English Language Teaching Now and How It Could Be

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By

Geoffrey Jordan and Mike Long

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To the English teachers of the world.

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PREFACE

In 2016, I started a blog aimed at criticizing coursebook-driven English Language Teaching (ELT). My main argument was that the increasingly pervasive use of General English coursebooks, plus all the supplementary materials that now go with them, means that millions of teachers today are forced to teach English as a second language in a way that contradicts robust findings in second language acquisition (SLA) research. I later started another blog where I applied this argument especially to those responsible for second language teacher education, accusing leading figures in this area of largely ignoring SLA research, and of misrepresenting its findings on the few occasions when they referred to it. Mike Long, already a good friend, told me how much he liked many (but not all!) of the posts, and in 2018, he proposed that we write a book together, giving an up-to-date summary of SLA research and its implications for ELT, a critical review of current ELT practice, and suggestions for how it might be improved. Of course, I was delighted and honored to accept. Since we were both anarchists, we agreed that the book should reflect our view that education is a political act; that current ELT reflects the ideology and economic consequences of neoliberal state capitalism; and that radical reform is necessary.

We knocked together an outline of the book at a long lunch in Barcelona, and after that, Mike worked from Washington, and I from Girona in Catalonia. We decided on the chapters, wrote drafts, reworked them, and on we went. Mike had pretty much finished his contributions, with just one chapter to go, when he was suddenly diagnosed with a very aggressive form of cancer. Mike reacted with extraordinary bravery, but, despite his determination to keep going, he soon realized we needed help, and that's when his partner, Cathy Doughty stepped in.

Cathy took over as coordinator and main editor, and after Mike's death she continued in this vital role, as well as helping Mike to finish his part of Chapter 11. I owe Cathy huge thanks; the book would not have been published without her disciplined organization, her academic acumen and her patient guidance. At such an awful, sad, stressful time, on top of dealing with Mike's death, her family and her job, Cathy got the job done.

Mike wasn't just a marvelous friend and a witty, cultured, charming man; he was a superb teacher - the best teacher I ever had. It was a delight to learn from him, to be constantly challenged by one of the sharpest and best-informed scholars in the field, and to be supported by his legendary generosity. I miss him terribly, and I can't express how proud I am to have Mike as co-author of this book.

Geoff Jordan, Vidreres, November, 2021.

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Many people – mostly renowned international scholars, colleagues, and former students – have influenced our ideas over the years, and hence, this book. Some we know well, or knew well, personally; others we hardly knew, or never knew personally at all. We disagree with some of them, but they have influenced us, nonetheless. Occasionally, it is the folks with whom we disagree that have influenced us most. We would particularly like to acknowledge the following:

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Geoff Jordan, Vidreres
November, 2021

INTRODUCTION

WHO IS THIS BOOK FOR, AND WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

We intend *English Language Teaching Now and How It Could Be* primarily for two – often overlapping – audiences: (i) upper division undergraduates and masters students working towards a qualification in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) teaching English as a second language (TESL), or applied linguistics, and (ii) practicing classroom teachers of English as a foreign or second language to adults. The reason for specifying the second group is that many practicing teachers began careers in EFL or ESL with minimal (e.g., Celta or Delta) training, or no training at all, or with training that was not well informed or informed at all by theory and research in second language acquisition (SLA), i.e., the process English Language Teaching (ELT) is designed to facilitate. (Imagine medical training without any attention to the workings of the human body.)

This book (especially, but not only, Chapters 1 – 6) should help readers catch up with recent developments in knowledge about second and foreign language learning, as well as implications for language teaching A solid understanding of how older children and adults learn languages is important if teachers are to understand when and how to intervene. Teaching is a complex, highly skilled job. Teachers often have to analyze what is going on in learners' minds and make quick judgements about how to help them. To do that successfully, they need to be able to draw on a solid knowledge base about language learning, as well as what research has shown about how best to facilitate it, and, of course, on their own and their colleagues' classroom experience. The aim should not just be ELT, but SLA-informed ELT. The book also contains chapters on pervasive and alternative approaches to teaching and teacher preparation (Section 2) and testing EFL and ESL (Section 3), together with what we consider a long-overdue examination of the often hidden political and economic interests at work in the field – interests that largely determine the viability of ELT as a career (Section 4). In the final chapter, we suggest how we think ELT should be

organized in the future to the benefit of learners, teachers, teacher educators and testers, alike.

Throughout the book, 'adult' is defined psycholinguistically, so differs from its everyday meaning. Research shows that some important changes in the ways people learn languages occur very early in life, and that some aspects of the level of ability that can be achieved in the long run are determinded in those early years, for instance ages 4 to 6 marking the end of most people's ability to learn to speak a second language without a detectable foreign accent. Shifts in the relative importance of incidental, implicit, and explicit learning (described in Chapters 5 and 6) that affect all linguistic domains – phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and (less clearly) pragmatics – occur before the mid-teens. For our purposes, therefore, 'adult' includes not just everyone aged 18 or over, but some middle school, and all high school, students, as well.

Each of us, Geoff Jordan and Mike Long, has expertise in theory and research in SLA, especially in instructed SLA (ISLA), and in classroom research. Both of us are also very experienced classroom teachers and teacher trainers. The combination of our academic preparation, research, and extensive field experience means we understand the theoretical, practical, and logistical dimensions of ELT. It also means, unfortunately, that we have had ample time to develop a high degree of cynicism about ELT's dark side, e.g., the powerful state interests and vastly profitable commercial enterprises that shape much of what goes on. In our view, they are the forces chiefly responsible for the unsatisfactory state of ELT the world over, and of ELT as a career. Therefore, while our main focus is on learning and teaching, we also discuss major structural problems in the "profession". We have strong, sometimes radical, views on these issues. It will probably come as no surprise to most readers, therefore, that we think many of the structural problems in ELT have to do with PPP: personalities, profits, and power.

In Chapter 12, we identify the major beneficiaries of ELT (spoiler alert: it is not the teachers or their students). Our analyses motivate a number of concrete suggestions for improving the way teachers are trained, the way they teach, and the conditions under which they work. Throughout the book, we propose some new, very different ways in which we think English should be taught, and in the way ELT needs to be organized at the grassroots level. Especially important are ways in which teachers can improve their own working conditions and classroom practices, leading to better ELT in the process, for both their own and their students' benefit. Improved training

and better working conditions will increase instructional effectiveness and make teaching more responsive to the educational interests and needs of students. We are keen to help improve the quality of teaching and testing, and the viability of ELT as a career.

Our intention, then, is not to provide another book about SLA, tempting though that is, but rather, a politically and SLA-informed treatment of ELT, with serious attention to teacher education, testing, professional and organizational issues. We show how many widespread ELT classroom practices are not supported by theory or research findings, and even directly conflict with them in some cases. Several of the least supported practices, moreover, are precisely those that make a lot of ELT boring for teachers, and irrelevant for students' needs and interests. In each area, we survey how things are done now, identify problems, and then specify how the research findings, along with our own classroom experience, suggest they can, and should, be done better – sometimes much better.

We make many teaching recommendations, but this is not a book of classroom recipes. Rather, we aim to lay out what research has shown about how people learn English as a foreign or second language, and for that matter, any other foreign or second language. Understanding how languages are learned and how and when to intervene are fundamental to the knowledge base of qualified language teachers, just as understanding human anatomy and physiology, the respiratory and cardiovascular systems, and the treatment of diseases is critically important for physicians, in fact required of them. There is still nothing for language teachers like the body of knowledge available to medical practitioners, and much is still *not* known about language learning, but many of the research findings over the past 50 years are important and very useful in the classroom. It is incumbent upon all of us to keep abreast of what is known about how language learning can be done most efficiently and how best to teach and test, but it is equally important to be aware of what is not yet known.

While we indicate what we see as the best options for classroom practice, we ultimately want to equip readers to make their own informed decisions. Despite our academic training, research background, and field experience (perhaps mostly *because of* our own field experience), we firmly believe that teachers are the experts on their own classrooms. They are the ones responsible for making the moment-by-moment decisions as a lesson unfolds, not people like us or textbook writers, who have never met their students and often know little or nothing about local conditions or the constraints under which teachers have to operate. *Options, not recipes*.

A few practical matters

As is inevitable in any specialized field, ELT has its fair share of acronyms and technical terms. For readers unsure about the meaning of some of them, we try to define them as they are introduced.

At the end of each chapter, we provide some **Discussion Questions**. Most are straightforward enough; others are quite hard. They occasionally include one or two to which we think answers would be very useful, but are currently unclear or currently unknown (to us, at least). In other words, there is not always a right answer.

For those interested in pursuing a topic further, a brief list of **Suggested Reading** appears at the end of each chapter.

SECTION 1.
HOW ADULTS LEARN LANGUAGES

Introduction to Section 1

Language teaching is a complex, highly skilled job. In real time, teachers often have to analyze what learners say, infer from that what is going on in their minds, and make quick judgements about how to help. To do that successfully, they need to be able to draw instantaneously on solid knowledge of how people learn languages, what evidence shows about how best to teach them, and, of course, their own and their colleagues' classroom experience. That way lies not just ELT, but first-rate, SLA-informed ELT.

As noted in the introduction, physicians are in a similar position. They need to know as much as possible about the normal workings of the healthy human body (human anatomy and physiology, the respiratory and cardiovascular systems, the treatment of diseases, etc.) if they are to intervene appropriately when things go wrong. There are at least two differences, however. First, a *lot* more is known about the workings of the human body and about the relative effectiveness of different medical interventions than about language learning and teaching. Second, physicians usually have time to decide what to do and colleagues in the same room to call upon in urgent cases, e.g., in the emergency room or intensive care unit. Classroom teachers are rarely so fortunate; they are usually flying solo from day one.

With that in mind, the six short chapters in Section 1 – How adults learn languages – provide a brief survey of what is known (and not yet known) about language learning in and out of classrooms. More specifically, we summarize the research evidence in Chapter 1 on language learning processes, in Chapter 2 on language learning sequences (real sequences, not the ones in coursebooks), in Chapter 3 on rate of language learning, and in Chapter 4 on ultimate attainment, that is, how far learners can get in their language learning with and without instruction. In addition to language-specific phenomena, we discuss in Chapter 5 how language learning overall is greatly influenced by several general cognitive processes, some of which are no longer the same for older children and adults as they were for when

they were young children. This is refected in greater difficulty and variation in adult language learning. There are important *general* implications for English language teaching, which we outline in Chapter 6. Many more concrete implications and applications are illustrated in subsequent sections of the book.

CHAPTER 1

LANGUAGE LEARNING PROCESSES

1.1 Introduction

There have now been over fifty years of research on second language acquisition (SLA). Hundreds of empirical studies have been published of foreign and second language learning and teaching in classrooms, i.e., of *instructed SLA* (ISLA), including a growing body of work on technology-assisted learning, via computers, mobile phones, virtual reality, etc. There is also a vast literature on *naturalistic SLA*, i.e., language learning "on the street", without the aid of instruction. This includes a wide variety of learners and settings. Young children may be recorded as they grow up bilingual, through speaking one language at home and another at school, or in linguistically mixed homes, where their parents have different native languages and follow the 'one parent, one language' model often found effective for raising bilingual children. Other naturalistic acquirers include older children and adults learning a second, third or fourth language as a result of receiving their school or university education through the medium of a new language, e.g., in bilingual, content-and-language-integrated (CLIL), immersion, or English-medium instruction (EMI) programs, through participating in a study abroad program, working overseas, or emigrating to a new country, either voluntarily or as refugees. Thirdly, a lot of research has been carried out in so-called "mixed" settings, where learners take language classes while living in a second language (L2) environment. From all this work, a lot has been discovered about factors that predict success and failure, and about what is referred to as *interlanguage development*.

Much of this work is very relevant for English Language Teaching (ELT). It provides insights into what is really going on in learners' minds, as opposed to what most coursebooks and all too many language teachers assume is going on. The following sections are quite detailed, but they are essential to a good understanding of how people learn a second language. We urge teachers to see them as not just a sound base, but also as a diagnostic guide for teaching; upon first reading, it is not important to

remember all the details, as they can be returned to whenever attempts to interpret observations of students' language development are made.

1.2 Interlanguages

An *interlanguage* (IL) is the transitional version of a foreign or second language spoken or written by an individual learner. Each learner's IL differs at least slightly from that of the next learner, and sometimes mightily so. The underlying IL grammar, especially in the early stages of learning a new language, is also very different from a native speaker's grammar of that same language, and many scholars hold that it remains different to some degree even among advanced learners, unless exposure to the L2 began when the learner was a young child. For example, when attempting to communicate in English, the beginning learner will usually operate (unconsciously) with a "rule" in mind which says that negation in English involves placing *no*, *not* or *don't* before the verb (**Pepe no/not/don't have passport*[1]). This is obviously very different from the way English negation really works.

At first sight, aberrant rules like that might seem to parallel rules found in some dialects of English. A *dialect* is a variety of a language spoken by people born and raised in a particular geographic location. At the national or regional level, this can mean the English spoken in Australia, England, Scotland, Fiji, India, Singapore, Nigeria, South Africa, the USA, etc. Distinct local dialects, moreover, exist within those broader varieties, for instance in Quebec, Yorkshire, Glasgow, Boston, Appalachia, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Hawai'i, and so on. Dialects are also sometimes associated with membership of particular social or ethnic groups, e.g., Cajun English, Australian Aboriginal English, African-American Vernacular English, Hawai'i Creole English, Jamaican Creole English, and Maori English. In some countries, e.g., England, the variety of English a person speaks is also a (fairly) reliable indication of their social class origins. Whereas dialects are varieties of a language shared by a community of speakers, however, and are stable, ILs are neither. No two learners share exactly the same IL, and ILs are anything but stable. As we shall see in section 1.2., and is very useful for teachers to know, ILs vary, sometimes in quite major ways, from one L2 speaker to another, and within speakers, from one time to another,

[1] Following the convention in linguistics, an asterisk before an utterance or a sentence indicates that what follows is ungrammatical.

one situation to another, one task to another, and more. Moreover, some ILs do not just vary; they are volatile.

Dialects may differ from so-called "standard" varieties of a language in pronunciation, vocabulary, spelling and grammar. "Standard" varieties of English are those used as the national norm in a country, most obviously in the written form of the language. While ruling elites typically claim to speak the standard variety, there is arguably no such thing as one standard *spoken* English, since standard means very different things in London, Dublin, Edinburgh, Boston, Los Angeles, Singapore, Auckland, Lagos and Delhi, for example. The norms themselves differ from one another, and what are often held up as standard varieties, e.g., in England, the English spoken by the educated middle-class in the "home counties" (London and surrounding counties in south-east England), are themselves dialects, but less often recognized as such because they are usually associated with social, political or economic elites and power groupings.

