas for development in a language needs analysis);
- independent use of language resources in the Language Centre (where the dual role of learner and teacher is involved);
- diagnostic style classes in the first term to help trainees complete their Language Needs Analysis.

Term 2:
- at least one language course at an appropriate level in the second term (most trainees take a language at post degree level and another at post A level or equivalent);
- native speaker 'self-help' classes where native speakers and non-native speakers beginners in the language(s) work together. Native speakers with no other TL have the opportunity to teach their own language to other trainees ab initio and to begin a new language in the same way themselves.

Additionally, some trainees have pursued other external classes throughout the whole year (for example, from the evening leisure programme on offer at the Language Centre).

The following table provides an overview of the content and sequence of the language skills maintenance programme.

Table 1. The PGCE Language Skills Maintenance Programme at Warwick

Independent language learning	Subject Knowledge tasks	Native speaker self help/ voluntary extra language classes	**Term 1: (September — December)** **September – November** – Diagnostic language classes – Language Needs Analysis **November — December** – School placement
			Term 2: (January – July) **January — March** – Weekly language refreshment classes at University **March — July** School placement

I now give details of the various elements of this language skills maintenance programme starting with the independent language learning that features on the left hand side of the above table.

a. Independent Language Learning (Terms 1 and 2)

An independent learning component was included in the first term of the PGCE programme for the following reasons:

- trainees need to 'find their feet' regarding their linguistic level (the language needs analysis is crucial here, see below and Appendix 2)
- the term is extremely intensive — there are approximately 6 weeks until the trainees are based in school on a Block Teaching Placement where they teach half a teaching timetable
- most trainees concentrate very quickly on the mechanics of classroom survival, and consequently subject knowledge, whilst still important, is not central for them at this point
- from the language needs analysis and Language Centre logs, time is available for Language Centre classes in the second term to be tailored to the specific requirements of that year's trainees
- the second term contains an extended period (approximately 9 weeks) where trainees are available at the University 3 days a week, enabling a more sensible time commitment for a language course.

I now turn to the content of the independent language learning component.

All trainees are introduced to the Language Centre on the first day of the University course and have a guide provided in their MFL handbook. The

Centre provides the PGCE programme with open access facilities (audio, CALL/multimedia, satellite TV, printed materials) and also offers leisure classes for the general public and trainees. Additionally, materials specific to the PGCE MFL are housed in the Centre, such as lessons on video and materials demonstrating oral assessment in schools.

Trainees are given specific tasks to complete using the materials available, some of which are open-ended and can be completed at any point during the first term. A list of activities also provides trainees with an initial focus and an outline for their language log (see Appendix 1). A copy is given to language tutors enabling them to assess which areas trainees have already worked on.

In the first term, the emphasis tends to be on listening and the refreshment of trainees' knowledge of grammatical structures and rules, whilst the second term mainly targets speaking and the application of grammatical knowledge in a pedagogical context. The independent learning component continues throughout term 2 when trainees complete a second log of their learning activities. Their subject handbook also contains lists of TL grammatical terminology: terms with which many trainees are unfamiliar, but will need to use in their teaching. Trainees have also taken it upon themselves to compile lists of relevant classroom language which are held in the shared space on the University network.

The open-ended set tasks serve a dual purpose: firstly to enable trainees to analyse their linguistic strengths and weaknesses and to fill in their language needs analysis, and secondly to familiarise trainees with a wide variety of language teaching and learning materials from their new perspective as developing teachers. Experience gained using resources in the Language Centre feeds in to subject seminars and school placements, and as some material, such as many resources for Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), is still not widely available in all schools in which the trainees gain their teaching experience, these activities also prepare them for future developments. The guide to independent learning now has a direct influence on the language classes in the second term. Tutors receive a language needs analysis from each trainee for each language, and use these details to plan and adapt the language input.

Despite the heavy timetable of the first term, the independent learning component has been very successful. Trainees see a direct purpose to the work — ranging from using email to producing an original cassette in the studio for use in schools. The log of their activities encourages reflection and criticism. For example, many logs demonstrate perceptive analysis of commercial lan-

guage learning materials and provide clear proof of trainees' growing ability to criticise materials from the dual perspective of learner and teacher.

This first term of independent learning also plays a central role in developing the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills and confidence of the trainees. A triple perspective becomes apparent: the language learner, the language teacher and the ICT user. This is particularly noticeable when trainees develop confidence in using email and the Internet, as the following log entry illustrates.

> 'Successfully used the Internet — I am so proud! I was quite nervous and found it rather scary but not as diYcult as I had thought. I looked at a German page on swear words and investigated the Guardian HE section. Slowly but surely I am becoming more conWdent with computers and realise that pushing the wrong button doesn't mean the thing will explode! I can see the potential for class use and that it could be really motivating.' (PGCE trainee, 1996–7)

b. Diagnostic Classes (term 1)

The diagnostic classes form part of the language input in term 1, alongside methodology sessions and independent language work in the Language Centre. However, as they take place before the first school placement, the instructional context is very different from the extended language skills maintenance classes of Term 2, by which time trainees have accumulated a substantial amount of teaching experience.

Below is a list of some guidelines for the conduct of the diagnostic classes

- they should be *language* based rather than pedagogical;
- they should incorporate language awareness raising of problematic aspects of each of the languages studied by the trainees;
- they should provide trainees with some indication of what areas of language they need to work to improve (i.e. be unobtrusively diagnostic);
- they should provide role models of good language teaching, but without substantial discussion of this;
- they should encourage trainees to be accurate in the language they use in class with pupils.

It should be said that these diagnostic classes are at an early stage of development and therefore remain under close review.

c. Language needs analysis (term 1)

A language profile and needs analysis (see Appendix 2) is completed during the course of term 1 by all trainees for any language they intend to teach. This includes details about trainees' language abilities (e.g. qualifications), where and for how long they have spent time abroad, and any previous work experience. This was felt by tutors to be very useful when planning the course, and ensures trainees feel a degree of ownership of the language classes. It also enables trainees to take the information to school placements so as to discuss timetables and targets.

Trainees' ideas for the content of future language skills maintenance sessions are also collated for incorporation into the classes for Term 2. They are learning so quickly at this stage about language improvement activities that it is important they have a say in the content and delivery of these classes. Indeed, at this stage trainees find it difficult to view the classes as language learning experiences alone; they are mainly concerned with the practical, immediate use to which the activities can be put.

A clear message from the language needs analyses from all cohorts so far is that trainees' perceive a need for grammar practice and ICT activities. Another area needing further investigation is writing. Teachers need to provide an accurate written model for pupils, and Davie (1996) and Meara (1994b) both found that undergraduates returning from the year abroad perceived their skills in reading, speaking and listening had improved to a greater extent than their writing.

d. Language Refreshment Classes (Term 2)

Despite the heavy timetable this imposes on them, trainees taking a PGCE MFL feel the need to work on *both* their foreign languages. This is partly because they wish to increase their linguistic confidence but also because in the second term most trainees apply for jobs, and the advantage of having two languages to offer becomes very clear to them.

If they attend regularly, trainees obtain a certificate for the language refreshment classes to add to their interview portfolios. Tutors also complete a report on this element of the course, indicating strengths and areas for development, and noting particular activities carried out by the trainee. The report specifies to which level the trainee is competent to teach at present, which is particularly important for the second foreign language.

Trainees also come to view the language refreshment classes from a dual perspective — as a way of strengthening their own linguistic ability, and as a

source of ideas and a possible role model for their teaching. One of the hardest audiences is, of course, one containing trainee teachers. They are, as learners, no longer in the role of a real learner, but that of a critical, reflective learner/teacher. As one trainee put it:

> 'The PGCE MFL course is a bit like a double effect course — Russian dolls — learning within learning — i.e. we're learning how to teach and in effect the way we are being taught is the way we should teach.' (PGCE trainee, 1994–5)

Thus, one aim of all the language refreshment sessions was to make them not merely communicative, interactive language learning environments, but also a secure environment to practise, for example, presenting a grammar point to a sympathetic audience before doing so 'for real'. In the Language Centre refreshment classes, trainees are learning the language (the content) as well as the 'methodology' and about how the language is learned. Wallace (1991: 88) talks about 'safe experimentation' in this context, and lists various activities and the risk to the trainees in using them.