People can identify other native speakers (NSs) of their own variety of English ("locals"), and also, those who are non-native speakers (NNSs), who may always be treated as "outsiders", as a result. In just the same way, NSs of English can identify other NSs and distinguish them, usually by their accent, from speakers for whom English is a second language (L2). Judgments tend to become less reliable in large urban settings, however, where many different varieties of English may be encountered, due to residents from different social class, ethnic, and other backgrounds being mixed with immigrants from other parts of the country or, at different ages, from other countries altogether. Which variety of English teachers are supposed to teach can be a contentious issue in some parts of the world, e.g., where British, American, Indian English, and so on, or another local variety may be seen as more relevant.

While commonalities and variation among NS varieties of English exist as a reflection of all these factors at the group level, at the level of individuals, even two people born and raised in the same place may speak slightly differently, e.g., as a function of generational change. Sociolinguists refer to an individual's particular version of his or her dialect as an *idiolect*. *An interlanguage (IL) is the psycholinguistic L2 equivalent of an idiolect*. Each IL is unique. At least in detail, and usually much more than that, an interlanguage differs from the target language (TL) *far* more than an idiolect differs from a dialect or from a "standard" variety of a language. ILs also lack the stability of an idiolect or a dialect, which do not change much over time, being mature, "end-state" varieties of a language at the individual and

group level, respectively, used in and by speech communities. An IL, conversely, is merely an individual learner's current, transitional version of a TL, spoken (exactly the same way) by no-one else. Far from stable, an IL varies at any one time and over time, i.e., *synchronically* and *diachronically*, respectively (see section 1.3 below). Learners have been observed to use different versions of the same structure for the same referent within the space of a few seconds, e.g., *No look my card/Don't look my card* (R. Ellis, 1985, p. 84), and (among many other examples) *three sister/five sisters*, *see a car/saw a car* (Long, 2003, pp. 510-511).

In sum, spoken by a social group defined by geographic location, race, class or ethnicity, a dialect is stable and differs broadly from another variety (particularly from the so-called "standard" variety) of the language concerned. An interlanguage, meanwhile, is an individual's transitional version of the L2. It is not stable, certainly not permanent, and influenced, but not defined by, location or social group membership. *An IL is a psycholinguistic, not a sociolinguistic, phenomenon*. It is the version of an L2 spoken temporarily, with a considerable amount of variation, as an individual develops his or her command of the new language. That said, to the trained ear or eye, as we shall see, just as an idiolect can reveal where a person grew up, features of a person's IL (especially, but not only, their accent) can reveal their native language, the approximate age at which they first began to learn the L2, and whether they have learned it naturalistically, with the aid of instruction, or both. Sometimes, their unique identity can be recognized by particular features or combinations of features of their L2 speech or writing.

1.3 Interlanguage variation

A very noticeable characteristic of ILs is their variability, especially the ILs of low proficiency learners. They are much more variable than the same individuals' command of their native language. As noted above, the way an individual learner speaks or writes, especially if their English proficiency is limited, may vary *synchronically*, i.e., at a particular point in time, e.g., saying **he speak* one minute, and *he speaks* the next, and also *diachronically*, i.e., over time. For example, at time 1, when attempting to communicate with limited English, beginners will express negation, as noted above, by placing the negator before the main verb, as in **She no like school* or **I no can play the guitar*. Later, perhaps after a few weeks or months, as their English improves, they will begin to place it in its correct position after the first tensed verb, as in *I don't like school* or *I can't play the guitar.* There is

still some way to go, however. At this stage, they will also produce utterances like **She don't like school*, and **I don't see the game last week*, showing that *don't* is not *do* + not, but an unanalyzed *chunk*. Later still, the learners will realize that *don't* is not a single word, and gradually sort out when to use *don't*, *doesn't, didn't, hasn't, haven't, and won't* correctly. *Diachronic variation*, that is to say, is a way of talking about progress in IL development. As we shall see, however, not all change over time is in the direction of the native speaker version of the TL.

Synchronic variation is interesting, as it is often the precursor to diachronic variation, that is, a driver of change over time. By way of illustration, beginning learners of English, especially (but not only) those whose L1 does not have any inflectional morphology (e.g., Mandarin), may routinely fail to mark plurals morphologically in English (**Shoe are cheap in my country*, **The dog eat two cookie*). Then, perhaps echoing recently heard nouns that more frequently occur in their plural form (*days*, *shoes*, *dollars*, *stairs*, etc.), which they have learned as unanalyzed chunks, they may respond to a question about how many days they work each week with the correct plural form: *six days*. If things go well, in the weeks that follow, the new plural marker will gradually spread to additional types of nouns in their speech.[2]

Synchronic variation comes in two forms: free and systematic. *Free variation* refers to situations in which learners use two or more forms, e.g., **He goes school* and **He going school*, in the same context, for the same purpose, with no apparent predictability as to which will be chosen. One form may have been operative, unchallenged, for a time, seemingly adequate for its purpose. Why a second, competing form should be added is unclear. It may simply be that the learner hears the second form in the input without really understanding its function, adds it to his or her repertoire, and uses both forms interchangeably for a while, i.e., in free variation. This state of affairs is then usually (but not necessarily) followed by a period during which each form gradually takes on a separate function, sometimes its true function in the target language, sometimes not. The same process occurs with many lexical items, e.g., *shop* and *store*, or *coat* and *jacket*.

Systematic variation refers to ways in which a learner's L2 performance varies predictably, according to such factors as focus of attention, linguistic context, topic and interlocutor. Where *focus of attention* is concerned, learners are likely to speak more accurately when they are attending to the

[2] See Pica (1983) for a study of the gradual "spread" of plural *-s* from one type of noun to another in the speech of Spanish ESL learners.

language as object, to *how* they are saying something, perhaps in a classroom drill or exercise of some kind, than while attempting to use English to communicate, when they are focused on *what* they are saying. In fact, they may repeatedly produce a target form, such as plural *-s* (/-s, -z, or -iz/), correctly in a drill (*Mary has two brothers, Peter has three dogs*, etc.), only to make errors with the very same structure (**Saturday, we play two game*) moments later, as soon as their focus switches from form to meaning. Inexperienced teachers often assume they have successfully taught something when their students manage to produce examples correctly in controlled classroom language practice, only to be disappointed when they hear them make errors with the same structure minutes later in "free" practice. In reality, what the teacher has taught is probably only *declarative knowledge* of the structure in question – *knowledge that* English marks plurality (on regular nouns, at least) with an *-s* allomorph (*-s*, *-z*, or *-iz*). The students have yet to internalize the new knowledge to be able to use it spontaneously.

A second factor in systematic synchronic variation is *linguistic context*. Learners will often do such things as produce third person singular verbs (verbal *-s*) with the *-s* correctly supplied in simple spoken utterances or written sentences (*John works in a bank*) but missing in complex sentences (**John wears a tie because he work in a bank*). Some learners will reliably mark plural *-s* on some nouns, mark it variably on others, and not at all on a third set. When learning to mark past time reference in English, many will start by using the simple past form of some high frequency (so-called lexical, or strong) verbs, correctly (*went*, *saw*, *ate*, *came*, etc.). They will then begin to mark so-called weak verbs with the /t/ (*liked*), /d/ (loved) or /id/ (*wanted*) allomorphs of the regular past tense *-ed* morpheme. In some cases, especially child learners, that is followed by a stage in which they "overgeneralize" the *-ed* allomorphs, using them with some of the strong verbs they previously got right: *goed*, *seed*, *eated*, etc. Finally, they sort out the weak/strong verb distinction (unconsciously, of course), and mark each correctly.

The initial (perhaps) 60% correct marking of strong verbs, followed by a drop in accuracy to (say) 30%, followed by an eventual rise in accuracy to 100% of both strong and weak, is an example of what is often referred to in the literature as *U-shaped behavior*. It occurs in several areas of L2 grammar, and is one of many examples of how development can sometimes be marked by an increase in the number and/or type of *errors* learners make, and simultaneously, of the fact that not all IL development is in the direction of the native NS version of the TL. Again, learners do not suddenly learn to use plural *-s*, verb *-s*, or verb *-ed* correctly in one step. Teachers and textbook

writers may assume they have taught plural, verb *-s*, and so on, but the data show that learning is gradual, often with zig-zag trajectories, not always moving in the direction of the native speaker norm, and influenced by linguistic context, e.g., simple or complex utterances or in this instance, by the particular nouns and verbs involved.[3]

A third factor often implicated in systematic variation is the *conditions* under which learners are speaking. Even very advanced L2 speakers may occasionally produce forms like **childrens* or **He always win* if they are very tired, distracted, multitasking, or otherwise not attending carefully to what they are saying or how they are saying it. That can happen with NSs,

[3] "Ayako" (not her real name), a well-integrated Japanese-speaking resident of Hawai'i, a naturalistic learner, who was studied for over 20 years (from age 60 - 80), still exhibited precisely this kind of variation after decades of extensive exposure to English. Some nouns in Ayako's IL were always marked correctly for plural, some never correctly, and a third group sometimes correctly and sometimes not. Ayako did the same thing with past time reference. Some verbs were always marked correctly with the appropriate *-ed* allomorph, some never correctly (the stem form of the verb was used instead), and a third group sometimes correctly and sometimes not. Variation among nouns and verbs in the third set in each case did not appear to be rule-governed (whether by correct or incorrect rules) and could not be predicted. The very same referent might trigger correct and incorrect plural or past time marking within just two or three utterances addressed to the same listener (the researcher), in the same linguistic context, and when Ayako's focus of attention in informal conversation was on meaning throughout. It was suggested that this unpredictable, non-systematic variation – despite the correct plural and past tense forms evidently being known to Ayako, and having been correctly integrated into her IL grammar in the case of some nouns and some verbs – was better described neither as *free variation* nor *systematic variation*, but as *volatility* (Long, 2003). Some of the data on Ayako can also be seen as consistent with the idea (see, e.g., Robinson & N. Ellis, 2008) that acquisition of an L2 is empirically driven, influenced by the frequency of encounters with instances of a lexical or grammatical form in the input, followed by abstraction and generalization of patterns to items within the same categories – learning from the ground up rather than, rule-governed, from the top down. This is certainly the case with lexis and collocations, which are manifestly not rule-governed, but is it also the case with constructions of various kinds, as has long been argued by Goldberg (Goldberg, 2006; Goldberg & Casenhiser, 2008), N. Ellis & Wulff (2015), and others. And after so many years of English exposure and use, why would the same nouns and verbs sometimes trigger the appropriate morpheme, sometimes not, and sometimes variably? It is likely that many L2 speakers exhibit the same kind of variation, but have not been reported as doing so simply because most morpheme studies, whether longitudinal or cross-sectional, are conducted at the level of types not tokens, e.g., plural marking of nouns in general, not of particular nouns.

too, of course, but whereas they can, and usually do, immediately correct themselves (*He always win- wins at cards*) on the (rare) occasions they slip up, NNSs often cannot and do not. At an unconscious level, the NSs know what is correct and what is not, because they can draw on a vast store of *implicit knowledge* of English grammar, built up over many years from the time they were small children – knowledge they have but are unaware they have.[4] Their tiredness, perhaps, has caused them to slip up momentarily, to make a *mistake*. The same things from an elementary- or intermediate-level foreign or second language speaker, conversely, may not be a momentary slip at all, but instead reflect a gap in their knowledge of the L2, a problem in their underlying grammar. They make the same *error* repeatedly because they have not yet learned the correct "rule".[5]

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[4] The vast majority of what adult NSs know about their L1 is implicit (see Chapter 5). They know thousands of collocations, for instance, and instantly recognize when one is violated (**hard coffee*, **make a photo*, etc.), but unless they are linguists or language teachers, that is likely to be the first time they realize there is a correct and an incorrect possibility. Similarly, a NS of English will never have thought about it, but knows that *bilm* and *stim* are possible English words, but *lbim* and *tsim* are not. He or she has accumulated a vast store of implicit knowledge of the *phonotactic rules* (or statistical regularities) of English.

[5] The distinction between *errors* and *mistakes* in SLA was first drawn by Corder (1967). 'Rule' is in scare quotes because there is evidence that many utterances or sentences that give the appearance of being rule-governed language use are not rule-governed at all, but simply reflections of a *statistical regularity* learners have perceived in the input without being aware of having done so. Frequency effects constitute one piece of evidence for this interpretation: all other things being equal, studies show, more frequent items in the input are learned before less frequent ones. If the language concerned were rule-governed, learners would get things right once they learned the rule, regardless of the frequency of items to which it was applied. Also, while many parts of a language, such as collocations, are right or wrong, they are clearly not rule-governed. We say *heavy traffic* and *strong coffee*, not **hard traffic* or **tough coffee*, *make an error*, *take a photo*, and *declare war*, not **do an error*, **make a photo*, or **announce war*, and so on. But we do so by convention, not because there is a rule that says it must be that way. Vocabulary items and collocations are arbitrary and learned separately, as a result of repeatedly encountering them in the input, a kind of *instance learning*. Knowing 1,000 lexical items or collocations does not help with the next 1,000.

Knowing that third person singular present tense verbs in English require an *-s* suffix, on the other hand, is a productive rule (or a statistical regularity, at least) which is generative. A student who has learned the rule (or regularity) can produce a new third person singular present tense verb form correctly even if they have never heard or seen it before. This was first demonstrated by Jean Berko Gleason with young children using her famous *Wugs* test (Berko, 1958). A child shown a picture

Other factors associated with systematic variation include topic and interlocutor. NSs and learners alike tend to perform more fluently with practice. For example, they become better and better at speaking about familiar topics – everything from their basic personal information and work to important life experiences and favorite sports teams. Talking to familiar interlocutors, similarly, is by definition more frequent, and usually more relaxing. In both cases, when dealing with familiar topics or familiar listeners, attention that would otherwise be required for new topics and strangers is freed up for attention to form, and errors that marked early iterations of the same performance have long since been eradicated, but still occur in other settings.[6]

1.4 Cross-linguistic influence

In the early days of SLA, sometimes referred to as the Contrastive Analysis era, linguists would compare surface structures of two languages to predict problems speakers of one would have when learning the other. The strong form of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) held that *differences* between L1 and L2 predicted *difficulty*. The predictions were data-free, based on linguists' intuitions about what would happen. NSs of Russian and Japanese, among many others, usually have persistent problems with articles (some uses more than others), which neither language has. And unless first exposed to English very early in life, all learners from whatever language background will always speak with a detectable foreign accent, usually the single most salient factor clearly related to differences between English and their L1.