Stones too (1984) describes the Chinese box effect — teaching teachers to teach pupils. It is partly through these classes that pedagogical content knowledge is developed. Novices can explore issues such as input modification (see Macaro 1997: 92–3), where the target language used in the classroom may be modified as necessary to stimulate learning. The language that novice teachers know as user permeates the TL they develop as pedagogical construct, and their experience of teaching and learning, in turn, has an influence on their ability as a TL user.

Over time, the content of the language refreshment classes has developed greatly and the following are now typical elements, both at post degree and post GCSE/A level:

- Brainstorming of TL phrases for praise/instructions/routines/written comments on pupils' work, and active practice of these in the sessions.
- Role-play practice of 'being the teacher' (presenting, collating ideas, writing up comments, even taking the register and writing dates and titles correctly).
- Basic cultural awareness/information (flags, major cities, currency etc.) — often in a quiz format.
- Pronunciation practice.
- Practice in developing activities and questions based on texts from a student text book.
- The study of common language errors (e.g. genders, certain vocabulary items, etc.). For more on this, see the chapter by Murray.

- The study of vocabulary commonly needed for work in school (e.g. certain words for pets, hobbies etc.).
- Grammar activities: for example, trainees list points of grammar causing them concern. These are pooled, and working in groups using appropriate reference materials, the trainees devise explanations and activities to 'teach' other groups of trainees.
- Viewing videos of news programmes in the foreign language: trainees select one item of news they feel able they could exploit with a class and explain why they chose that extract.
- Marking exercises: an example might be a paragraph extracted from a learner's work at various levels which is then placed on OHT and 'marked' as a class. This is a useful exercise for revealing any linguistic misunderstanding on the part of trainees, and can stimulate useful discussion regarding marking, feedback etc.

Although the trainees have a common goal in that they are all doing a PGCE, one can still identify at least two distinct groups: those who are post A Level or GCSE trainees and who consequently need huge amounts of confidence boosting and groundwork, and those who are post degree, who need the opportunity to rediscover or maintain their fluency. The aims for sessions with each of these groups consequently differ slightly: for example, with the post degree trainees, teaching issues can be discussed in TL; but with post A level trainees, there is more need to demonstrate and practise classroom language.

That said, there remains considerable overlap between the two groups. A graduate who is adept at discussing issues such as current affairs or when analysing a literary text will still need to focus on specific classroom language ('*Put your chewing gum in the bin!*' or '*Where is your pencil case?*', which requires a completely different vocabulary field and register).

To sum up, the language refreshment classes cater for a very committed set of trainees who, despite the pressure they are under in the PGCE year, are very keen to improve their language proficiency, which they see as directly relevant to their work in schools. Indeed, the refreshment classes have been so popular that there have been many requests for them to be run from the start of the PGCE year rather than from Term 2. However it has not been possible to grant this request: first of all because Term 1 is already heavily loaded with content so as to help trainees cope with their first school placement and second because trainees tend to identify their language needs more precisely in the course of their first school placement and during independent language study.

For the tutors in the Language Centre, the trainees form a very different clientele from undergraduates, adults, and business people in that they are preparing to be teachers and are consequently very aware of teaching style and methodology. This presents a challenge for the language tutors; they are in the spotlight in a quite different way to their other Language Centre work. However, they also say they have benefited from the comments of the PGCE trainees, which have, for the most part, been constructive and enthusiastic.

d. The Language Class Handbook

Also worthy of mention here is the generic handbook and content list issued to trainees.

This constitutes one response to the diversity of trainee background mentioned above as it provides for flexibility of specific content within a common framework. It also gives the course more coherence, helps trainees plan ahead and is often used as a discussion document by tutors in the first lesson.

Handbooks contain the following kinds of information:

– suggestions for trainees linked to the needs analysis they completed in term 1. For example, the handbook advises them to request additional written practice if they feel a need for it
– cautionary advice: for example that trainees will normally be expected to prepare something each week for the next class (e.g. preparing a grammar point to present to others, reading, researching a topic via the Internet, or collecting teaching material). Trainees are also advised that trainees should expect to be corrected, as these classes are a 'safe' environment in which to make and to rectify language mistakes. As always, the language learning as well as the methodological aspect to the refreshment classes is emphasised
– advice that any written materials used by trainees (for example worksheets, OHT's, writing on the board) should be checked by the tutor or (another) native speaker, if possible. This is vital for the professional development of the trainees.

An illustrative extract from one version of the handbook (German post A level) can be seen in Appendix 3.

Conclusion

The language skills maintenance programme is now firmly established in the MFL PGCE course and has proved very successful. Results of the evaluations from every cohort have been very positive, as is indicated in the figure below which displays evaluative feedback from PGCE MFL trainees throughout the year 1996–7 (but which is typical of responses from subsequent cohorts). The question to which trainees were responding here was one asking which components of the course they were most enjoying. There was then a list of eighteen components from which three at most could be selected. As can be seen below, the response 'using my languages' is most frequently indicated precisely at the time trainees were participating in the language refreshment classes

This result is very encouraging, particularly as the language refreshment classes were in competition with other popular course components such as 'contact with pupils' and 'being in school'.

For the future, it would be desirable to investigate how trainees might extend and refresh their language knowledge during school placement, especially in their FL2. It would also be advantageous if methodology sessions at the University involved increased use of the TL, though this might be difficult at present as most sessions are taught in mixed language groups with three languages represented.

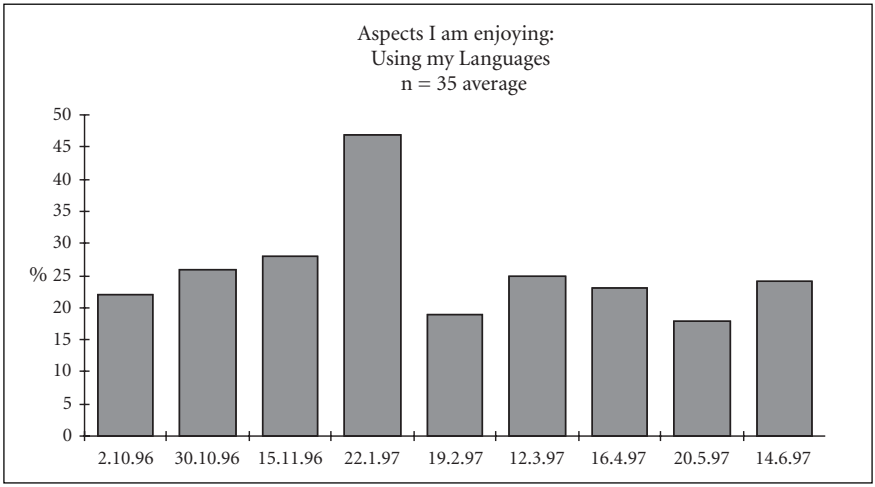

Figure 2. Trainee feedback on the language refreshment classes

The future MFL teacher faces many challenges. Recently, the maintenance of language skills as a pre-requisite for effective teaching has become a key area of interest for both trainees and the wider educational world. A programme such as that described above is one possible means of addressing the challenge of maintaining teachers' language skills, as the following remark from a recent PGCE trainee perhaps indicates:

> 'It provided a useful revision of grammar and also gave me more confidence in my German (I am almost bursting with confidence now!).' (PGCE trainee, 2000–2001)

Notes

1. See Hamilton (1995) for details of more ambitious selection procedures, and for a detailed discussion of PGCE MFL interview requirements in England and Wales, including the use of written tests, see Hurman (1997).

2. (For a fuller discussion of this theme, including how trainees attempt to 'fill the gaps', a process they are all encouraged to undertake at interview, see Barnes and Murray, 2000)

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Appendix 1: Language Centre log and suggested tasks for independent learning

Work in the Language Centre — Term One.
Below are various activities which you should work on this term in the Language Centre. Next to the suggestion, please keep a record of what you do, when and your opinion of this activity. You will give this sheet in to us in January — if you don't wish to tear it out of this handbook, make a photocopy, or keep it in a different form but still use the headings below.