Once SLA researchers began to collect data on the issue, however, it soon became obvious that large differences are sometimes sufficiently salient *not*

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of a strange creature, and told it was a *wug*, and then prompted with a picture of two of the same creatures, would confidently identify them as two *wugs*. Gleason showed that, at first, young children can produce the correct plural form of real words, but not of nonsense words like *wug*, meaning they begin by memorizing specific singular - plural pairs. Later, they can apply the "rule" to words, like *wug*, they have never heard before. They have now abstracted the general rule or pattern involved as a result of encountering many particular examples, and they can generalize it to new examples. They are unaware of what they have learned, so their knowledge is implicit. They do the same with other parts of English morphology, applying past tense *-ed* to new verbs, including non-existent verbs, to possessives, and so on.

[6] For some research findings on the effects of task repetition on L2 performance, see Bygate (2001).

to cause problems, and that "interference" sometimes operates due to *similarities* between a sub-system in the L1 and L2. The article systems in English and Spanish are very similar, but subtle differences at the level of detail result in problems. For example, Spanish requires a definite article, with correct gender agreement, before abstract nouns (poverty is *la pobreza*) and days of the week (Monday is *el lunes*). Wode (1981) proposed the Crucial Similarity Measure, and Odlin (2003) 'interlingual identification', to capture the finding that things have to be similar enough to be confused before they cause problems.

Nevertheless, one of the most visible processes in IL development is L1 influence on the L2 (L3, etc.). NSs of French, for instance, will often say **I have 25 years*, instead of *I'm 25*, at the elementary level, triggered by their L1 construction, which uses *hav*e, not *be* (*J'ai vingt-cinque ans*). Indeed, negative transfer of L1 features to the L2, so-called "interference", is sufficiently pervasive for it often to be claimed that (i) having already learned an L1 and (ii) *fossilization* are the two factors that distinguish SLA from L1A.[7] L1 "interference" in SLA (or, at least, what looks like L1 interference[8]), is readily apparent in many cases where the L1 and L2 (or L1 or L2 and L3, L4, etc.) are very different. It occurs, for example, when a whole grammatical sub-system, like English articles, is absent in the L1 of, say, Russian or Japanese speakers, or when inflectional morphology is absent in an L1, such as Mandarin or Vietnamese, resulting in problems for Chinese and Vietnamese learners even with semantically simple forms like English plural *-s*.[9]

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[7] There is some doubt as to whether fossilization, i.e., a *permanent loss of capacity* to progress further, really occurs, as distinct from temporary *stabilization* (Long, 2003). The fact that a learner does not progress for several months does not necessarily mean they *cannot* progress.

[8] Some errors and interlingual constructions that could be interpreted as the result of L1 transfer (e.g., **runned*, and **the car was crashed*) also appear in L1A of the same language. Speakers of L1s, such as Spanish or Punjabi, which do not have inversion, may assume utterances like **Where he went?* are the result of negative L1 transfer, but most learners, including those whose L1 *does* have inversion, go through a stage where they produce such questions (Pienemann et al, 1988), reflecting universal developmental processes, perhaps in combination with L1 influences. Moral: Infer underlying causes of errors with care!

[9] Production of word-final English consonants and consonant clusters is a problem for adult NSs of "open-syllable" languages, like Mandarin, Japanese or Vietnamese, that do not allow consonants in final position, i.e., do not have "closed" CVC or CVCC syllables. Speakers of Mandarin, for example, may understand the function

Less obvious examples are cases of partial difference, such as adverb-placement in English (with its relatively rigid word order) and languages with flexible word order. The L1 equivalents of all three of these sentences are grammatical in many languages, e.g., French and Spanish:

(1) *Every day, John reads three different newspapers.*

(2) *John reads three different newspapers every day*.

(3) **John reads every day three different newspapers.*

Learners of English whose L1 allows all three options have to "unlearn" (3), which is ungrammatical, due to a constraint in English on interrupting verb – direct object constructions.[10] Even some advanced learners still make that error. And problems can also occur, it is important to note, when the L1 and L2 do something not merely in a similar way, as in this case, but in the same way. For example, Hyltenstam (1977) found learners of L2 Swedish whose L1s, such as Japanese and Turkish, had *post*-verbal negation, i.e., the same position for placement of the negator as Swedish, the L2, still began their acquisition of L2 Swedish using *pre*-verbal negation. This is hard to explain by a simple difference = difficulty prediction.

In recognition of the subtle ways, both positive and negative, that an L1 can affect acquisition of an L2, the term "interference" gradually gave way to positive and negative "transfer". Since the mid-1980s, researchers have preferred the even broader term 'cross-linguistic influence' (Kellerman & Sharwood-Smith, 1986), which recognizes that relationships among two or more languages take many forms. Transfer operates in both directions, for example, not just from L1 to L2, e.g., leading fluent L2 speakers occasionally to produce L2 lexical items, prepositions or word order in their L1. And similarities can sometimes facilitate, not hinder, SLA.

Conceptual and semantic differences can also cause problems, e.g., when one language, French, uses three verb tenses (passé simple, passé historique, and plus-que-parfait) to refer to past events and actions, compared with just two (simple past and past perfect) in English. And many languages use two second person pronouns, with morphologically distinct verb forms – the "familiar" T form and "unfamiliar" V form, e.g., *tu* and *vous* in French, du

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of word-final inflectional morphemes, but still have difficulty producing words like *book* (CVC), *cats* (CVCC), *asked* (CVCC) or *hoped* (CVCC) in speech, due to the L1 phonological constraints (Sato, 1984).

[10] Generative grammarians have "deeper" explanations than the one offered here.

and sie in German, and *tú* and *usted* in Spanish – instead of one form, you, in English for both.

L1 influence occurs in all linguistic domains, not just grammar. Where phonology is concerned, a speaker's L1 has pervasive and (unless exposure to the L2 begins very early in life) permanent effects on their L2 pronunciation. The L1 phonology is usually among the most predictable sources of all errors learners make, such that an individual's accent reveals both that he or she is not a NS of the L2, and often, to the trained ear, the identity of his or her native language.

Vocabulary shows long-lasting effects of L1 – L2 differences, too, often because one language encodes semantic distinctions ignored in another. Spanish, for instance, has one word, *rincón*, for interior corners, such as the corner of a room, and a different word, *esquina*, for exterior corners, such as the corner of a street. And usually because subtle distinctions are locally important to their speakers, some languages have (or appear to have) more words than others to draw distinctions in concepts that are less significant elsewhere. The most famous putative example is the many words for different kinds of 'snow' in the Inuit and Yupik Eskimo language groups spoken by Eskimos.[11]

L1 influence in pragmatics is also widespread, and because it is often subtler or may have no immediately apparent effect on communication, may go unnoticed by L2 speakers for a long time unless pointed out to them explicitly. Korean, for instance, has six registers marking different degrees of politeness, inappropriate use of which can result in unintentional rudeness. Inappropriate use of the familiar "T" form or polite "V" form for *you* in a Romance language, e.g., *tú* and *Ud*. in Spanish, can convey an unintended level of familiarity, politeness, coldness/distance, or respect. Direct questions about a person's marital status, religious beliefs, job and income are acceptable early in a conversation when meeting someone new

[11] Anthropologists, e.g., Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf, have occasionally suggested that the languages peoples speak both reflect and affect the way they see the world, an idea known as the Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis. However, critics have pointed out that English and Eskimo languages have similar numbers of word roots for snow, and that it is the Eskimo languages' use of morphological affixes, compounding and other devices that creates the false impression that they have more words. The same applies to words for snow in the Sami languages of Norway, Sweden and Finland. For a history and deconstruction of the myth, see Geoffrey Pullum's important (and humorous) essay, 'The great Eskimo vocabulary hoax' (Pullum, 1989, 1991).

in some cultures, but (at the risk of over-generalizing, perhaps) much less so with English speakers.

Several factors beyond surface structural differences can predict transfer, one of which is typological markedness. The Markedness Differential Hypothesis (Eckman, 1977) captures the generalization that typologically marked features, e.g., voiced stops (/b/, /d/, /g/) required in the L2 in a context where the unmarked equivalent (/p/, /t/, /k/) serves in the L1, cause more problems than the opposite move, from marked in the L1 to unmarked in the L2. (For reasons we will not go into here, linguists accept that voiced is marked, and unvoiced unmarked.) Thus, while German has all three voiced stops, they are always devoiced in syllable-final position, leading to Germans learning English (at least in the early stages, and some for a long time) saying *bik* instead of *big*, *wafe* instead of *wave*, etc. English speakers learning German, conversely, have no problem devoicing syllable-final German stops, i.e., in moving from a marked L1 feature to an unmarked L2 feature.

Another factor predicting the likelihood of transfer is 'perceived transferability', or 'psychotypology' (Kellerman, 1979, 1983, 1985). In a series of studies, Kellerman presented Dutch NSs with written English sentences containing various uses of the verb *break* (in Dutch, *breken*), asking them to indicate which ones they thought were acceptable in English. English and Dutch are typologically close, and all the sentences were in fact fine in both languages. The Dutch learners, however, tended to predict that more literal, semantically transparent Dutch usages, e.g., *break a cup* or *break your leg*, would be fine in English, too, but not sentences containing uses of *break* they considered marked, more semantically opaque, or more language-specific, e.g., *break a strike* or *break for lunch*. When it came to transitive (*he broke his leg*) and intransitive (*the cup broke*) sentences, acceptance rates for Dutch learners at three proficiency levels provided another example of U-shaped behavior. Students at each proficiency level accepted all transitive uses of *break*. Beginners also accepted all intransitive uses, perhaps still naive as to the real problems that can occur as a result of differences between languages. Intermediate learners rejected 40% of the intransitive sentences. Advanced earners accepted 80%.

		Beginners	Intermediate	Advanced
Transitive	He broke his leg	100%	100%	100%
Intransitive	The cup broke	100%	60%	80%

Kellerman's studies showed that whether transfer occurs is not solely a question of L1–L2 differences, but of how learners *perceive* those differences – perceived transferability – at either a conscious or an unconscious level.

In addition to perceived transferability, perceived difficulty can play a role, determining whether transfer occurs – or, at least, whether it is visible. Not attempting an L2 structure perceived as difficult is known as *avoidance* (Schachter, 1974). Schachter began a study of L2 writing by noting that relative clauses (RCs) in Chinese and Japanese differ from English RCs (e.g., in whether the subordinate clause precedes or follows the noun they modify) more than the degree to which RCs in Arabic and Persian differ from English RCs. More errors would be expected from Chinese and Japanese speakers, therefore. But the facts were different. When writing short essays, Chinese and Japanese learners actually made fewer (14) written errors with English RCs than Arabic and Persian learners (74). Careful analysis showed, however, that this was because the Chinese and Japanese were attempting far fewer RCs – only half the 328 attempts by the Arabs and Iranians – effectively, avoiding the problem. While leading to fewer errors in the short term, avoidance postpones the learning problem, delaying acquisition. As Pica (1983) found when she observed a higher error rate with morphology in EFL learners in Mexico City than naturalistic ESL and mixed learners in Philadelphia, making more errors can be a good thing, an inevitable part of language learning.

Again, however, it is not simply a matter of linguistic differences between L1 and L2. Perceived transferability plays a role here, too, as shown by the preference of NSs of Hebrew (which does not have phrasal verbs) for single-word Latinate lexical items in English, e.g., *disappoint* and *admire*, over two-word or three-word word phrasal verbs, e.g., *let down* or *look up to* (Dagut & Laufer, 1985), and Dutch learners' avoidance of two-word phrasal verbs that in fact have an exact phrasal verb equivalent in English, but were perceived as marked, so not transferred (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989).

Cross-linguistic influence can reflect differences in *types* of languages, not just differences between languages. For instance, Finnish ESL learners produce utterances like *The girl stole a loaf of bread _ the car and ran away*,

whereas Swedes never do (Jarvis & Odlin, 2000). Finnish, an agglutinative language, uses bound suffixes to indicate location, whereas Swedish uses free-standing prepositions (in this case, *from*), like English.

Quite abstract L1–L2 differences can also show up indirectly in surface L2 forms. For example, L1 speakers of Chinese, a *topic-prominent* language, learning *subject-prominent* English L2 produce sentences like *There are so many Taiwan people live around the lake*, where the native-like English form is not being used with its native like function. *There are* is functioning as a pseudo topic-marker.

Another intriguing case was identified by Sato in her longitudinal study of two Vietnamese children's acquisition of ESL in Philadelphia (Sato, 1984, 1990). Vietnamese, among other languages, has an open, consonant – vowel (CV) syllable structure, with syllable-final and word-final consonants and consonant clusters (CVC and CVCC) disallowed. As a result, speakers of such languages tend to omit syllable-final consonants and consonant clusters in English, so that a word like *bits* (/bIts/) is pronounced /bI/, and *He likes you* becomes /hi: lai ju:/. Sato's work showed, again, how structural differences at the level of *type* of language can lead to cross-linguistic influence, and also, how differences in one linguistic domain in the L1 can result in problems in a different linguistic domain in the L2 – here, a phonological constraint on L1 syllable structure resulting in omission of L2 morphology.

Finally, as noted earlier, cross-linguistic influence can also be positive, not necessarily a source of learning difficulty. Positive transfer is harder to spot than negative transfer, as it may result simply in faster learning, as opposed to conspicuous errors. Swedes and Finns in Sweden each learn the other's L1 as their L2. Swedes, whose L1 is typologically closer to English, go faster with L3 English than do the Finns, whose L1 is typologically more distant, as shown by the Swedes relatively faster acquisition of articles (Jarvis, 2002). German marks nouns for gender, and German learners of French develop French L2 gender marking faster than speakers of English, which does not (Bialystok, 1997). L1 speakers of Taiwanese and Mandarin (tonal languages) benefitted more from 30 minutes of training in L2 Thai tones than L1 speakers of (non-tonal) English (Wayland & Guion, 2004).

Similar advantages at the level of whole languages also occur in positive transfer by bilinguals compared to monolinguals. Knowing a second or third language may facilitate learning another one, especially if it is typologically related. For example, learners of English as L3 did better with preposition-

stranding (*What did he do that for?*) than learners of English as L2, even when neither their L1 nor the first group's L2 allowed 'preposition-stranding' (Klein, 1995), both using so-called 'pied-piping', instead, where the preposition "follows" the question word to the beginning of the sentence: *From where do you come?* instead of *Where do you come from?* Generally, if a L3 learner's L2 is typologically closer than their L1, transfer is more likely from the L2 (Flynn et al, 2004), especially with surface features, but semantic transfer is more likely from the L1, even if typologically more distant (Ringbom, 2001). Relative proficiency in the L2 and L3, and how recent acquisition and use of the L2 has been, can both also influence the degree of transfer from L1 and/or L2 into L3.