NAME: _____

	Date(s) Activity	Opinion
Familiarisation with CD-ROMs and other software, including authoring packages		
Electronic correspondence		
Investigate the WWW (websurfing)		
Satellite TV		
Pronunciation work		
Grammar		
Listening (cassettes, radio broadcasts)		
Magazines/Books		
Videos (including school lessons)		
Other (please specify)		
General comments on Language Centre:		

Appendix 2: Language Needs Analysis

Language needs analysis: preparation for Language Centre classes
Please fill in the following section for each language you would like classes in from January. You will need either to photocopy this page or tear the page out and give it to us in October.

Your details:
Name:
First foreign language:
Language(s) to degree level and class of degree:
Language(s) to A Level (or equivalent) and grade:
Time spent abroad (how long and where):
Previous work experience (whether teaching or other):

Language _____

Please tick the areas you feel you need to work on:

FL1	**FL2**
✔	✔
❒ conversational fluency	❒ conversational fluency
❒ grammatical accuracy	❒ grammatical accuracy
❒ pronunciation/intonation	❒ pronunciation/intonation
❒ TL use in the classroom	❒ TL use in the classroom
❒ colloquial/idiomatic lg.	❒ colloquial/idiomatic lg.
❒ cultural awareness in the TL	❒ cultural awareness in the TL
❒ other(s) (please specify)	❒ other(s) (please specify)

Please tick the activities you would like to see included in next term's language classes:
✔
❒ debates
❒ presentations
❒ videos
❒ grammatical explanations
❒ listening activities
❒ IT activities
❒ grammatical exercises
❒ cultural awareness information
❒ other(s) (please specify)

Appendix 3: Extract from a version of the language refreshment class handbook: Post A level/GCSE German

About this course … .
This handbook is not intended as a syllabus, but as something to refer to during the course of the next nine weeks, and when you teach German in the future. In the course, we will be using the vocabulary usually needed at KS3 & 4, and practising questions you can start to answer about yourself, to see what sort of conversation areas you will need to familiarise yourself with.

Each week, one of you will conduct a game or an activity with the rest of the group in German. (So get thinking of what you're going to do! Perhaps it could be an activity which you have used successfully already in French or Spanish.)
If you have already taught some German in your Block Placement, then bring in any lesson plans/materials you have used, and we'll get other people to use them, criticise them, improve them …

The aim of the course is to get you using German as much as possible in a classroom situation and in so doing not only practise the language, but also your teaching skills.

Although this handbook is set out week by week, the course will not be as rigid as this looks. You can make suggestions or add topics at any time. Maybe you want to look at certain bits of grammar, or particular resources.

Topics we shall try and cover include the following (but please add or amend as you see necessary):
- the alphabet
- improving pronunciation
- interview questions in German you may be asked
- the teaching of topics within the Areas of Experience
- instructions and classroom language
- writing German on the board
- praise vocabulary
- written comments in exercise books
- specific problems you may encounter when teaching German (word order, cases etc.)

Some strategies you could consider when teaching your FL2 (they could be thought of as good practice for your FL1 too!)(from an article by Shirley Lawes, Links 15, Autumn 1996):

- check (and then check again!) grammar and gender before lessons
- encourage pupils to use dictionaries
- use a variety of linguistic models (tape, video, native speakers) and imitate them yourself too!
- learn and practise a set of 'classroom language'
- use group and pair work
- avoid lessons being too 'teacher-led'

The use of lesson transcripts for developing teachers' classroom language*

Richard Cullen

Introduction

In many parts of the world, a major — perhaps even the main — training requirement of English language teachers, whether on initial pre-service or subsequent in-service courses, is the development of their own proficiency in the language they are teaching. This requirement has been noted frequently in the literature on language teacher development (for example Doff 1987, Berry 1990, Cullen 1994, Murdoch 1994, with specific reference to secondary school English teachers in Egypt, Poland, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka respectively), as has the difficulty in meeting teachers' needs and expectations in this area, particularly on in-service programmes. Language improvement invariably, and understandably, takes second place to what are perceived to be more pressing pedagogical needs associated with curricular innovations of one kind or another, such as the introduction of new syllabuses or textbooks, class reader programmes, or new communicative methodologies. Yet surveys of teachers' own views, for example Berry (op. cit.) and Murdoch (op. cit.), often show language improvement to be as high, if not higher, on their scale of priorities as improvement in pedagogical skills (see also Lavender, this volume). This is particularly so in countries where access to the target language, and to native speakers of the language, is limited, or where levels of proficiency in English have declined due to changes in its status from a second to a foreign language. In addition, moves to expand English as a subject taught on the curriculum at Primary level in many parts of the world, and the expansion of secondary education generally, have necessitated a rapid and large-scale increase in the number of English teachers required, many of whom are likely to feel a pressing need for language development. In this chapter, I intend to show ways in which lesson transcripts, made from video recordings of classroom teaching, can be used to develop teachers' classroom language skills on in-

service courses, and at the same time to deepen their understanding of teaching processes. (On the use of transcripts for teacher education, see also the chapter by O'Donoghue and Hales).

Language Proficiency and Teacher Confidence

A teacher with a poor or hesitant command of spoken English will have difficulty with essential classroom teaching procedures such as giving instructions, asking questions on text, explaining the meaning of a word or replying to a student's question or remark. Referring to the issue of the teacher's use of language in a communicative approach to teaching French as a foreign language in Scottish comprehensive schools, Mitchell (1988) observes that:

> No functional syllabus, 'authentic' materials, or micro-computer programme can replace the capacity of the live, fluent speaker to hit upon topics of interest to particular individuals, continually adjust his/her speech to an appropriate level of difficulty and solve unpredictable communication problems from moment to moment, or to 'scaffold' the learner's attempts at FL speech. In all this the teacher and his/her interactive skills are decisive. (Mitchell 1988: 166)

Although these linguistic/ interactive skills might arguably be essential to effective teaching whatever the method, it is probably true to say that their importance is heightened in an approach which emphasises the importance of realistic and spontaneous classroom interaction, the negotiation of meaning between teacher and students, and student-centred activities where the teacher is inevitably required to respond to unpredictable student contributions.

A teacher without the requisite language skills will crucially lack authority and self-confidence in the classroom, and this will affect all aspects of his or her performance. As Murdoch (1994: 254) points out, 'for non-native English teachers, language proficiency will always represent the bedrock of their professional confidence'. This confidence is not only the confidence required to teach effectively in class, but also to interact in English with colleagues outside class when required, for example in departmental meetings.

A limited command of English may also have an impact on teachers' lives in other more tangible ways. For example, a teacher's success in obtaining private lessons, often a vital addition to his/her barely adequate salary, may well depend on his/her perceived ability to speak the language well. Teachers with a poor command of English may not only be less successful in this area, but are also likely to be unfavourably assessed by school supervisors and inspectors,

who may be more interested in this aspect of their performance than their classroom skills.

Provision for language improvement in teacher training

So what can be done to help improve teachers' command of English on training courses (with their inevitable constraints of available time and resources) in contexts where this represents an important need, as felt by the teachers themselves? Various proposals have been put forward. Parish and Brown (1988) describe a Pre-service teacher training project in Sri Lanka which aimed to integrate language improvement and methodology through the use of text-based language tasks. Cullen (1994), taking up an idea from Berry (1990) for making language improvement the primary component in a training programme, describes an approach used in Bangladesh in which participants on a one-year post-graduate Diploma course attended general English language classes (aimed at their level) which were then used as the basis of process reviews on subsequent methodology sessions. Murdoch (1994) looks at ways of strengthening language support through activity-based communication tasks related to pedagogic topics as well as encouraging self-development strategies involving extra-curricular reading programmes and available self-study resources (e.g. radio, TV and video).

An alternative approach would be to adopt an ESP solution to the problem and concentrate on developing a command of classroom language — the language that teachers typically use when giving instructions, explaining, asking questions (cf. Thompson 1997), responding to and evaluating students' contributions, signalling the beginning and ends of activities and lesson stages, and so on. Such an approach to language improvement on in-service courses, not only has the potential to enhance teachers' language fluency — and by extension their confidence — in the classroom, but can also be combined easily and naturally with the pedagogical aims of training. This integration of language and methodology has received attention in Willis (1981), a pioneering work in the field, which systematically looks at the language teachers need to perform effectively in the classroom. This includes both the 'social and organisational language' (p. vii) used, for example when checking attendance and introducing different stages of the lesson, as well as the language required for specific EFL techniques such as presenting new vocabulary or introducing a listening text. In the book Willis draws on lesson extracts, in the form of

transcripts of teacher-student interaction, as sources of data to illustrate different aspects of teachers' classroom language, as well as aspects of the methodology they are using in their teaching.

Lesson transcripts of course are not the only source of such data. Video and audio recordings of classes can also serve the same purpose on teacher development programmes, and in Willis (1981), the lesson extracts are in fact transcriptions of accompanying taped material. Video and audio arguably provide richer sources of data in that they retain the prosodic features of the teacher's voice, such as stress and intonation, which of course are lost in the transcripts, and in the case of video, also include additional paralinguistic information, such as facial expression and body language. Nevertheless, transcripts do have certain of advantages of their own, as Cullen (1995) has pointed out (see also the chapters by Pennington and O'Donoghue & Hales). Perhaps their main value lies in the fact that the teachers who taught the original lessons can remain anonymous, in a way that they can never be in the case of audio and especially video recordings. This is likely to be an important factor when using authentic, local classroom data for critical examination and analysis. Another important consideration is that transcripts offer a more practical, feasible option in contexts where material resources, such as VCRs, are limited or unavailable.

Using lesson transcripts: an illustration

The approach taken to using lesson transcripts is practice-driven, in the sense that 'the starting point of the methodology is an item of classroom data' (Ramani 1987: 4) which is used as a basis for reflection and analysis by teachers in order to extrapolate underlying theory and influence subsequent classroom practice. The examples of transcripts I shall use to illustrate the approach are taken from video recordings of secondary school classes taught by Tanzanian teachers of English in Dar-es-Salaam, and form part of a training session on the teacher's use of questions. The transcripts used are short excerpts from three different lessons in three different schools, and in each one the teacher is asking questions to the whole class during the 'pre-reading' stage of a reading lesson (either using a reading comprehension text or a new graded reader). The aims of the training session are, on the one hand, to develop teachers' awareness of different kinds of questions and their different pedagogical purposes, and, on the other, to develop their ability to ask similar kinds of questions fluently and

confidently themselves. Although the transcripts themselves were used on INSET courses in Tanzania (see Cullen 1995 for an account of this), the procedure described here has been adapted to include a more formalised language development aim than that actually adopted on courses in Tanzania.

Stage 1

The first stage involves analysing and comparing the teacher's use of questions in Transcripts 1 and 2 below. Notes explaining the context of each transcript — in terms of school, level, size of class, arrangement of classroom and stage of the lesson from which the transcript is taken — are provided. At this stage the focus is on methodology rather than language, with the course participants being asked to study the transcripts, underline the questions the teacher asks and make notes about the differences between the questions each teacher uses, following the guidelines in Worksheet 1 (Appendix 1).

Transcript 1

Context: *A Form 2 English class in a Girls' Secondary School in Dar-es-Salaam. The teacher is about to introduce a reading text to the class ('Why the black fly buzzes') and, as a Pre-Reading activity, is asking the class questions about the picture accompanying the text. There are 40–45 students in the class, sitting in rows with two or three at each desk, sharing a book. Later they move into groups of 6 or 7, each group sitting around a desk.*

T What do you see in the picture, Catherine?
S1 I see a man and a girl and an elephant.
T Catherine can see a man, a girl and an elephant. Fatma, what can you see in that picture?
S2 I see a hen and a tree.
T Good. A hen and a tree. What is the man doing? Yes, Agnes?
S3 The man is climb a tree.
T Again.
S3 The man is climb a tree.
T The man is climbing the tree. Say that again.
S3 The man is climbing a tree.
T The man is climbing a tree. Good. What is the woman doing? What is the woman doing?
S4 The woman is running.
T The woman is running. OK. Now in your groups and pairs — some of you are in pairs — I want you to write down something about the picture. I want you to list all the things you can see in the picture. Just list them down. Then

write down two activities taking place in the picture.

SS work in groups/ pairs. Ten minutes later in the lesson….

T Now your sentences, sentences. Tell us any activities taking place in the picture. Who's ready with a sentence? Rehema? Just your sentence.
S5 A rat is climbing a tree.
T A rat?
S5 A rat is climbing a tree.
T Say 'A rat is climbing a tree.'
S5 A rat is climbing a tree.
T Good. A rat is climbing a tree. Another sentence. Yes?
S6 An elephant … *(not clear)*
T Loudly
S6 An elephant … *(still not clear)*
T I can't hear you. Say it again loudly. It is correct, but I want you to say it again loudly.
S6 *(loudly)* An elephant is running.
T Good. An elephant is running. Another sentence. Yes?
S7 A monkey is laughing.
T Again.
S7 A monkey is laughing.
T A monkey is laughing. Another sentence. At the back.
S8 A bird is sitting on the tree.
T Again?
S8 A bird is sitting on the tree.
T A bird is sitting in the tree. Very good. Now the picture is about a story in the book. We're going to read the story.

Transcript 2

***Context**: A 2nd year class in a Girls' Secondary School in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania. There are 45 students in the class, sitting in rows, with two students at each desk. It is at the beginning of a 'Class Reader' lesson, in which the class are about to begin reading a new simplified reader entitled 'Skyjack over Africa'. The teacher begins the class by asking stuidents about their own experience of travelling, and of flying in particular.*

T. How many of you have travelled outside Dar-es-Salaam? If you have, put up your hand — if you have travelled outside Dar-es-Salaam. *(Pause: wait for hands). To S1:* Yes, please. Where have you been?
S1 Mbeya.
T. Thank you, Grace. She went to Mbeya. Now who else? Who has been outside Dar-es-Salaam? Yes?
S2 Moshi

T Moshi. Who else has been outside Dar-es-Salaam?
S3 Kigoma.
T. Thank you.
S4 Morogoro.
T Yes?
SS Moshi. Arusha.
T So many of you have been outside Dar-es-Salaam. Now how did you go there? How did you travel to Moshi, Arusha, Kigoma … How did you travel? Yes?
S5 By train
T By train. What about you?
SS By bus.
By train.
By train.
By aeroplane.
T By aeroplane. Ha! Now how many of you have travelled by aeroplane? Put your hands up. Yes? *(pointing to S6)*. Where did you fly to?
S6 I travelled to Zambia.
T Zambia. Yes? *(indicating S7)*
S7 I travelled to Tabora.
T Good, so there are some of you who have travelled by air. Now can you tell me — when you were in the air, how did you feel? When you were airborne, how did you feel? Were you afraid? Were you comfortable? How did you feel?
S6 I was comfortable.
T Thank you, Hilda. You were comfortable. Who else? Who else has travelled by air? You, Zeinabu? Did you travel by air?
S8 Yes
T How did you feel when you were in the air?
S8 I felt … er like something in my stomach…
T You felt — you felt that there was something in your stomach? *(Laughter)*. You felt some butterflies in your stomach. That means you were scared. Now look at the picture on page 1. We can see a man and a woman. Where are these people? Where are they? Yes?
S1 Airport.
T Good. They are at the airport. The man is showing something to the woman behind the desk. What do you think he is showing her? *(Silence)* What is he showing her? Is he showing her his watch *(points to her watch)*?
SS No.
T So what do you think he is showing her?
S6 I think… his ticket
T Good, Hilda. Anything else?