In sum, "interference", transfer, and cross-linguistic influence in general, are a lot more complex than simply difference = difficulty. L1 influence can show up as errors of commission, omission (avoidance) and frequency of use (both overuse and underuse). Cross-linguistic influence is bidirectional and not absolute, but probabilistic, often conditioned by factors beyond surface similarities and dissimilarities.

1.5 Errors are necessary

Many teachers, ourselves included, were trained to ensure that students avoid making errors, e.g., by drilling them in the correct form, and when errors did occur, to view them as a problem, a failure on our or our students' part, and to "correct" them. It turns out, however, that all learners make numerous errors as they progress in a new language, and making them is an inevitable and valuable part of language learning. If they *don't* make errors, we should be worried.

Again indicative of universal cognitive processes at work, the errors students make are not a random assortment. Most are the same ones made by millions of other learners, especially, but not only, if they are from the same L1 background. Common errors and error types occur in the ILs of learners of different ages and L1s, and across formal, informal and mixed learning contexts – indications of the workings of an internal "learner syllabus" (Corder, 1967, and elsewhere) and actually indicate that they are learning.

One source of errors for all learners is *overgeneralization*. For example, on analogy with the use of inversion to form simple questions (*Did Mary get the job?*), learners of English pass through a phase (which some never get beyond) in which they routinely invert subject and verb in subordinate

clauses (**He asked why did he resign*). In the terminology of Processability Theory (e.g., Pienemann, 2011), they fail to 'Cancel inversion'. And some of the most often noted errors in English – perhaps because they are salient and seem easily interpretable as reflecting underlying "hypothesis-testing" – are errors like *goed* or *sheeps*. While striking, morphological overgeneralization errors are relatively infrequent – about 2% of all errors – and just one of four pervasive error types documented in a study of Spanish-speaking naturalistic, instructed and mixed learners of English by Pica (1983).

Pica's data consisted of transcripts of one hour of free speech from interviews with 18 Spanish-speaking learners of English, representing a wide range of proficiency, as measured by each learner's place in the four-stage sequence in the acquisition of English negation: *No* V, *Don't* V, aux-neg, and analyzed *don't* (of which more in Chapter 2). Pica found that although the relative frequencies differed, whether learning in foreign language (FL) classrooms only, in Mexico City (n=6), naturalistically only, in Philadelphia (n = 6), or in a mixed setting, naturalistically in Philadelphia while also receiving classroom instruction (n = 6), all three groups made the same four types of errors. They were (i) *overgeneralization errors*, where regularized irregular morphemes are supplied in obligatory contexts, e.g., **She eated the apple,* (ii) *overuse errors*, where morphemes are supplied in non-obligatory contexts, e.g., **Mary liking movies*, **He lived in London now*, or **The boys likes soccer*, when the referent is a single boy, (iii) *omission errors* in obligatory contexts, e.g., **He go shopping yesterday*, and (iv) *substitution errors* in obligatory contexts, e.g., **He goes shopping last year*.

Pica noted many similarities between instructed, naturalistic and mixed learners. They included production of all four error types, and the accuracy order for nine grammatical morphemes supplied in obligatory contexts (SOC): *-ing*, plural *-s*, copula *be*, auxiliary *be,* article, irregular past, regular past, verbal *-s*, and possessive *-s*. For instance, the following sentence creates obligatory contexts for simple past and plural *-s*: *John was happy when he (see) the two (boy) yesterday*. The accuracy orders correlated highly with each other and with a "natural order" for the same nine morphemes previously established by Krashen (1977) for learners of different ages, L1 backgrounds, and (naturalistic and classroom) learning contexts. Importantly, however, Pica also pointed out differences in the accuracy orders and in the error profiles for the three groups.

First, although the accuracy orders were similar, the rank of some morphemes in the orders differed for instruction only (pure EFL) learners, as did the percentage correct for those morphemes. For example, plural *-s* was 19% and one or two ranks higher in the EFL group, and verbal *-s* about 40% more accurate. The transparent form-function relationships of both items made them "easy grammar", Pica noted, suggesting that it was precisely in this area that instruction has its greatest effect.

Second, when she conducted a target-like use (TLU) analysis of the same data, Pica discovered additional differences among the three groups. A TLU analysis looks at SOC, but also at target-like and *non*-target-like suppliance in *non*-obligatory contexts. TLU revealed more differences among the groups, especially between the instruction-only and the other two groups. Naturalistic learners tended to *omit* grammatical morphemes, such as *-ing* and plural *-s* – an example of *simplification* – whereas instruction-only and, to a lesser extent, mixed learners tended to *overapply* those morphemes.

In particular, if *overgeneralization* and *overuse* errors were collapsed into a new category, *overapplication errors*, there were some striking differences. *Overgeneralization errors* involve suppliance of regularized irregular morphemes in obligatory contexts (**He seed Mary yesterday*), and *overuse* of morphemes in non-obligatory contexts (**He lived in London now*, **I don't understanding the teacher*). Naturalistic learners tended to omit plural *-s*, and instead use free-form quantifiers (**two book*, **many town*), a pluralization device often employed in *pidgins* and *creoles*. Instruction-only learners made far more of those errors at almost all proficiency levels. Mixed learners performed like naturalistic learners at lower levels, but more like instructed learners as their ILs developed. Pica (1983, p. 495) concluded that (i) similarities among all three groups showed that a good deal of SLA depends on the learner, not environmental or contextual factors, and (ii) instruction triggers over-suppliance of grammatical morphology and inhibits use of ungrammatical, albeit communicatively effective, constructions found in pidgins. So, paradoxically, one short-term effect of instruction is to *increase* the numbers of some kinds of errors.

Pica was careful to note that her findings only applied to production, not rate or ultimate attainment. We would note, however, that the differences in error patterns were found at all proficiency levels, so lasting effects on long-term achievement are a distinct possibility. (We will return to this possibility in Chapter 4, when discussing the effects of instruction on ultimate attainment.) For instance, it may well be that instructed learners will find it easier to relinquish morphological over-marking than naturalistic acquirers

will find it to begin supplying morphological marking, which is often non-salient and communicatively redundant, especially after using their ILs successfully for communication for several years without that morphology. After all, many languages, e.g., Mandarin, get by just fine without articles and marking past tense on verbs, and without an *-s* affix for plural, third person singular, or possessive, using adverbs and context, for example, instead.

As with a number of the transitional structures that occur at various stages within developmental sequences (see Chapter 2), neither L1 transfer nor habit formation can explain the appearance of many errors. For example, resumptive pronouns are often observed in the relative clauses of Italian learners of English (Pavesi, 1986), as in **That is the man who he stole the car*, or **She is the woman who he loves her*, yet resumptive pronouns are found in neither Italian nor English. Such error types are hard to account for, either in SLA theory or in classroom practice, if students experience exclusively standard target language forms on the street and are drilled in them in the classroom. While practice has a role in automatizing what has been learned, i.e., in improving *control* of an already acquired form or structure, common developmental stages and errors like those documented by Hyltenstam, Pica, Pavesi, and many others show that L2 acquisition is not simply a process of forming new habits with one new structure after another to override the effects of L1 transfer: powerful creative forces are at work.

We have already noted the role of overgeneralization, overuse, and overapplication in IL development. Another source of error is *simplification*. Beginning and elementary learners who attempt to communicate in the L2 will often produce greatly simplified speech, heavily dependent on stringing together the few nouns and verbs they know, with minimal or no morphology (**I play soccer Saturday*, **Australia good country*, **Car hit man*, etc.). Klein & Purdue (1997) referred to this early, very limited version of an L2 as the Basic Variety. As Corder (1981, p. 110) pointed out, strictly speaking, we should refer to simple, not simplified, speech, in these cases, as learners cannot simplify what they do not yet know. Subsequently, however, learners frequently do omit items they "know", or at least, know about (**John like his new job*), as evidenced by their supplying the same item elsewhere, perhaps in careful, monitored speech (*John works in an office now*). *Simplification* does appear to be an appropriate term in such cases.

These errors and hundreds more like them are phenomena at the level of whole populations of learners. At the individual level, all learners also make idiosyncratic errors (while doing lots of things right, of course) that distinguish them from most other learners. For example, one L2 speaker of English may repeatedly use a faulty version of a fixed expression, ending a list of things with **and so* (instead of *and so on*), or adding **so to say* (instead of *so to speak*) to something they just said. At different levels of proficiency, they may produce non-existent collocations (*big standards*, *fast increase*, *at London*, *do a mistake*, *shoot a goal*, *grimace with anger*, etc.), a few of which may be unusual or even poetic. These erroneous forms are not in the input learners hear or read, except possibly from other NNSs in some cases. They are another reflection, therefore, of the learner's creative role in SLA, and constitute one of many pieces of evidence demonstrating that the acquisition process is not simply a matter of stimulus - response learning, of adding one shiny new native-like structure after another to the learner's repertoire, or improving the speed with which newly heard or read structures are regurgitated in their full NS form, i.e., of *automatization*, so central to Skill Acquisition Theory (DeKeyser, 2017). In fact, IL development does not always involve movement towards native speaker norms at all. Remember, Kellerman's Dutch learners were most accurate in accepting English uses of 'break' when they were naïve beginners, and one of Pica's findings was that instructed learners made *more* errors than naturalistic acquirers in the early stages.

Far from progress being measurable by a steady increase in the proportion of learners' error-free performance, several phenomena show that the opposite is often the case. An *increase* in error rate may precede, and even be an inevitable precursor to, learning a new rule or constraint. For instance, as noted earlier, learners may produce a verb marked correctly in simple sentences (*John likes school*), but make errors when they attempt to apply the same rule in a more complex linguistic environment (**John says he like school*) (Meisel et al, 1981). Development of individual structures over time, and often of the L2 as a whole, exhibits plateaus, occasional movement away from, not towards, the L2, and temporary regression under pressure to earlier IL structures, known as 'backsliding,' resulting in progress being characterized by U-shaped or zigzag trajectories rather than smooth, linear developmental contours (Huebner, 1983; Kellerman, 1985; Sato, 1990; Selinker, 1972). Moreover, very few learners ever achieve full NS command of a second or foreign language, and research suggests that the tiny minority who do need to have been exposed to the new language very early in life. ILs often stabilize far short of the full NS version of the L2. Many learners persistently use non-target-like forms and structures that they

were never taught, e.g., transitional structures not attested in the input or present in the L1 (e.g., Japanese and Turkish NSs' pre-verbal negation in Swedish), and target-like forms and structures with non-target-like functions (Sato, 1990). The stabilization seen during developmental plateaus can sometimes last so long that the non-target-like state is claimed to be permanent, i.e., indicating not just stabilization, but *fossilization* (see Lardiere, 2006; Han & Odlin, 2005; Sorace, 2003; and for critical discussion of fossilization claims, Long, 2003).

Rather than regarding errors as something to be avoided at all costs, teachers should see errors as an inevitable component of the language-learning process, just as they are of most human learning processes, and they are a healthy component, as they reveal creativity and cognitive activity on the learner's part. As we have seen, errors are often the result of overgeneralization, where a new structure is applied in new contexts in which the generalization does not apply (*childrens*, *goed*, *more cheap*, subject-verb inversion in subordinate clauses, etc.) or in which a word is inappropriate (**The snake crept across the grass*, **The car turned the bend too fast*). Errors like these show that learners are trying out new things, not just regurgitating items they have rote-learned. Teachers should be worried if they are *not* making errors. If everything they say in class is correct, it probably means they are being limited to tightly controlled practice, most obviously during a drill of some kind. They are focused on the language as object, merely parroting back what the teacher or textbook has just modelled, not having to think about what they are saying, which is not the same as having internalized the correct form or "rule". This quickly becomes apparent if (all too rare in such classrooms) they are given an opportunity to attempt to communicate through the L2: their focus of attention changes from form to meaning, whereupon errors (re-) surface.

Summary

An interlanguage (IL) is an individual learner's transitional version of the target language (TL). ILs share much in common, but each is to some extent idiosyncratic; they are the psycholinguistic equivalent of idiolects. Unlike idiolects, dialects, and so-called "standard" languages, however, ILs are unstable, exhibiting considerable variability, especially in the early stages. The variation is synchronic, i.e., at the moment both free and systematic, and diachronic, i.e., change over time, often, but not always, in the direction of the L2. The learner's native language influences many aspects of L2 development, both positively and negatively, with similarities between the

L1 and TL often being as important as differences, perceived or real. Non-native speakers (NNSs) make many morphological errors in English as they progress, the result of *overgeneralization, overuse, omission,* and *substitution*. Rather than something to be avoided through textbook writers and teachers exercising tight control over students' speaking opportunities, they constitute an inevitable and productive part of second language acquisition process. Naturalistic, instructed, and "mixed" learners exhibit somewhat different error patterns as their proficiency increases.

Discussion questions

1. In what ways are ILs and idiolects alike, and in what ways do they differ?

2. What is meant by IL stabilization and fossilization? Why is the distinction important?

3. Give two examples of U-shaped behavior, preferably including one not mentioned in the chapter.

4. Provide an example of synchronic variation. How could you prove it was a real example?

5. Explain the differences between free variation, systematic variation, and volatility.

6. Name at least four ways in which a learner's L1 influences second language acquisition, and give examples of two of them.

7. What is 'perceived transferability'? Give an example. Is it more likely to be a problem with learners whose L1s are typologically close to, or distant from, English?

8. How do the error profiles of naturalistic, instruction only, and "mixed" learners differ, and why?

9. Can you think of other ways in which the ILs of naturalistic second language and classroom foreign language learners may differ, e.g., in the areas of vocabulary, collocations, and formulaic speech?

10. Give two examples of how making errors can have a positive effect on IL development, and explain why.

Suggested readings

Jarvis, S. (2012). Cross-linguistic influence and multilingualism. In Chapelle, C. A. (ed.), *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics.* Boston: Wiley Blackwell.

Ortega, L. (2009). Crosslinguistic influences. In Ortega, L., *Understanding second language acquisition* (pp. 31-54). London: Hodder.

Pica, T. (1983). Adult acquisition of English as a second language under different conditions of exposure. *Language Learning* 33, 4, 465-497.