Presenting the transcripts to a group of participants can of course be done in a number of ways: they can listen to an audiotape or videotape and follow the transcript, or roleplay the transcript themselves by reading it aloud, with the tutor or one of the participants taking the part of the teacher (T), and the others becoming individual students, S1, S2 etc. as directed by T. I believe there are some important advantages in the second approach that are worth commenting on. Firstly, roleplaying the transcript allows for more active participation and involvement and is generally more fun. Secondly, and more importantly (in terms of the training aims of the exercise), it *depersonalises* the original transcript: by this I mean that it removes the personality, voice and mannerisms of the teacher who taught the lesson and thus forces attention onto the features of classroom discourse illustrated in the transcript rather than on the performances of the individual teachers themselves. The result of depersonalising the transcript material is to make it more generalisable as an object of analysis and interpretation: the participants have to imagine and consider different ways in which the questions could be asked, for example the stress and intonation patterns that could be used, or the teacher's use of pausing between questioning and nominating, or between asking a question and repeating or reformulating it. The participants are in a sense recreating the lesson extracts themselves, and *making them their own* for the purposes of analysis and possible improvement.

In the subsequent discussion based on Worksheet 1 (Appendix 1), various pedagogical points could arise concerning the use of questions in the two extracts, and in particular, the differences between the kinds of questions asked and the possible reasons for this. Examples of such points would be:

– Teacher 1's exclusive use of 'display' questions, i.e. questions to which the answer is foreknown by the teacher, compared to Teacher 2's preponderance of 'referential' questions — genuine information-seeking questions to which the teacher does not know the answer (Long and Sato 1983). Thompson (1997: 102) uses the terms 'display' and 'communicative' to refer to the same distinction.
– Further distinctions in question types could be made between the use of 'closed' and 'open-ended' questions (Barnes 1969), or between 'low order' and 'high order' questions (Dillon 1990) in each extract. Thus, for example, Teacher 2's closed, low order questions such as 'How did you travel?' would contrast with her more open-ended, higher order question 'How did you feel?', which is likely to place greater linguistic and imaginitive demands on the student answering it.

– the different purposes the teachers seem to be using their questions to achieve: Teacher 1 seems to be primarily concerned to use her questions to elicit a particular grammatical pattern (sentences with the Present Continuous tense), whereas Teacher 2 seems to be more interested in eliciting the students' own experiences of travelling: the focus of the activity is thus more on the content than the form of their responses.

Although teachers may well have their own preferences for one approach as against the other, preferences which will be revealed when discussing the various 'points to consider' on the worksheet, the object of the discussion is not to 'push' teachers into thinking that one is better. Rather it is to present two very different approaches to using questions, each of which might be valid in the context of the teacher's aims for the lesson, and the group of students s/he is teaching, and which are then available for reflection and discussion. In the context of in-service teacher development in Tanzania, the second teacher's approach was one which for many teachers represented a departure from traditional practice, and which also placed more demands on the teacher's own competence and fluency in the language. The second stage of the procedure thus asks teachers to examine this transcript in more detail, paying closer attention to the language used.

Stage 2

In this stage, the participants are given Worksheet 2 (Appendix 2), the first task of which asks them to complete a table showing the language that Teacher 2 used when directing questions to the class. They are asked to note not only the question forms used, but also how the questions are structured in terms of classroom discourse moves. Four moves are identified:

1. A 'lead-in' move which acts as an attention catcher, e.g. 'Now', 'So', or a preface to the question itself, e.g. 'Can you tell me' (line 28).
2. The main question itself, which is occasionally followed by a straight repetition of the question, as in the repetition of 'How many of you have travelled outside Dar-es-Salaam?' in line 1, but is more often followed by a 'modification' move (see 3 below).
3. A reformulation or 'modification' move (Chaudron 1988), in which the teacher either reformulates the original question in some way, for example by rephrasing a vocabulary item used (e.g. in line 29 'when you were in the air…' is recast as 'when you were airborne'), or supplies additional infor-

mation which might have been elliptical in the original question. The elaboration of 'How did you go there?' to 'How did you travel to Moshi, Arusha, Kigoma' (lines 15–16) is an example of this. The purpose of the modification move is primarily to assist comprehension and facilitate a response to the original question, as noted by Chaudron (1988: 128):

> A … factor in improving questions is … to provide the right sort of modification of a question so as to make it appropriately comprehensible and answerable within the learners' subject matter and L2 competence.

In addition to assisting comprehension, teachers may also use reformulation moves (of both their own questions and of their students' responses to them) to provide richer lexical input in their English classes, as the teacher's reformulation of 'in the air' to 'airborne' (line 29) in this transcript seems to show. It is unlikely that 'airborne' would be any more comprehensible than 'in the air'.

Chaudron discusses various ways in which teachers modify questions, including 'narrowing' the question by means of clues and rephrasing with alternative 'or-choice' questions, as in 'What would you like to drink? [pause] Would you like coffee, tea, beer?' (ibid:128). Examples of this 'narrowing' strategy can be found throughout Transcript 2. In line 30, the teacher modifies her original 'Wh' question ('How did you feel?') by using two Yes/No questions ('Were you afraid?' 'Were you comfortable?') which have the effect of giving students a choice of answer. The same strategy can be observed in the modification of the questions in line 15 ('How did you go there?') and line 42 ('What is he showing her?') Modification of questions can be seen as an important aspect of negotiating meaning in the classroom, and would need to be included in any programme aimed at developing teachers' questioning skills.

4. An optional 'follow-up' elicitation move, when the teacher tries to elicit further contributions from the students in response to the same question. This is typically used in questions designed to elicit the students' own ideas or examples of their own experience, and can be seen in lines 5 ('Who else has been outside Dar-es-Salaam') and 18 ('What about you?')

By completing the worksheet in Appendix 2, the teachers have to notice and pay attention to the language used while at the same time to think about the discourse structure in which the questions are framed. The focus of the activity is thus both on language and methodology, a dual focus which continues into

the second task where the teachers are asked to add possible follow-up questions which Teacher 1 could ask her class. This involves the use of 'Why?' questions ('Why is the man climbing the tree?'), and the use of the indirect speech structure: 'Why do you think … (the man is climbing the tree)?'; this is a structure which teachers need to be able to use with confidence for this kind of elicitation work.

Stage 3

The third stage involves completing a gapped transcript (Transcript 3 below) taken, in this case, from another secondary school class in Dar-es-Salaam, in which the teacher is introducing the novel 'No longer at ease' by Chinua Achebe. The participants are asked to work in small groups and complete the transcript with the questions they think the teacher might be asking. They are thus being asked to make the transcript their own in a more real sense than before, and it is not difficult to see how such a task would not only produce a variety of acceptable questions but also generate some useful discussion about which would be the most appropriate and useful in terms of eliciting and encouraging student responses. They can then compare their own completed transcripts with the original (see Appendix 3).

Transcript 3

Gapped transcript task: Try to fill in or complete the questions the teacher is asking the class in this piece of classroom discourse. The context is a Form 3 (3rd Year Secondary level) class in a mixed school in Dar-es-Salaam. There are about 40 students in the class in a small room with a lot of noise coming from the road just outside. The teacher is introducing the class reader 'No longer at ease' and is asking students about the illustration on the picture *(which shows a somewhat contorted figure forming a human arch over a pile of dollar bills).*

T What ……, Anna?
S1 I can see a person with some money.
T ……..? ……..?
S2 The man is resting.
T She says the man is resting. ……..? What else …….. ……..? Yes, David.
S3 He is jumping.
T He says he is jumping. One says he is resting. Another he is jumping. ……. ……..?
S4 He is diving.

T He is diving? Another one. OK. Why ……
……..? Why ……he's like this?
……comfortable, this man? Yes?
S5 No.
T Neither do I. ……?
S6 'No longer at ease.'
T 'No longer at ease.' ……..?
S6 It means there's nothing that has no ?end *(not clear)*
T He says it means there's nothing that has no end *(not clear).*
Do …… with him? …….
another answer? Yes?

Stage 4

In the final stage of the session — the transfer stage — teachers are given the cover picture of another class reader, or a picture accompanying a reading text, and are asked to plan a sequence of questions they might ask when using the picture in the Pre-reading stage of the lesson. The sequence should include examples of modifications of the questions they plan, as might be required in the classroom environment. The task thus asks teachers to apply the classroom language they have been focusing on in Stages 2 and 3 to the process of lesson planning, in an attempt to ensure that work on enhancing teachers' language skills is integrated with work on developing teaching skills.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to show, through a description of the stages of an in-service teacher development session, how data from lesson transcripts, taken from the local teaching environment, can be an effective way into work on developing teachers' command of classroom language. I have focused on the questions teachers ask — to get students to think, to encourage them to express their own ideas, to check understanding, or to get them to practise a particular language form — as the skill of questioning is seen as an essential aspect of effective teaching, and also constitutes one of the more challenging *linguistic* skills for non-native speaker teachers to handle with confidence. Using transcripts to focus on the language of questions, and on the language required for the pedagogically vital tasks of reformulating, expanding on and following up

those questions, thus provides a clear link between enhancing teaching skills on the one hand and improving classroom language skills on the other.

However, it should be apparent that other aspects of teachers' classroom language would be equally amenable to work with transcripts. For example, the language used for giving instructions, and for giving feedback to students' contributions in the class, would be very fruitful areas for investigation and language development work with the aid of lesson transcripts (see also Pennington, this volume). Provision of feedback would not only include the language used for evaluating and correcting students' responses, but also the different ways in which teachers respond to and comment on the content of what students say — and the quality of 'responsiveness' (Jarvis and Robinson 1997: 219) which they display in the language they use. Willis' categories of social, personal and organisational uses of classroom language (Willis 1981) provide a useful indication of other areas where transcript data would be useful, as do Bowers' categories of classroom verbal behaviour (Bowers 1980, cited in Malamah Thomas 1987).

Finally, although this chapter has concentrated on the use of lesson transcripts as a source of data for work on language development, they should not be regarded as the only effective source of such data. I have argued that transcripts have certain advantages of their own, in particular the anonymity they afford the teacher and students and their ease of use in situations where more high-tech options, such as video, are not available. However, this is not to argue for the exclusive use of transcripts as a source of input, or to deny the undoubted value of other forms of input such as audio or video, with all the additional prosodic and contextual information they provide. Each of the three sources — transcripts, audiotapes and video — have their own merits as well as their own shortcomings. All three, however, provide samples of direct, authentic classroom data, and as such should be regarded as valuable, complementary resources for the course facilitator in a practice-driven approach to teacher development in general and to language development for teachers in particular.

Note

* This chapter is a somewhat modified version of a paper which appeared originally in *System* 29 (2001) 27–43.

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Appendix 1

Worksheet 1: Teachers' questions
Underline the various questions Teacher 1 (Transcript 1) asks the class and then the questions Teacher 2 (Transcript 2) asks. Compare the two sets of questions. What do you differences do you notice between the kinds of question each teacher asks? Note down your observations in the table.
Points to consider:

- *How varied are the questions in terms of topic/ length/ use of language?*
- *How easy/ difficult are the questions for the students to understand and answer?*
- *To what extent do the questions require the students to think or use their imaginations?*
- *Do you think the questions interest and engage the attention of the students?*
- *What can you deduce about the teacher's* ***aims*** *in each lesson extract?*

TEACHERS' USE OF QUESTIONS	
Teacher 1	Teacher 2

Appendix 2

Worksheet 2

1. Study Transcript 2 and complete the table below showing the exact words that Teacher 2 uses when directing her questions to the class. Write in her words in the empty boxes under the appropriate heading. If the box is shaded there is nothing to complete.

Lead-in	Main question	Modification	Follow-up
	How many of you have travelled outside Dar-es-Salaam?		Who else? Who else has been outside Dar-es-Salaam?
Now	How did you go there?		
		Where did you fly to?	
	When you were in the air, how did you feel?		
Now, look at the picture on page 1. We can see a man and a woman.			
The man is showing something to the woman behind the desk.			
So			

2. Look at the questions Teacher 1 asked her class and the responses she elicited. What follow up questions (e.g. questions beginning 'Why ……?') could you ask to some of these responses so that:
   a) the students are required to produce more language?
   b) the students are required to do more thinking?

Appendix 3

Transcript 3: From the original lesson

T What can you see on the cover? Yes, Anna?
S1 I can see a person with some money.
T What is the man doing? What is he doing?
S2 The man is resting.
T She says the man is resting. Do you think so? What else can you say about the man? Yes, David.
S3 He is jumping.
T He says he is jumping. One says he is resting. Another he is jumping. Another one?
S4 He is diving.
T He is diving? Another one. OK. Why do you think this man is diving, is resting, is jumping? Why do you think he's like this? Do you think he is comfortable, this man? Yes?
S5 No.
T Neither do I. What is the title of the book?
S6 'No longer at ease.'
T 'No longer at ease.' What does it mean? Yes?
S6 It means there's nothing that has no ?end *(not clear)*
T He says it means there's nothing that has no end *(not clear)*. Do you agree with him? Anyone want to give another answer? Yes?

Towards a framework for language improvement within short in-service teacher development programmes

Susan Lavender

Introduction

This chapter discusses the role of language improvement on short in-service courses for English language teachers with a view to establishing sound guidelines for this component of such courses. The discussion is supported by data on in-service teacher trainees and their tutors'[1] expectations and experiences of language improvement work. Although only one institution's efforts to investigate this area are reported, it is hoped that the research perspectives, methodologies, and outcomes, as well as the guidelines themselves, will be helpful to those involved in the design of language improvement components elsewhere.

Why research the language improvement element of courses?

There were three main reasons for undertaking this research. Firstly, as evidenced by Berry (1990) with regard to pre-service courses, language teachers tend to regard language improvement as the single most important element of their professional development course (see also the chapters by Cullen and Barnes). Secondly, there is surprisingly little in the literature on short course design which relates to principles for improving trainee teachers' language proficiency. Although most literature on the content of in-service English language teacher development assumes a language improvement component (see, for example, Breen et al. 1989 and Long 1990); there is, as Bernhardt & Hammadou (1987) point out, very little data-based research on second language teacher improvement. Thirdly in the context here described, there was a danger, arising from the time pressures of a short course, that teachers would either impose a course structure irrespective of the trainees' needs or that time

would be wasted whilst tutors and the trainees teachers negotiated the structure of language improvement work.

Background to teachers, tutors and courses researched

The data discussed below were obtained from two groups (20 in one and 21 in the other), of experienced primary and secondary school teachers of English from Korea who were attending in-service teacher development programmes of between 4 and 5 weeks in length. The teachers ranged in age from mid-twenties to early fifties and were predominantly female.

Many were overseas for the first time, and only a minority had received any previous form of in-service teacher development. They were almost all graduates in English, but a majority claimed they had had no opportunity to improve their language skills since university. Most were, at the beginning of their course, estimated to be at an intermediate level in terms of their own English language competence. They were all selected and paid for by Korean sponsors, who established the overall aims of the programmes — as follows:

- to upgrade teachers' ELT methodology
- to provide insights into British culture
- to improve teachers' language skills.

These aims were translated into three main course components of approximately equal weight, each occupying approximately 7 contact hours per week. The teachers were accommodated with British hosts and generally made their own travel plans outside course hours.

Four course tutors, all involved with the language improvement components, were included in the research. Two had previous experience with several similar groups; two were involved for the first time. The data from the tutors were all obtained via interviews.

These particular groups of teachers were selected for research because whilst they were typical of other such groups, they were also, in some ways, placed in a somewhat unusual situation. Table 1 below illustrates the rather unusual context of the course: not only were the teachers studying away from their home country but they were doing so in the target language cultural setting (the UK) and through the medium of the target language. This resulted in a somewhat uneven power balance between teachers and tutors, as the latter were operating on their home territories, a fact indicated in the table below where the courses described are located in the lower right quadrant.