CHAPTER 2

DEVELOPMENTAL SEQUENCES

2.1 Introduction

As we saw in Chapter 1, a student's L1 and whether or not they learn the L2 via instruction and/or naturalistically each affect both the number and kinds of errors they make, but other *processes* in IL development remain unchanged. As mapped by *developmental sequences*, research findings show that the same is true of the pathways learners follow, i.e., the *route* of IL development. The pathways, too, are influenced by a learner's L1, but not in ways that alter the order of stages in a sequence or allow stages to be skipped. As we shall see, the sequences have very little to do with the order in which items appear in a grammatical syllabus or are presented in coursebooks, and they cannot be altered by instruction, except in trivial ways. With occasional minor variation at the level of individuals[1], developmental sequences are basically the same in all settings – foreign language and second language, instructed, naturalistic and mixed – and regardless of the kind of exposure or kind of instruction learners experience. This is because language learning, like any other human learning, is a cognitive process. It takes place in learners' minds, which share a common architecture and are highly creative, not (choose your metaphor) a blank slate or an empty vessel.

If instruction really were king, and teachers and coursebook writers were in control, the order in which linguistic items were learned would reflect the order in which they were presented in the coursebook, and learning processes and sequences would vary with different kinds of instruction. That only happens in the very limited sense that an unspeeded, discrete-point grammar test (fill-in-the blanks, grammaticality judgment, error correction, etc.), which requires learners to *focus on language as object*, can

[1] Minor variations are sometimes reported at the level of individual learners. Developmental sequences are *generalizations* across research findings, not inviolate *laws* in the scientific sense Long, 1990; Pienemann, 2015).

show them apparently doing better, "out of sequence", on structures they have recently been taught. As Krashen pointed out 40 years ago, this is especially the case with "easy" grammar, like plural *-s* and verb *-s*, that involves transparent form-meaning-function relationships. When students are tested using a communicative measure of some kind (free speech, picture-description, story-retelling, etc.), in which they have to *focus on meaning*, their performance shows they are following the same developmental sequences as everyone else, including naturalistic learners with no instruction at all.

2.2 The pathways learners follow

Studies have repeatedly demonstrated that, with minor effects for L1, learners follow the same developmental routes (Bonilla, 2015; Johnson, 1985, 1997; Ortega, 2009 a, b; Pienemann, 2015), and not whichever ones are enshrined in the coursebook or the one their teachers follow in the classroom (Bonilla, 2018; R. Ellis, 1989; Håkansson & Norrby, 2010; Lightbown, 1983). They master the structures in roughly the same manner and order, whether learning in classrooms, on the street, or both (Pica, 1983). Attempts to make learners skip a developmental stage fail (as they must if 'developmental sequence' is to retain its meaning and predictive validity), leading Pienemann to formulate his *Processability*, *Learnability,* and *Teachability Hypotheses*: what is *processable* by students determines what is *learnable*, and what is *learnable* determines what is *teachable* (Pienemann, 1984, 1989, 2015; Pienemann & Kessler, 2011).[2] The effectiveness of feedback on error has been shown to be constrained in the same way (see, e.g., Mackey, 1999). Notice the implication: learners, not teachers or textbook writers, have considerable control over what they learn, and when. The empirical findings provide substance to Corder's idea of the internal "learner syllabus" (Corder, 1967).

In fact, the routes classroom learners follow are fundamentally the same as those taken by naturalistic learners, i.e., those learning with no instruction at all. Learners analyze the input and come up with their own interim grammars, their progress broadly conforming to the developmental

[2] There is some evidence, nevertheless, that instruction targeting structures two stages ahead of learners' current stage of development can produce advances at both that stage and, as Processability Theory (PT; Pienemann, 1998, and elsewhere) would predict, the stage just one ahead of the current level (Bonilla, 2018; Mackey, 1999; Spada & Lightbown, 1999).

sequences observed in naturalistic settings (see, e.g., Bonilla, 2015; Eckman et al, 1988; R. Ellis, 1989; Fathman, 1978; Felix & Simmet, 1981; Gass, 1982; Håkansson & Norrby, 2010; Jansen, 2008; Krashen, 1977; Lenzing, 2015; Lightbown, 1983; Mackey, 1999; Pienemann, 1984, 1989, 2015; Pienemann & Kessler, 2011). And except when restricted to tightly controlled, non-communicative drills of some kind, students do not jump from zero knowledge to native-like use in one step. The occasional apparent "jump" is artificial and short-lived, often reflecting little more than a student's ability to echo something the teacher has just said. After being drilled exclusively in the full native speaker version of the "structure of the day", as is the custom in courses based on a grammatical syllabus and PPP (present-practice-produce), and even when errors are routinely "corrected," learners revert to the stage they have reached in the natural developmental sequence as soon as their focus of attention and/or the focus of a classroom lesson shifts to a new structure or when they attempt to use the L2 to communicate.

The research findings are unambiguous. Nevertheless, presumably because they require little expertise on the teacher's part and are easy to sell, coursebook writers and commercial publishers continue to base their attractively packaged and skillfully marketed offerings, based on a linguistic syllabus of some kind (grammatical, notional-functional, lexical, hybrid), as if nothing were known about how students really learn an L2. Nor are the research findings recent. Clear examples were provided nearly 40 years ago by a longitudinal and cross-sectional study of over 100 11- to 17-year-old Quebecois children learning ESL in Montreal by Lightbown and her colleagues (e.g., Lightbown, 1983; Lightbown & Spada, 1978). They found that intensive drilling of *-ing* resulted in both accurate suppliance of the form in obligatory contexts *and overuse* for the school year. However, after uninflected verbs, such as simple present and imperatives, were taught, both accurate use and overuse of *-ing* declined in favor of the uninflected forms favored from the outset by naturalistic acquirers. A similar pattern was observed with some *-s* morphemes. Once they were taught, children tended to use them correctly in obligatory contexts, but also to overuse them, e.g., producing **The girls want a cookie* when describing a picture with only one girl. Lightbown wondered whether the "overlearning" produced by the audiolingual drill-work the children experienced (they were being taught using the six-volume audio-lingual *Lado English Series*) created an obstacle they had to overcome later before constructing their own IL systems.

On the positive side, unlike what happened with the *-ing* form, appropriate use of *-s* in obligatory contexts for plural and copula did not decrease in

tandem with the decrease in overuse errors with those morphemes. So while instruction accelerated attempts to use the *-s* forms, leading to overuse errors, as the negative side-effects wore off, the benefits remained intact. Overall, however, Lightbown's findings suggested that instruction was successful in altering developmental sequences temporarily, in a trivial, potentially harmful, and time-wasting manner. Part of the definition of 'developmental sequence', again, is that the order of the stages within it is fixed, and stages cannot be skipped. We will return to the limitations, as well as the benefits, of instruction in Chapters 3 and 4.

While sudden changes in performance suggest occasional fundamental *restructuring*[3] of the underlying IL grammar, acquisition of grammatical constructions and sub-systems like word order, negation, questions, or relative clause formation is typically gradual and incremental, sometimes taking months or even years to accomplish, and is never completed at all by some learners. None of this means that teaching is unhelpful; on the contrary, as we shall see in Chapters 3 and 4, (well-timed) instruction can both speed up acquisition and help students achieve higher levels of proficiency than they might do without it. It can modify L2 input in helpful ways, provide feedback on error when required, and increase the *salience* of linguistic items in the input that might otherwise go unnoticed. As will become clear, however, teachers cannot teach what they want when they want. Again, as Pienemann put it decades ago, *processability* determines *learnability*, and learnability determines *teachability* (Pienemann, 1984). Learners rule, OK?

[3] *Restructuring* (McLaughlin, 1990) refers to relatively sudden reorganization of a grammatical or form-function subsystem, with the learner handling it in a new way. Restructuring occurs in many fields, not just language learning. When learning to count, for example, young children initially tend to add each item in separate groups to calculate a total. There comes a point, however, when they "realize" that multiplication and addition work more efficiently than addition alone. Rather than 1 + 1 + 1 . . . . = 15, three rows of five = 15. The way they calculate totals changes. In language learning, similarly, 'N1 *of* N2' (*the sister of John*) becomes 'N2 possessive N1' (*John's sister*), and the way tense and aspect are employed, initially indiscriminately, in utterances like **He leave the house at six o'clock* and **He leaving the house at six o'clock*, are assigned different, more target-like (or sometimes still non-target-like) functions.

2.3 Some examples of developmental sequences

Common developmental sequences have been observed for structures in many languages, including questions in L2 English, perfective and imperfective aspect in L2 Spanish, word order in L2 German and Swedish, and relative clauses and past time reference in L2 German and English. (For reviews of research findings, see Hulstijn, R. Ellis, & Eskildsen, 2015; Ortega, 2009a, pp. 110-144; Lenzing (2015); Pienemann, 2015), and for more structures in other languages, Pienemann, 2005.)

Perhaps the most famous example is ESL negation. From the earliest lessons, classroom EFL and ESL students are typically presented with models illustrating the way negation works in English, usually starting with simple equational sentences (*Maria and Peter are not students*. *New York is not the capital of the USA*), and gradually moving on to more complex examples (*You mustn't be late*. *We don't own a car*. *Peter does not like math*. *Francesc didn't come to class yesterday.*). Despite all the model sentences, however, and despite learners only being exposed to, and drilled in, the full NS version, they always go through a four-stage developmental sequence, which is certainly *not* modelled.[4]

Schumann (1979) was one of the first to show this sequence for Spanish-speaking learners of English (whose L1 has pre-verbal negation): 1. No V (**I no see him*), 2. Don't V (**She don't like the movie*), 3. aux-neg (*I can't play the guitar*), and 4. *analyzed don't* (*John doesn't have a job*). Often accompanied by some memorized, unanalyzed chunks (especially, *I don't know* and *I don't understand*), pre-verbal negation is the first stage not just for Spanish-speaking learners of English (both ESL and EFL), but also for learners of English whose L1 has post-verbal negation, e.g., Japanese (Stauble, 1984), and even for learners of an L2, like Swedish, which has post-verbal negation, when the learners' L1s (in that instance, Japanese and Turkish) also have post-verbal negation (Hyltenstam, 1977). The fact that *No V* structures in such cases do not originate in the L1 or the L2 constitutes additional evidence of the learner's powerful cognitive contribution to SLA – powerful enough to overcome the effects of classroom instruction in the post-verbal Swedish structure, or in the case of ELT, the "mid-verbal" formula for English, whereby the negator is placed after the first tensed verb

[4] For examples of slight variations sometimes observed in the ESL negation sequence, and discussion of the role of idealization in the identification of developmental sequences, see R. Ellis (2015).

and before the main verb: auxiliary – negator – main verb (*He will not win the election. John does not like apples.*).

Another well-documented developmental sequence is that for questions in ESL. There are six stages. Stage 1 involves use of single words or chunks with rising intonation (*John? The boy?*). Stage 2 features simple utterances, with rising intonation, that follow the canonical SVO (subject – verb – object) word order for English (**He live London? *You pay ticket?)*. Stage 3, known as WH-fronting, adds a question word before the SVO questions in stage 2, but still without an auxiliary (**Why he hit the man? *How come she like him?*). Stage 4 involves two kinds of inversion: copula inversion (*Is Vancouver expensive?*) and Yes/no inversion (*Did you see Messi?*), with a copula or auxiliary moved into initial position. Stage 5, like Stage 3, involves question words, but now followed by an auxiliary in second position, plus the main verb (*When did he see Peter?*). This advance, however, is overgeneralized to indirect questions (**He asked where did he see Peter?*). Finally, Stage 6, 'Cancel inversion', is reached when the learner can distinguish direct and indirect questions (*Where were the children?* and *He asked where the children were?*), now correctly "canceling" subject - verb inversion *(*He asked where were the children*) in the latter.

The findings on negation and questions concern *developmental sequences*. Something very different is a common *accuracy order*, which has also long been attested in studies of both EFL and ESL, most notably in the eventual achievement of 80% – 90% accuracy with which nine grammatical morphemes are *supplied in obligatory contexts* (SOC). The order holds for child and adult learners from a variety of L1 backgrounds, with the nine morphemes split into four clusters. The first cluster includes *-ing*, plural *-s*, and copula *be*. The second comprises auxiliary *be* and article. They are followed by irregular past, and finally, by regular past, verbal *-s*, and possessive *-s*. The order has been shown to be explicable largely as a function of input frequency and perceptual salience (Goldschneider & DeKeyser, 2001). There are some observable effects for learners' L1, e.g., with articles noticeably later for Japanese speakers, who lack articles in their L1, than for Spanish speakers, whose L1 has articles, and a system similar to the one in English. As with developmental sequences, there is some variation; the morpheme accuracy order is based on mean scores for groups of learners, and does not necessarily hold for every individual learner (Andersen, 1977; Meisel et al, 1981; Murakami, 2013). Again, we are talking about a generalization, not a law.

The so-called 'Natural Order' (Krashen, 1977) for the nine English morphemes is the order in which they usually cross the accuracy finishing-line, i.e., reach 80% or 90% accuracy in obligatory contexts, not the order in which they first appear in an IL, i.e., the order in which they first *emerge*. Pienemann is at pains to point out the fundamental difference between accuracy and acquisition. When a learner first produces an utterance like **What is he takes*?, the utterance is inaccurate, due to its use of the wrong auxiliary *(is* instead of *does)* and its marking of person on the main (lexical) verb, as well as on the auxiliary. But faulty marking of subject-verb agreement should not distract from the more important advance in syntax, namely, production of an utterance with aux-second placement. As Pienemann (2011, p. 7) puts it, "It is important to realize that the level of grammatical correctness is not the same as level of acquisition." He continues,

> "The key point of a developmental perspective is to focus on the development of specific grammatical regularities in the individual rather than focusing on grammatical accuracy" (Pienemann, 2011, p. 10).

2.4 An explanation

Developmental sequences have long been well attested, but why should they exist at all, and why should they be so resistant to outside interference? A viable explanation is provided by Processability Theory (PT; Lenzing, 2015; Pienemann, 1998, 2015; Penemann & Kessler, 2011, 2012). PT, as noted above, uses *emergence*, not 80% or 90% *accuracy* in obligatory contexts, as the criterion for identifying stages in developmental sequences. Also, two productive tokens of a new structure are required before deciding a student has progressed to a new developmental stage, e.g., *happily* and *quietly*, rather than *daily* (which could be chunk learned, due to its input frequency) before crediting students with having learned 'adj + *ly'* for adverbs. PT has greater explanatory potential because it looks at the acquisition process over time, in other words, not just at the end-point, the order in which items cross the finishing line.

According to PT, first productive appearance of items, unlike their final position in the accuracy order, is determined, and predictable across languages, by a hierarchical set of *processing constraints* that underlie a six-stage model (Figure 2). It is those processing constraints – cognitive universals – that explain why particular structures, both syntactic and morphological, appear when they do.

Figure 2.2: Six-stage PT model for ESL questions (based on Pienemann, 2011, p. 51)

Stage	Syntax	Morphology
6	Cancel inversion	*I know why he arrived late*
		She wanted to know who he liked
5	Do-2nd 3rd sing -*s*	*How much did he pay for the horse?* *she works*
	Aux-2nd	*When will they leave?*
	Neg-do-2nd	*Why didn't he come to class?*
4	yes/no inversion	*Did she visit her mother?*
	Copula inversion	*Are they on the train? Where is he?*
3	Do-fronting pl-agreement	*Do she work there?* *two teams*
	Adverb-fronting	*Yesterday, they play soccer*
	Neg + verb	*They no work factory*
2	Neg + SVO past -*ed*	*No they have job* *he played*
	pl -*s*	*boys*
	poss. -*s*	*John's car*
1	Formulas	*Good morning*
		How are you?
		Where is station?

Learners start with single words and chunks, or formulas (*Today? Yes, please.*). Production is initially constrained, such that at Stage 2, they can only produce utterances that adhere to the canonical SVO order (*They like Melbourne*? **She is teacher?*). Next, they learn to move an element from one salient position to another. In English, that means topicalization, movement of an item from the salient last position in an utterance to the

salient first position (**In Guatemala, no has job? *Tomorrow, you have class?*) or simple placement of a new element at the front of an utterance, still without disrupting the canonical SVO word order (**When she have class? Do you have money?*). Then comes disruption of a string and movement of an element from an internal to a salient, initial or final, position (**Is John student? *Have you see game?*), followed by internal rearrangement of elements (**When has she leave*? *Where did they go?*), and so on.[5]

Despite its successful track record in predicting and explaining developmental sequences in a typologically varied array of L2s, PT is not the only explanation on offer, and some researchers (e.g., De Bot et al, 2007; Lowie & Verspoor, 2015) question the very existence of fixed developmental sequences. However, Pienemann points out that they have based their critiques on (a) "finishing line" accuracy orders, not acquisition orders, (b) analysis of elicited, as well as spontaneous, speech data (PT claims apply to the latter), and sometimes (c) misinterpretation of synchronic variation in the use of two or more developmental structures at one time (e.g., *No* V and *Don't* V negation) as evidence against staged development. Like Johnston, Ortega, and others before him, Pienemann (2011, 2015) summarizes the solid evidence in favor of developmental sequences in English and German. He provides additional evidence from more recent studies, and points out that research on a number of typologically varied languages, including Arabic, Chinese, English, German, Spanish, Japanese, Swedish, and Turkish, demonstrates that developmental sequences are both predictable and robust, and that PT provides a viable explanation for the findings:

> "PT contains an alternative operationalized descriptive framework, as outlined above (acquisition = emergence; development = predictable increases in complexity of processing prerequisites; variation = alternative manifestations of an underlying system that can be described using the PT apparatus)" (Pienemann, 2015, pp. 142-143).

Because the same processing abilities and constraints affect all learners, PT can account for progress not just with isolated structures like negation or

[5] Explanations of the underlying processing prerequisites that determine the order in which different structures appear are beyond the scope of this book, but available elsewhere. For earlier accounts, see, e.g., Johnston (1997), Larsen-Freeman & Long (1991, pp. 270-283), Pienemann (1998), Pienemann & Johnston (1987), and for current versions of PT, Pienemann & Kessler (2011, pp. 27-63, 2012).

questions, but for English morpho-syntax more generally, and (with some modifications) for any other language.

Although broadly the same for learners from different native language backgrounds, developmental sequences, like accuracy orders, sometimes show the effects of L1 influence (Zobl, 1982), but always without changing the sequences themselves. For example, speakers of L1s that have pre-verbal negation, such as Spanish, tend to spend longer in the pre-verbal, *No V* stage in ESL than speakers of L1s like Japanese that have post-verbal negation. The pre-verbal '*No* V' stage matches the Spanish L1 system, so appears to seduce learners into sticking with it longer; its marked dissimilarity to their post-verbal L1 system, conversely, leads Japanese learners to relinquish it sooner and move on. The point is, both L1 groups adhere to the sequence. They do not skip stages.

As well as causing differences in the rate of passage through a developmental sequence, L1 effects can show up in the form of additional sub-stages in a sequence, but, again, without altering the sequence itself. For example, when their L1, such as Mandarin, lacks articles, many learners begin by using deictics, instead (**Wei read this/that/one book*). It is as if they were placing a chair beneath the developmental "ladder" in order to reach the bottom rung. When they arrive at the third, aux-neg stage in the acquisition of ESL negation, many German learners produce utterances like *Peter plays not soccer*, assuming the English rule is 'Place the negator after the verb, including main verbs.' This works in German, but not in English, where the rule is 'Place the negator after the first tensed verb (usually an auxiliary of some kind)' (*is*, *does*, *did*, *will*, etc.), as in *Francesc doesn't like Real Madrid*, not after main verbs (**Jordi likes not Real Madrid*).

Summary

Like developmental processes, discussed in Chapter 1, the ubiquity and resilience of developmental sequences shows that a lot more is going on in learners' minds than simply digesting whatever bit of the target language they were presented with last. A basic finding from decades of research is that, contrary to what is commonly believed, learners play a more powerful role in their own language learning than either teachers or coursebook writers. Students are not empty vessels waiting for grammatical structures and vocabulary items to be hammered into them one by one in a pre-set, fixed order, through a combination of rules and drills. Nor do they learn one structure or word at a time, moving from ignorance to native-like command of the item in one step, and then moving on to the next, as most commercial

coursebooks imply. Language learning is slow and incremental, with many errors, transitional structures, and gradual approximations to correct forms and uses along the way.

Teachers and coursebooks typically present, drill, and try to persuade learners to produce, full NS examples of the linguistic dish of the day, e.g., *John didn't see the accident* or *When does Mary finish work?* No matter the L1 or the order or manner in which target language structures are presented to them, however, learners analyze the input and come up with their own transitional IL grammars, development broadly conforming to developmental sequences observed in naturalistic settings. They master the structures in roughly the same manner and order, whether learning in classrooms, on the street, or both. Attempts to make learners skip a developmental stage fail, leading Pienemann to formulate his *Processability*, *Learnability* and *Teachability Hypotheses*: what is processable by students at any time determines what is learnable, and, thereby, what is teachable. As we will see later, the effectiveness of negative feedback on error has been shown to be constrained in the same way.

All this will come as no surprise to anyone familiar with research findings in other areas of education, such as teaching math. Nevertheless, the false idea that language teachers can teach what they want, when they want (the third conditional because it's Tuesday), and to all students in a class on the same day, is one of the most damaging assumptions that continues to underlie most ELT. Even L1 influence does not lead to omission of a stage or to alteration of the order of stages: the developmental sequences remain intact (Zobl, 1982). EFL and ESL coursebooks, and as a result, most classroom ELT, do not take these imutable sequences into account. Transfer from the L1 cannot alter developmental sequences (which are, by definition, fixed) but can (i) lead to additional rungs on the ladder before learners start to climb, (ii) increase rate of passage through a developmental sequence, or conversely, prolong the duration of stages if they are similar to the corresponding L1 structure, and (iii) result in additional sub-stages. L1 influence can affect, but not override, universal developmental processes**.** Instruction, the research shows, has only minimal, usually temporary effects on language learning processes, on morpheme accuracy orders, and on developmental sequences. The picture is much more encouraging in two other major areas of language development, however: rate of learning, and level of ultimate attainment. It to these that we turn in Chapters 3 and 4.

Discussion questions

1. In what ways did the findings of Pica on effects of instruction on Spanish-speaking learners of English match those of Lightbown and colleagues concerning the effects of instruction on the French-speaking teenagers' learning of the *-ing* form?

2. What is meant by *restructuring* in IL development? Can you give an example (preferably not one from the chapter)?

3. How do accuracy orders and developmental sequences differ?

4. Can you explain Pienemann's three hypotheses about when instruction will, and will not be effective?

5. Given the resilience of developmental sequences, it has occasionally been suggested that teachers should model Stage 1 structures in a sequence, followed by Stage 2 versions, and so on, even if some of the developmental structures are ungrammatical. What arguments can you think of for or against such proposals?

6. What is the difference between emergence and accuracy as criteria for judging a learner's progress? Which has greater potential for explaining acquisition, and why?

7. Why do some German speakers produce utterances like *Helmut plays not football*, and at what point are they likely to produce them?

8. After ten minutes of intensive practice, most students in a class produce plural *-s* or simple past *-ed* correctly. How could you check to see whether they have really learned them successfully?

9. How can PT's ability to predict developmental sequences across grammatical sub-systems and across languages be explained?

10. What differences could knowledge of accuracy orders and developmental sequences make to textbooks and classroom instruction?

Suggested readings

Håkansson, G. & Norrby, C. (2010). Environmental influence on language acquisition: Comparing second and foreign language acquisition of Swedish. *Language Learning* 60, 4, 628-650.

Long, M. H. (1990). The least a second language acquisition theory needs to explain. *TESOL Quarterly*, 24, 649-666.
Ortega, L. (2009). Sequences and processes in language learning. In Long, M. H., & Doughty, C. J. (eds.), *Handbook of language teaching* (pp. 81-105). Oxford: Blackwell.
Pienemann, M. (1989). Is language teachable? Psycholinguistic experiments and hypotheses. *Applied Linguistics* 10, 1, 52-79.
Zobl, H. (1982). A direction for contrastive analysis: the comparative study of developmental sequences. *TESOL Quarterly* 16, 169-183.

CHAPTER 3

RATE OF DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Introduction

As we saw in Chapters 1 and 2, research findings on *processes* and on *developmental sequences* in IL development show that language instruction is not as powerful or as immediately successful as is typically assumed by those who continue to write, market, or use coursebooks. This is especially true of books based on a grammatical syllabus, delivered via audio-lingual Present – Practice – Produce (PPP) "skill-building" pedagogy. Fortunately, research has also shown that, provided they are timed correctly, other kinds of instruction can have a very positive effect by improving the *rate* at which language learning proceeds. As described in Chapter 4, instruction can also raise the eventual level learners achieve in the new language, i.e., their level of *ultimate attainment*. *Rate* of development is of considerable practical importance, especially for adults, who are usually paying for courses with their time and money. It is important for their teachers, too, therefore.

3.2 Rate advantages for instruction

From the late 1970's to the mid-1980's, some commentators, most notably Krashen (1981, 1985) claimed that the value of classroom instruction lay not in teaching *about* the language (a view we share). That might feed *learning* (conscious L2 knowledge), but learning was of very limited use. Krashen's Monitor Model of second language performance (e.g., Krashen, 1976) held that conscious knowledge of L2 grammar, the typical product of formal instruction, cannot be deployed unless three conditions are met: students know the rule, have time to access it, and are focused on language as object. They might then be able to check, or "monitor", their output, and correct or edit it using what they know. A paradigm example is an unspeeded, paper-and-pencil, grammar test. Monitorable tasks are rare in real life. Spontaneous speech, listening to a radio broadcast or university lecture, and a speeded, on-line, communicatively-oriented test, such as a so-called "oral proficiency interview", conversely, fail to meet all three deployment conditions, meaning that knowledge about the L2 ought not to

be of assistance, with learners needing to rely on their implicit L2 knowledge, or what Krashen called *acquisition*.

For Krashen, the main value of instruction (a view with which we disagree) lay in the access lessons provided to comprehensible input (CI) for elementary students, whose limited English made it difficult for them to obtain such input "on the street." Krashen argued against teaching grammar or correcting student errors, the solution for which, he said, was more CI. CI would facilitate *acquisition*, or implicit learning, which is what L2 speakers rely upon when using the language for communication. The purpose of language teaching (LT) was to recreate in the classroom the conditions that made child language acquisition so successful. Krashen's 'Fundamental Pedagogical Principle' stated that "(a)ny instructional technique that helps second language acquisition does so by providing comprehensible input" (Krashen, 1981, p. 59). The goal of the classroom "is not to produce native speakers or error-free second language performance. Rather, it was to develop "intermediate" second language competence, to bring the student to the point where he can begin to understand the language he hears and reads outside the class and thus improve on his own" (1981, p. 61).

Based on a review of studies of the absolute effects and relative utility of instruction – controlling for the total amount of instruction, exposure, or instruction plus exposure, i.e., for the total opportunity to acquire the L2 – Long (1983) identified problems the findings posed for Krashen's position. The studies provided evidence that instruction was beneficial in four situations where, if Krashen were right, it should not have been. (1) Children supposedly only acquired, not learned, language, yet they benefitted as much from (CI-poor) formal classroom instruction as adults. (2) Since supposedly only simple rules could be taught and used, beginners should benefit more than advanced learners; but instruction benefitted beginning, intermediate, and advanced students. (3) Conscious knowledge was supposedly only usable when three conditions were met: learners knew a (simple) rule, had time, and were focused on language as object; but instruction had a positive impact on students' performance not just on discrete-point but on integrative tests, which supposedly drew on acquired knowledge. (4) If the value of instruction was the access it provided to CI, it should be useful, or more useful, at least, in acquisition-poor, e.g., foreign language, settings; but it was beneficial in acquisition-rich settings, as well.

Krashen (1985, pp. 28-31) responded to two of Long's four generalizations, (2) and (4), but the attempted rebuttals were countered by Long (1988, pp.

127-130). For example, the fact that instructed learners outperformed naturalistic acquirers in most studies, he argued, was because classrooms provided CI for beginners. But if so, why did instruction benefit intermediate and advanced learners, too? Krashen's solution was that learners in some studies had been wrongly classified as intermediate or advanced, but that required him to reclassify participants in some studies differently from the original researchers' classifications, including those averaging 2+ on the Interagency Language Roundtable scale (see Chapter 11) as beginners in one study.

Krashen's position, nevertheless, remains largely unchanged to this day, although his emphasis has shifted from CI to (yet to be operationalized) 'compelling' CI (Krashen, 1985, 2011). The point here is not whether Krashen was right or wrong about this particular issue. (He has been right about a lot of other things over the years.) It is simply that if the findings can be interpreted as Long claimed, taken together, they provide an important piece of evidence for the idea that (appropriately timed) instruction increases rate of development. Instructed learners outperformed learners who had enjoyed the same total amount of instruction, exposure, or instruction plus exposure, i.e., for the total opportunity to acquire the second language. With the aid of instruction, in other words, they had achieved more in the same amount of time, i.e., progressed faster.

Modeling SLA on child first language acquisition was partly based on the belief at the time that commonalities in morpheme accuracy orders across child and adult, instructed and naturalistic acquirers reflected the workings of Chomsky's Language Acquisition Device (LAD) and the continued access it provided to Universal Grammar (UG). As with young children, who are highly successful language learners – they all become NSs – exposure to extensive, comprehensible, holistic samples of the L2 would allow adults to induce the rules of the L2, a theory enshrined in the "Natural Approach' to LT (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). One of several problems with that claim, however, is that it assumes that adult learners' ability for incidental and implicit learning remains as strong after the offset of several *sensitive periods* for SLA as it was in young children before *maturational constraints* set in.