Table 1. An Overview of contexts of in-service teacher education courses

	Training for same context(s) as course tutors	**Training for different context(s) from course tutors**
Course takes place in teachers' context(s) and language(s)	1	2
Course takes place in tutors context(s) and language(s)	3	4 (*courses described in this chapter are located in this cell)*

From the teachers' perspective, the very importance which they accorded to language improvement tended to make it an emotive issue. As experienced teachers who were already expected to be competent in English, they felt their professional, and indeed personal, integrity to be at stake as they were asked to work entirely in the medium of the target language and were thereby at risk of exposing their language weaknesses. Many, indeed, reported feeling a loss of status when they began to view themselves, once again, as language students.

In their discussion of the design of the language improvement component, tutors also reported a tension between viewing the teachers as language learners or as language teachers. While the objectives set by the sponsor stressed language improvement for professional development, the teachers themselves wanted to focus more on personal language improvement, and especially language for survival in the host country. Tutors also perceived a tension between using sessions to extend teachers' own language and using them to develop teachers' methodological skills.

Finally, the design of the component was also subject to a number of practical constraints, typical of courses of this nature, which influenced the nature of the language improvement work. Firstly, the tutors had no direct experience of the teachers' home contexts, including their typical styles of teaching and learning. In addition, the short, intensive nature of the courses made it difficult for tutors and teachers to get to know each other well. Finally, for reasons of finance, teachers had to be taught in fairly large groups and were not grouped according to language level.

Research approach and methods

Three principles guided the research methodology. Firstly the research needed to be on-going. It was felt perceptions from both groups were likely to change

at various points, and so it was essential to capture these changes in order that the final guidelines could take account of them. Secondly, it needed to allow the voices of both teachers and tutors to be heard, and to do so in such a way as to allow them to be compared. Thirdly, the research had to work with the expectations, perceptions and reactions of those involved.

The approach was somewhat similar to that adopted by Morrow and Schocker (1993), whose aim was to encourage teachers and tutors to give voice to their feelings throughout a course. It was felt, again following Morrow and Schocker, that the most revealing data were likely to be generated by using an informed 'inside' participant/researcher who knew all the parties. This role was therefore taken on by the course co-ordinator. A variety of data collection methods were used with the teachers: questionnaires, interviews, teachers' session notes, visual representations, and group diaries that the teachers kept throughout their courses.

Three specific questions were asked of the data.

- What expectations did the teachers and tutors have for the role of language improvement within a course?
- How did the teachers' and tutors' expectations change during and after a course?
- What views did the teachers and tutors express about the use of particular activities?

What expectations did teachers and tutors have for the role of language improvement within the course as a whole?

At the beginning of their course, and in line with similar data collected by Berry (1990) on pre-service courses, the teachers indicated that language improvement was a central, indeed and paramount, expectation of their time in Britain. One group completed the following phrases on a questionnaire on the first day of their course. The number of mentions given to items are as indicated below:

Table 2. Teachers' initial expectations: n = 21
(some teachers doubled ranked some items)

	language	**culture**	**travel**	**teaching ideas**
What I most want to do in Britain …	14	5	4	0
What I most want to learn on my course	13	1	0	8

Asked to complete the phrase '*What worries me most …*' nine of the twenty-one teachers cited language as their prime worry (cf. Barnes, this volume). When asked to rank the four areas in the above table in order of importance, fourteen of the twenty-one gave language the highest rank.

Although it is clear, then, that at the outset of the course the teachers saw language improvement as highly important, we have also to ask what teachers understood language improvement to mean at this point? The same group was therefore asked to repeat the ranking exercise, this time ranking each area for both professional and personal importance. The results, in the table below, again show that it is personal language improvement that teachers value most highly.

Table 3. Teachers' ranking of course components: n = 20

Course component	Professional importance	Personal importance
Language	4	13
teaching ideas	13	5
culture & travel	3	2

The importance of personal language improvement also featured strongly in teachers' initial diary comments. Many stressed the unique opportunity the course provided for them to have contact with native speakers. Remarks such as the following were typical: '*remove fear to speak with the foreigner*', '*ease tension to use English*'. The main emphasis in most of the comments was on the improvement of spoken language: for example, '*I want to speak English very well*'; and on improving confidence in interaction with foreigners, as in '*feel OK and confident to speak English people of other countries*'. The teachers clearly saw language improvement as part of their entire experience, not something which they expected to take place only in sessions specifically devoted to that end.

Although, as indicated in Table 2, they gave some importance to methodological skills, they tended to expect these to be taught explicitly, whereas they appeared to take responsibility themselves for language improvement: '*please help me make contact with foreigner so I use my English, and please learn me of teaching methods*'. Many of the comments showed this strong sense of the teachers taking responsibility for their own language improvement. For example, '*Many people anxious about their communication. Also I did. But I think that the best solution is to make much opportunity to speak English*'. At this early point, then, their comments indicated optimism and high expectations of language improvement.

How did these views accord with those of their tutors? The two inexperienced tutors were, in initial interviews, most out of step with the teachers' views

because they tended to view the methodology component as most central to the entire course experience. They expressed personal dissatisfaction at being involved in the language improvement component as they tended to see it as something they had professionally moved beyond. Both commented that they used to be language teachers before becoming involved in teacher development, and they thus viewed language work as providing them with less professional development as well as with less prestige. They tended to feel the work could be undertaken by someone less skilled and specialised than themselves.

The two more experienced tutors, however, who had previously worked with similar groups of teachers, did not share these views. For example, they referred, in interviews, to the challenge of reacting on the spot to teachers' questions, to the variety of language work from course to course, to the possibility of getting to know teachers well through language work, to teachers' enthusiasm for language improvement, and to the link with methodology through teachers' awareness of themselves as language learners.

How did these expectations change during and after a course?

By the mid-way point of the course, language improvement remained paramount in the teachers' thinking, but there was now a noticeable pessimism in many of their diary comments. For example, one teacher remarked: '*very stressful to hear English — I can't understand what they said*'. This sense of pessimism contrasted with their previous assumption that effort on their part would lead to language improvement. Their thoughts also seemed to turn from their own active production towards their comprehension of language, over which they necessarily had less control.

Many teachers also expressed worries that they were allowing travel planning to monopolise their time at the expense of language improvement work. They felt that the time for language improvement was effectively slipping away from them, and that that what had, at first, seemed a long experience would soon come to an end and that they would be left with no further means of developing their language skills.

At this point, their thoughts, as revealed in diaries and interviews, turned more to themselves after the course, and thus to their professional use of the language. Many gave comments that were highly critical of themselves as language teachers. For example, one remarked:

> 'our students know about me. I'm speak English very well — but in my mind I cannot deceive my mind … I'm very sorry I cannot speak English'; 'I'm shameful — cannot but confess I'm a non-English speaking English teacher'

The teachers had by now begun to comment on their enjoyment of the language improvement sessions, which they saw as an opportunity of getting to know each other better. That said, their comments also indicated they were very aware of differences in language competence within the peer group. For example: '*other teachers are envious of me because they cannot speak English well*'.

A further interesting point to emerge from the data was that teachers tended to exploit other sessions not aimed at language improvement as an opportunity to improve their language skills. Thus, several openly admitted that they had quite often sacrificed attention to the methodological content of a session in favour of noting particular language expressions used by the tutor, and when asked to talk through their notes they often recalled little of the session's methodological input but had quite often profited linguistically in terms of specific expressions and vocabulary.

In interviews, teachers also displayed signs of a more refined awareness of their language needs. For example, they started to cite as problematic differences in accent between British English and American English, their own grammatical weaknesses, and the difficulties of drawing on explicit rules when speaking. They also remarked that some of what they had learnt about English in Korea no longer seemed to hold true. There was thus a sense in which the teachers were beginning to think about long term uses of their English rather than only about their needs for their time in Britain.

At the end of their course, the teachers still regarded language improvement as central. Thus, when asked on the final day of the course to draw visual representations of their course and their overall stay in Britain, many teachers put language improvement at the centre of their images. Although they were invariably disappointed by their progress, the teachers reported that language improvement — especially noticed in listening skills — was the most useful outcome of their course. The majority also commented that the language improvement sessions were the most enjoyable and useful component of the course and the one most likely to have an impact on their future teaching. Many said that as a result they would be able to use more English in their classrooms, and to get their pupils to speak more English.