The literature clearly shows that is not the case. Some individuals can achieve very high levels in an L2, which is more than most of them need, starting at any age. The prognosis deteriorates markedly, however, the later the learner's age of first sustained L2 exposure, also called the age of onset (AO). Nativelike abilities become impossible quite early, even for learners

with high language learning aptitude, high IQ, strong motivation, positive attitudes, plenty of time, and unlimited input, e.g., highly educated immigrants who have lived in their adopted country for decades. The research shows they cannot acquire a native-like accent if their first exposure to the new language occurred after childhood (before age 4-6 for most people and by age 12 for everyone else). They cannot acquire a nativelike command of semantics, vocabulary and collocations if they were not first exposed by age 7-9 (Munnich & Landau, 2010; Spadaro, 2013). They can achieve very high levels of morphology and syntax, but not nativelike levels, if first exposure occurred after the mid-teens (Abrahamsson & Hyltenstam, 2009; DeKeyser, 2000; Granena & Long, 2013). (For reviews of the research findings, see Granena, 2016; Hyltenstam & Abrahamsson, 2003; Long, 1990, 2013). The point here is that the way older learners acquire an L2 has clearly changed from how they did it as young children, with noticeably poorer results suggesting it is wrong to believe adults will do well if they are simply provided with CI.

3.3 Rate advantages for overall abilities

At the time Krashen made his influential claims, very little empirical work on the effects of instruction had been carried out. However, as noted above, based on Long's (1983) review of what was available, it was argued that instruction was clearly advantageous – facilitative across the board. Of 11 studies comparing student achievement after equivalent amounts of classroom instruction and/or naturalistic L2 exposure, six clearly showed faster development in children and adults receiving formal ELT. The findings of two more were ambiguous, but pointed in the same direction, and three showed a minor or no rate advantage. Moreover, contrary to Krashen's claims, the research findings showed classroom instruction was favorable (i) for children, not just adults, (ii) for intermediate and advanced learners, not just beginners, (iii) in what Krashen called 'acquisition-rich' environments (i.e., situations where comprehensible input was easily available outside the classroom), not just 'acquisition-poor' environments, and (iv) on integrative, not just discrete-point, tests. Most of the 11 studies involved real classrooms, and tests of general English proficiency.

Since then, much additional research and several statistical meta-analyses of the findings have followed, confirming unambiguously that instruction is beneficial. Norris and Ortega (2000), synthesized the results of 45 experimental and quasi-experimental studies conducted between 1980 and 1998. They found a strong overall effect for instruction (d = 0.96). That

result was confirmed ten years later by a second statistical meta-analysis of 34 studies by Goo, Granena, Yilmaz, & Novella (2015). The two meta-analyses compared explicit and implicit instruction, and *focus on forms* and *focus on form* instruction.[1] Again, there was a strong overall effect for instruction (g = 1.03). A third meta-analysis was reported by Kang, Sok, & Han (2018), this time of 54 studies conducted between 1980 and 2015. 75% of the studies had been carried out in a foreign language (FL), and 25% in an L2, setting. Once again, there was a large effect size for instruction on immediate post-tests (*g* = 1.06), and also on delayed post-tests (g = .93). "Treatment" groups (those receiving instruction) in almost all the studies comparing the effects of different types of instruction outperformed control groups, i.e., demonstrated a faster *rate* of learning for instructed learners regardless of the type of instruction.

A potential confound in some of the early studies was the so-called Hawthorne Effect, whereby people modify their behavior, and often improve their performance and productivity (at work, on the sports field, in the classroom, etc.) simply as a result of knowing they are being observed. Well-designed studies preempt that possibility, e.g., by making students in the control groups aware that they, too, are part of a study, and, on analogy with placebo treatments in medical research, by engaging them in interesting "treatment" activities that, unknown to the students, happen not to be relevant to the outcome variables.

The findings of the three statistical meta-analyses (Norris & Ortega, 2000; Goo, Granena, Yilmaz, & Novella, 2015; Sok, Kang, & Han, 2018) show consistent overall rate advantages for instructed learners. Short-term advantages sometimes show up on immediate post-tests, especially tests of explicit instruction, and then fade away over time, but even then provide some evidence of the potential of instruction to improve rate of development. Learning from implicit instruction, however, is more durable, and often surpasses the effects of explicit treatments over time, as demonstrated by scores on delayed post-tests.

Another body of research that provides evidence of rate advantage for instructed learners is the extensive work over the past three decades on a particular dimension of instruction: negative feedback on learner error (what used to be referred to, misleadingly, as 'error correction'). The overall

[1] The results for different kinds of instruction – implicit and explicit, and focus on forms, focus on form, and focus on meaning – and the implications for teaching, are discussed in Chapter 6. The terms are defined in that chapter.

research findings are synthesized in the results of several narrative reviews (e.g., Loewen & Philp, 2006; Mackey, 2012; Yilmaz, 2016) and statistical meta-analyses (Goo & Mackey, 2013; Li, 2010; Lyster &Saito, 2010). Both types of syntheses concluded that short-term gains, measured by tests administered immediately after the treatment, sometimes favor explicit negative feedback (prompts, elicits, provision of grammar rules, etc.) over implicit feedback (clarification requests and, mostly, recasts). Long-term gains, however, measured by tests administered, say, one week or one month later, generally favor implicit negative feedback (usually in the form of recasts) over explicit feedback, with the short-term gains from explicit feedback tending to disappear over time, while those from implicit feedback gaining in strength.[2] Importantly for the present discussion, *both* kinds of treatment groups do better than the control groups in the same studies.

3.4 Markedness and rate advantages for specific linguistic targets

While many of the original studies surveyed in the meta-analyses measured general, overall effects of instruction, an interesting experimental study with a much narrower focus, English relative clauses (RCs), was reported by Gass (1982). Her research aimed to assess the generalizability of instruction focused on more typologically marked[3] RCs to less marked ones in a supposedly universal noun phrase accessibility hierarchy, proposed by Keenan and Comrie (1977):

[2] Definitions and examples of the different kinds of implicit and explicit negative feedback are provided in Chapters 5 and 6.

[3] To describe a form or construction as 'marked' usually means it is unusual, infrequent, less frequent, or rare within a language or across languages of the world. Unmarked forms or structures, conversely, are more basic, typical, or canonical in a language or languages. For example, if a language only allows relativization from one position, it will be subject position, and so on down the hierarchy. Few languages allow relativization from all six. Within a language, like English, that allows all six, RCs from lower positions are less common that those from higher positions. Incongruities occasionally arise, however. For example, preposition-stranding (*Where are you from?*) is much more frequent than pied-piping (*From where are you?*) in English, yet pied-piping is the only option allowed in many languages.

Least marked	**Subject**	The man who bought the car
|	**Direct object**	The man who we know
|	**Indirect object**	The man who we sold the car to
|	**Object of a preposition**	The man who we heard about
|	**Genitive**	The man whose car was stolen
Most marked	**Object of a comparative**	The man who John is richer than

International students at the University of Michigan were randomly assigned to one of two groups. Students' knowledge of RCs before the study began was minimal, as shown by their performance on two kinds of pretests, a grammaticality judgment test (GJT) and a written sentence-combining test. For example, presented with these two sentences, 'The police were searching for one of the bank robbers' and 'The bank robber was hiding in an empty building', students had to combine them to produce 'The bank robber (who) the police were searching for was hiding in an empty building.' During three days of classes, the experimental group received instruction on the fourth-most marked RC type in the implicational markednes scale, variously called 'Oblique' or 'Object of a preposition (OPREP). The second group received an equivalent amount of instruction on the two least marked RCs in the hierarchy, Subject and Direct object RCs. A post-test was administered, using the same two GJT and sentence-combining measures.

The experimental group's scores on all of the first four RC types (Subject, Direct object, Indirect object, and OPREP) was found to have improved significantly on the GJT. On the sentence-combining task, both groups' scores had improved significantly, but with the experimental group doing better not just on OPREP RCs, the focus of the instruction they had received, but also on the three less marked types above it in the Keenan and Comrie hierarchy – Subject, Direct object, and Indirect object – on which they had received no instruction. Teach one, get three free? There is some evidence, in other words, of effects of instruction on rate of acquisition and also of the generalizability of the effects, at least to constructions that are implied terms

in an implicational markedness hierarchy. Other studies employing different types of instruction showed similar results of replications (see, e.g., Doughty, 1988; Eckman, Bell & Nelson, 1988).[4]

Findings in other grammatical domains concerning the generalizability of beneficial effects of instruction targeting less marked constructions have been obtained by Zobl (1985, and elsewhere). Zobl, for example, reported similar findings with French possessive adjectives, which, unlike English, have to agree with the object (*John loves her sister*. *Mary spoke to his father*), not with the subject, as in English (*John loves his sister*, etc.), leading to frequent errors in SLA of either language. Zobl first confirmed standard linguistic accounts to the effect that (i) masculine (*his*) is the *un*marked, and feminine (*her*) the marked, member of the *his*/*her* pair, and (ii) that control of the rule governing possessed animate or human objects (*his mother*, *her brother*) implies control of the rule governing possessed *un*marked *in*animate or *non*-human entities (*her hand*, *his car*), but not vice versa, i.e., *non*-human is the *un*marked member of the human/non-human pair. Controlling for input frequency, two effects-of-instruction studies followed, with one group of students each time receiving 15 minutes of intensive formfocused exposure (picture-based question-and-answer practice, with rephrasings of incorrect responses, but no use of grammar rules) only to examples with marked, human-possessed entities, and the other group given the same amount of instruction exposed only to *non*-human possessed entities. Findings of both studies were that students trained on the marked (human) examples improved in *both* the human *and* non-human domains. Conversely, students who had experienced exposure only to unmarked, non-human examples deteriorated in their use of that form (first study) or improved, but less than the other group (replication study). The second group also showed no improvement in use of the marked human form, not experienced in their instruction, in either study.

So here, again, are studies showing that learners exposed only to marked data improved more than students exposed only to unmarked data in *both* the marked and unmarked (non-human) domain, in which the other group, alone, had received instruction. Echoing findings of the RC instruction studies, assuming such benefits last, attention to marked forms and constructions appears to be a second *potential* way that instruction can

[4] The original markedness scale seems to work well with RCs in English and other European languages, but not with left-branching RCs in Asian languages. A special issue of *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* (29, 2, 2007) is devoted to this problem.

produce long-term advantages, i.e., raise the level of ultimate attainment. The generalization? Instruction exposing students to more marked data led to greater improvement than that seen in students exposed only to unmarked data in *both* the marked/more marked domain *and* in the unmarked/less marked domain, in which only the other group had received instruction.

3.5. Rate advantages for appropriately timed instruction

Another early study demonstrating beneficial effects of instruction on rate of acquisition was reported by Pienemann (1984, 1989). The main purpose of Pienemann's study was to see whether he could predict which structures students would, and would not, be able to learn, given their current ability to process those structures. Pienemann analyzed the spontaneous speech of 100 seven-to-nine year old Italian children learning German as a second language (GSL) in Munich. He identified 10 children who were at either stage 2 or stage 3 in the six-stage sequence displayed earlier (see Figure 2.2.), when discussing the development of ESL questions. The children, who were all in the same class, then received two weeks of exactly the same instruction from their regular teacher – a mix of linguistically focused and communicative exercises targeting subject-verb inversion (stage 4). The children's spontaneous speech was then recorded again.

The results were exactly as predicted. Students who were at stage 2 when the study began were still at stage 2 two weeks later. Children at stage 3 before the instruction began had progressed to stage 4, a process normally taking several months in naturalistic GSL. That is to say, the study provided important initial evidence (confirmed by subsequent studies, e.g., Bonilla, 2015; Mackey, 1991; Pienemann, 1989) of four things highly relevant both for understanding SLA and for explaining when language teaching is more likely to work. First, students can benefit from instruction only when they are psycholinguistically ready for it – the *learnability hypothesis*. Structures were learnable if one stage ahead of the children's current level, but not at two stages ahead.[5] Second, the learnability of a structure determines its teachability – the *teachability hypothesis*. Third, instruction pitched at a level for which students are not yet psycholinguistically ready will not help, and will not make them skip a stage in a developmental sequence. Stages in

[5] Krashen had suggested a similar idea: learners at stage '*i*' in their IL development could potentially learn structures "one step ahead," at stage '*i* + 1', that they encountered in comprehensible input. Conceptually similar, Pienemann's claim had the advantage that, unlike *i* and *i + 1*, stages in Processability Theory were defined a priori and operationalizable, not metaphorical, so empirically testable (and tested).

developmental sequences are fixed and cannot be skipped. Fourth, instruction for which they are psycholinguistically ready can speed up the *rate* of passage through a developmental sequence. Timing is everything.

Many other studies have demonstrated the positive effects of instruction on rate of learning, but due to space constraints, will not be reviewed here. Nevertheless, as noted earlier, some important evidence for rate advantages is indirect, a by-product of research whose original purpose was to compare the absolute or relative effectiveness of different *types* of instruction or different types or particular features of instruction, such as feedback on error. These studies usually include one or more control groups whose members receive equivalent amounts of L2 exposure to those in the experimental groups, but not instruction in the targeted item(s). Whatever the outcome of the main "methods comparison" aspect of the research, a consistent finding is that one or (usually) both treatment groups outperform the control group. In other words, given the same amount of time and exposure, students in the treatment groups getting different types of instruction learn more (progress faster) than those in the uninstructed groups.

In sum, it is clear that instruction of various kinds improves *rate* of learning. Repeated demonstrations of beneficial effects are important, and problematic for naysayers. However, they are themselves a finding in need of explanation. How, who, and when does instruction help, and what kinds of instruction help most? We will return to these questions in Chapters 6, 8 and 9.

Summary

It is unequivocal that instruction can speed up adult second language acquisition. Many more studies have confirmed the seminal findings discussed in this chapter. In fact, there is now an entire field, called Instructed Second Language Acquisition, which takes the rate advantage as a given finding. The positive effects of instruction on rate of development might, at first glance, seem at odds with its lack of effect on developmental sequences. The two sets of findings can be reconciled, however, when it is remembered that developmental sequences are based on implicit knowledge, subject to universal cognitive constraints. Instruction speeds up that development, without altering the sequences, through devices such as increasing the perceptual salience of and exposure to items that might otherwise take a long time for learners to notice, for instance the marked relative clauses and possessive adjectives described in this chapter (and especially items that have little or no effect on comprehensibility). This

draws students' attention to them sooner, but also when they are psycholinguistically ready.