By the end of the course, the tutors too were generally positive about the language improvement sessions saying they had enjoyed teaching them. They

did, however, express frustrations about the range of language competence within a group, the short time available for assessing needs, and the impression that teachers arriving with better language skills were those likely to make best progress.

What views did the teachers and tutors express about particular activities?

When asked in interviews at the beginning of the course which particular activities they expected to assist them most within language improvement sessions, teachers' most frequent replies were:

- grammar input;
- learning new expressions and vocabulary;
- working on listening skills;
- classroom discussion.

All of the above activities were included in sessions at the teachers' request.

However, by the end of the course their views on the same activities had changed somewhat, as we detail below:

- Grammar remained popular, but teachers reported preferring to collect real spoken data themselves and then to engage in guided reflective activities as opposed to class-based work with their tutor.
- They appeared to grow less keen on new vocabulary and expressions. Several teachers commented that much of the vocabulary they initially requested for use with hosts and for travel was too specific to be of long-term use to them.
- Work on listening skills was poorly rated. Teachers no longer saw a need for listening practice in class as they felt had better opportunities outside the classroom.
- They found unstructured class discussion relatively unhelpful, commenting that in contrast to their use of language outside the classroom, they tended to use only language they were sure of during class discussions. Also, those who were most proficient tended to dominate discussion.

The teachers also identified shared features of the activities they found most useful. These were:

– active language production from all participants
– work outside the classroom
– language input towards a given end
– interim tutor feedback
– hard work
– a tangible, permanent outcome.

The two individual activities judged most useful, almost unanimously, were writing class newspapers and keeping group diaries. Both activities possessed all the characteristics mentioned above.

At the beginning of the course there was only a very limited degree of agreement between tutor and teacher views as to what were likely to be the most useful session activities.

The four most commonly mentioned by tutors were:

– listening practice
– vocabulary to cope with life in Britain
– speaking activities which the teachers could adapt for use with their own classes
– error feedback.

By the end of the course, however, tutors and teachers' views largely coincided. In particular, tutors now felt that :

– listening practice had been ill-received, approximating more to testing than teaching;
– much of the vocabulary input, motivated by homestay and travel arrangements, had been of little long-term benefit to teachers;
– several of the speaking activities had not matched well with teachers' concepts of their own classrooms, and in general had not been as successful as they had wished. As one tutor put it, '*they did communicate in English simultaneously which was something I wanted to happen … they appreciate it intellectually but it isn't entirely satisfying to them*'.

Tutors' views on what had been successful were also very similar to those of the teachers. For example, both tutors and teachers felt the reflective grammar activities, especially those based on teacher-collected data, had worked well. Both also commented on the success of activities such as class newspapers and group diaries, though some of the tutors felt they had had to coerce the teachers into making the necessary effort. Tutors mentioned the benefits of

such activities in providing continuity from session to session, and in linking the various components of the whole course.

Outcomes from data analysis

Three main points relating to the overall design of the language improvement component emerge from the data. First, the teachers consistently, and over a range of instruments, viewed language improvement as the single most important component of their course. They also showed strong evidence of exploiting the other course components for language improvement purposes, which is interesting, given the tendency in the literature to view short teacher development courses as mainly focusing on the development of teaching ideas (see Lamb 1995).

The literature also tends to assume that language improvement work will stimulate teachers to develop classroom teaching ideas, but this does not find support in our data where teachers were preoccupied with their own language rather than with methodology. In both session notes and verbal recalls they refer to a focus on language itself rather than any methodological interest in the type of activity being undertaken.

The second main finding cast some doubt on the viability of self-assessment of needs and negotiated syllabi, as it is clear from our observations that the teachers were not initially in a position to undertake either of these. They were simply not familiar enough with the range of potential language improvement activities to be able to make informed choices, nor was this a focus of their initial interests. Their initial choices were very much influenced by their short term needs of orienting to life in the host country, and they only took an active interest in the range of activity types at the mid-way point of the course when they began to think more about their own longer term needs as classroom teachers. Also, by the end of the course, activities for which they had initially displayed little enthusiasm, such as producing newspapers and keeping group diaries, were now the most highly rated.

The third main finding relates to support for the teachers. Consistent with a recent finding by Lee (1998) that language learning autonomy develops best when participants are strongly supported by tutors, the teachers here clearly gained from being the subjects of the research project. Many commented that the resulting opportunities provided for them to reflect, and then discuss,

feelings, strategies and progress in the presence of an interested and informed interlocutor were invaluable.

Principles for the structure of language improvement

The research findings suggest eight principles for the structure of language improvement work on this type of course. These are outlined in the table below.

Table 4. Some principles for the structure and organisation of the language improvement component on a short teacher development course

1	Language improvement should be regarded as the central pivot of the taught course and of teachers' entire experience. It should provide coherence amongst the taught components by preparing teachers within the language component for their other components. It should also aim to bring teachers' experiences in Britain outside the class into the course.
2	The outcomes of sessions should be tangible products (e.g. newspapers and diaries), so as to provide or allow for: coherence from session to session, coherence amongst course components, teacher feedback; confidence-building, work at a range of levels, permanent products of achievement.
3	During sessions teachers should be encouraged to reflect on themselves as language learners.
4	Initial sessions should be geared to confidence building and the social binding of the group.
5	Initial sessions only should focus on short-term language needs for dealing with hosts, travel etc.
6	Final sessions should include ideas for post-course work and continued group support for language improvement.
7	Teachers should be clear about the structure and aims of the sessions. They should have opportunities to discuss their expectations and progress in additional regular small group meetings with language tutors;
8	Language improvement sessions should be staffed by tutors experienced in all areas of the course.

Table 5 below indicates how these principles were then used to guide the planning of the language improvement component on a subsequent course for Korean teachers. As with the courses researched, this course lasted 4 weeks with 3 language improvement sessions per week.

Table 5. The structure of the language improvement component on a subsequent short course for Korean teachers

Week	Session	Aim(s)	Activities
1	1	build group relations	'getting to know you' focused oral & written with preliminary feedback: establish group diaries
	2	build confidence for making contacts in Britain	establish language tasks to complete with hosts as preparation for newspapers
	3	build confidence and language for fulfilling travel agendas	travel role-plays etc.
2	1	enable teachers to profit as much as possible from other components	initial newspaper articles based on work in other components
	2	facilitate access to British media	TV & newspaper tasks with hosts: newspaper articles
	3	maximise out-of-class learning opportunities	interviews for newspaper with members of local community
3	1	classroom language	setting-up of classroom activities
	2	compare language taught with 'natural' language	record data
	3	compare language taught with 'natural' language	analyse and discuss data
4	1	reflect on selves as language learners	analyse and discuss diaries
	2	build ideas and contacts for post course language improvement	brainstorm possibilities
	3	build sense of achievement through permanent outcomes	collate diaries and newspapers; tutor feedback
		small group tutorials are also arranged on a weekly basis	

Conclusion

Although the framework illustrated in Table 5 above is specific to a particular institution and the needs of particular teachers, both the process and findings of this research project can be said to have wider implications. First, the research reported here involved not only being aware of the teachers' home and course contexts, and of the interplay between these (see Holliday 1994 and Pennycock 1994), but also responding to the teachers' own evolving agendas.

Second, although much has been written on the impact of language teacher development courses, and their frequently disappointing results (see Lamb 1995 and Pacek 1996), much of this research has been tailored to the researchers' own agendas and has tended to focus on the methodological impact on trainee teachers. In this case, however, informal post-course contact with the teachers studied strongly suggests that it is the language improvement work rather than the methodological input that has had the greatest post-course impact. Many teachers have commented that greater confidence in their own language abilities has enabled them to employ more English themselves in their classrooms and to encourage their pupils to do likewise.

All that said, this is clearly a limited study focusing only on two groups of teachers, both of the same nationality. It would be interesting, then, to see if the tentative findings above might be replicated in larger and wider studies.

Note

1. Hereafter, teacher educators are referred to as 'tutors' and trainee teachers as 'teachers'.

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