Discussion questions

1. Explain Krashen's distinction between learning and acquisition, and the role he attributes to CI.

2. Since instructed and naturalistic developmental sequences are the same, is Krashen justified in downplaying the importance of classroom instruction?

3. Using examples of each, what is the difference between monitorable and unmonitorable tasks?

4. What makes a setting acquisition-rich or acquisition-poor?

5. Since child language acquisition (L1A) is so successful, why not create the same conditions for adults and rely on them to do the rest?

6. Given the well established developmental sequences for the L1A and SLA of relative clauses (RCs), do the findings of Gass (1982) and Eckman et al (1988), among others, constitute counter-evidence to the idea that developmental sequences are impervious to instruction?

7. Using the findings by Pienemann (1984, 1989), how is the timing of instruction a crucial determinant of its likely success?

8. Can you suggest three potential ways in which instruction helps, and explain why they should?

9. If students can produce a particular structure accurately after practicing it with their teacher in class for 30 minutes, does this constitute an example of an effect of instruction on rate of development?

10. How would you respond to someone who maintains that instruction does not work, as evidenced, for example, by unchanging developmental sequences and common error types, so that students are better off simply seeking out opportunities for L2 exposure and use outside the classroom?

Suggested readings

Abrahamsson, N. & Hyltenstam, K. (2009). Age of onset and nativelikeness in a second language: Listener perception versus linguistic scrutiny. *Language Learning* 59, 2, 249-306.

Granena, G. & Long, M. H. (2013). Age of onset, length of residence, language aptitude, and ultimate L2 attainment in three linguistic domains. *Second Language Research* 29, 3, 311-343.

Hyltenstam, K., Bartning, I., & Fant, L. (Eds.) (2018). *High-level language proficiency in second language and multilingual contexts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Krashen, S. (2011). The Compelling (not just interesting) Input Hypothesis. *The English Connection* (KOTESOL) 15, 3, 15.

Long, M. H. (2013). Maturational constraints on child and adult SLA. In Granena, G., & Long, M. H. (eds.), *Sensitive periods, language aptitude, and ultimate L2 attainment* (pp. 3-41). Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Malovrh, P. A. & Benati, A. G. (Eds.) (2019). *The handbook of advanced proficiency in second language acquisition*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.

Ortega, L. & Byrnes, H. (Eds.) (2008). *The longitudinal study of advanced 2 capacities*. New York: London: Routledge.

CHAPTER 4

ULTIMATE ATTAINMENT

4.1 Introduction

So far, we have seen that instruction produces no more than minor, mostly ephemeral, changes in *developmental processes* and *developmental sequences*, e.g., altering the relative frequencies of different error types at different stages of development or adding sub-stages to sequences, but definitely has a positive effect on *rate of development*. The final area of interest is its potential effects on *ultimate attainment*, i.e., the eventual level learners achieve in the L2. This has always been important, but more so in recent years, given the increasing need around the world for L2 speakers with advanced L2 abilities for academic, vocational training, or occupational purposes. It is increasingly common for people to study in other countries, work overseas, or, tragically, be forced to migrate to other parts of the world as refugees seeking to escape the ravages of wars, religious persecution, political persecution, ethnic cleansing, and climate change. In the development of advanced levels of proficiency, instruction appears able to play a positive role, but there are often overlooked methodological problems in demonstrating unambiguous long-term advantages.

4.2 The difficulty of proving long-term effects of instruction

Showing that something occurs as a result of instruction, e.g., a welcome speed-up in rate of development, is not the same thing as showing that instruction is responsible for permanent advantages. A short-term change in an instructed group does not prove that the same change will not, or cannot, be achieved later by an uninstructed group. After 20 minutes of instruction, group 1 may learn grammatical structure X or collocation Y, or show an overall pre- to post-test gain of 20% on a general test of English grammar, whereas group 2, with no instruction or instruction on different linguistic features, unsurprisingly, does not. But many members of group 2 may learn the same things via natural exposure, even if it takes them longer to do so.

How long must the researcher wait before it is justified to conclude that change or a lack of change is permanent? This is also a central question in research on fossilization, i.e., the supposed cessation of language development due to a permanent loss of *capacity* to go any further (as opposed to development merely stabilizing due to lack of input or learner interest), Language development is well known to plateau periodically, sometimes for a matter of days, sometimes for much longer, before taking off again. By convention (nothing more), access to plentiful L2 input for at least ten years is usually considered an acceptable standard in research on fossilization. Is that sufficient in research on ultimate attainment, or is it necessary to wait longer before concluding that uninstructed learners will never or can never acquire X or Y? A partial solution is to compare what is achieved by instructed and naturalistic acquirers after years of plentiful L2 experience – both input and production opportunities. Are there linguistic items – or more useful for predictive and instructional purposes, classes of linguistic items – that are not learned or less frequently learned without the aid of instruction?

It turns out that a lot of research has looked at very advanced learners and at linguistic domains, such as collocations and formulaic speech, in which even near-native abilities are rare, even for them (see, e.g., Abrahamsson & Hyltenstam, 2009; Byrnes, 2012; Hyltenstam, 2016; Granena & Long, 2013; Hyltenstam, Bartning, & Fant, 2018; Malovrh & Benati, 2019; Ortega & Byrnes, 2008; Spadaro, 2013). The problem is, hardly any studies include comparisons of instructed and naturalistic acquirers. In fact, hardly any include purely naturalistic acquirers at all. This could be due to convenience sampling (most studies are conducted with university students because most researchers are university faculty members or graduate students), or perhaps simply because few purely naturalistic acquirers achieve very advanced (near-native) abilities in an L2. That seems unlikely, however, as (a) there are many more naturalistic than instructed or mixed acquirers in the world, (b) no instruction is available in the vast majority of the world's languages, yet (c) many people learn them successfully through long-term residence in an area where they are spoken.

ELT is readily available to most people with the time and money to pay for it. There are many naturalistic acquirers of English, too, e.g., refugees and working-class immigrants to English-speaking countries, but they are often unsuitable candidates for study. Many have received little formal education in their country of origin, have less access to NSs of the L2 on arrival in an English-speaking country (the "linguistic ghetto" phenomenon), or in many cases, have little motivation to progress much farther in the language than

is required to satisfy their everyday communicative needs. Some, however, especially political refugees of various kinds, are highly educated and require as close to native-like L2 abilities as their circumstances and age of arrival allow. Many of them seek out instruction, of course, but not all do. Research on learners like those is sorely needed. A relevant study of two English-speakers who chose to move to another country voluntarily, was reported by Ioup, Boustagui, Tigi, & Moselle (1994).

Ioup et al examined the level of achievement in Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA) by two American women, one with, and one without, the aid of instruction. "Julie" married an Egyptian national and moved to Egypt when she was 21. Her husband was drafted into the army nine days after they arrived, leaving Julie, who knew no Arabic, living alone with his family members, none of whom spoke any English, for 45 days until he returned. Over the next two years, a purely naturalistic acquirer, Julie gradually transitioned to using ECA full-time, as her ability rapidly increased. She had no formal instruction, and never learned to read or write the new language. She had lived in Egypt for 26 years by the time of the study, working as an EFL teacher and teacher trainer at the college level. Julie used ECA at home with her husband and two bilingual children, and she was fluent.

The second American woman, "Laura", studied Arabic for several years in the USA, including taking graduate courses, participating in a year-long study-abroad program in Morocco, and even teaching Arabic classes. She could read and write the more formal variety, Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). To improve her ECA, she had moved to Egypt, where she married an Egyptian, and had lived in Cairo for ten years by the time of the study. She worked as a teacher of MSA at the university level. Her profile, therefore, was very much that of a highly motivated "mixed" learner, with plenty of both formal instruction and naturalistic exposure, with the instruction preceding most of the exposure.[1]

Arabic is a highly inflected language with complex morphology for forming nouns, verbs and adjectives. Ioup et al administered a series of tests to the two women. They first probed their free spoken production (describing a

[1] Study abroad programs vary greatly. Some amount to little more than student groups taking summer language or content courses overseas, with little additional contact with the L2. Others involve instruction and considerable out-of-class exposure. A few involve naturalistic exposure, only. They vary in many other ways, too, such as program duration and student age and starting proficiency level. (For reviews of program structures and outcomes, see Collentine, 2009; Yang, 2016).

favorite recipe), mixing recordings of the two Americans with five recordings of the same task by three educated Arabic NSs and two individuals who were clearly non-native speakers (NNSs).[2] Julie and Laura were both "passed" as NSs by 8 out of 13 judges (teachers of Arabic as a foreign language), with some classifying them as NNSs because of occasional incorrect pronunciation or intonation. They then examined both women's ability to identify accents from different Arabic-speaking countries and from different parts of Egypt, finding both performed almost comparably to NS judges. Third, they looked at the two women's grammatical intuitions, compared their performance and that of 11 NS controls on three tests: translation, a speeded aural GJT, and an aural anaphora-interpretation task. Each revealed some small errors, such as non-native use of a preposition (both women), incorrect use of a yes/no question particle (Julie), and rejection of some optional word orders licensed in ECA and accepted by the NSs (both women, especially Julie), differing from the NS controls in total on 5/37 sentences (Julie) and 6/37 (Laura). Laura performed like a NS on anaphora interpretation, whereas Julie consistently made several errors (although some sentences were hard even for the NSs to process).

Ioup et al note the excellence of both Julie's and Laura's Arabic, which, while clearly not native, was certainly near-native. They concluded that the women's grammatical competence was similar, and that while the ILs of instructed and naturalistic acquirers typically differ in several respects, it seemed that very advanced speakers may differ very little. If true, this would suggest that early advantages of instruction do not or, at least, do not always translate into permanent improvements to ultimate attainment. That said, it should be remembered that this was a study of only two individuals, and that the instructed learner had also benefited from several years of naturalistic exposure. For instance, the researchers note that Julie was a particularly talented learner, with all the inherited characteristics typical of the Geschwind cluster. Such individuals frequently have twins, left-handedness, allergies, and other characteristics in their family history. Also typical of "Geschwind cluster" family members, while clearly a talented language learner herself, Julie's ability in math or anything requiring manipulation of numbers was dismal. Talent in one cognitive area often corresponds to weakness in another. This is typically also the case with

[2] Including speakers who are clearly non-natives increases the chances of "false positives", i.e., individuals who judges "pass" as NSs simply because they are noticeably better. See Long (2005, 2013) for discussion of this and several other methodological problems in this kind of research.

linguistic *savants*.[3] Thus, these findings, though intriguing, are not generalizeable.

4.3 Some potential explanations for long-term effects of instruction

It is important to determine not only *that* instruction works, e.g., by increasing rate of development, but having established that there is something to explain, *how* it works. Suppose something that instruction offers can be identified that simply is not available, or only rarely available, via natural exposure. Three candidates (among others) are (i) explicit language knowledge, (ii) the addition of perceptual salience to items in the input that learners might never notice if left to their own devices, and (iii) modifications of the input to which learners are exposed that draw added attention to those items. If the effect of any or all of these can then be linked to long-term advantages for instructed over naturalistic acquirers, they may be features of instruction that boost ultimate attainment permanently. Such links (if they exist) would not constitute proof of the effects, but would offer candidate permanent benefits of instruction that could be sustained if most instructed learners were successful with the areas of the language concerned, and very few or no naturalistic learners were. The hypotheses would be testable empirically, so open to refutation. Let us briefly consider the three possibilities mentioned (by no means an exhaustive list).

4.3.1 Explicit L2 knowledge

Most advocates of the use of a grammatical syllabus and traditional skill-building approaches to LT tacitly assume that *conscious awareness* of new forms and constructions, knowledge of grammatical rules, memorization of L2 vocabulary items through translations of L1 words, and intensive practice of target forms and patterns, are some of the advantages instruction offers that naturalistic exposure does not. Such phenomena unquestionably distinguish many instructed and naturalistic learners' experience of the L2, at least where the approach to instruction devotes considerable time to consideration of the new language as object. (Not all instructional approaches do that, as we will see in chapters in Section 2 of this book.) The question is whether whatever is (believed to be) taught that way really

[3] For an analysis of factors explaining polyglotism, exceptional individual achievement in multiple languages, see Hyltenstam (2018).

provides instructed learners with a permanent advantage, or even a temporary advantage, i.e., with something that naturalistic acquirers cannot or do not learn simply by experiencing the L2 in use for communication.

It would be difficult to argue that a new word or particular piece of grammar *cannot* be learned simply by encountering numerous examples in authentic language use, i.e., without explicit knowledge – just that it typically takes more time. Even if many learners fail to learn something after considerable opportunity to do so, many others do. The kind of linguistic features that might conceivably only be learnable with the aid of conscious awareness would presumably be infrequent, possibly esoteric, and perceptually *non-salient*.[4]

A grammatical example of this in English might be subject-verb inversion in sentences in which negative polarity adverbs (*never, nowhere, neither, nor, not until, rarely, seldom*, etc.) are fronted and modify an entire clause, e.g., *Never/very rarely/only once before/not since 1978 has a hurricane caused such devastation*, or *Never/Seldom/Only once before/Neither/Nor had he been forced to borrow money*. Very advanced learners, including many who have received years of instruction, frequently violate that rule, accepting and producing sentences like **Very rarely a hurricane has produced such devastation* (has a hurricane), **Only once a week he eats pizza* (does he eat), or **Never before he had been forced to borrow money* (had he). Where vocabulary and collocations are concerned, even advanced learners will often accept or produce such "semantically ungrammatical" sentences as **The snake crept across the grass* (slithered), **The boy grimaced with anger* (pain), **The government responded to the attack by announcing war* (declaring).

A problem with such grammatical and collocation errors, and potentially the reason they persist, is that the spoken utterances or written sentences in

[4] Linguistic salience (broadly) refers to how noticeable something is. The item has some quality, or has had something done to it, that makes it stand out. All others things being equal, a bound morpheme, like verb *-s*, which is also unstressed, communicatively redundant, and usually string-internal, is *non-salient*, e.g., *Frankie DeJong plays beautifully*, or *Messi scores goals for fun*. The past time bound suffix /Id/ in *Jordi wanted to play like Xavi or Pirlo*, conversely, is a little more salient than verb *-s* or the /d/ and /t/ in *wondered* or *hoped* because it is syllabic, and meaning-bearing (*wants* and *wanted* mean different things), so not communicatively redundant. A normally non-salient item, like verb -s, may become more salient if it is italicized or bolded in a written text or stressed in a spoken one -- so-called *input enhancement* (Sharwood-Smith, 1993). See Chapter 6.

which they occur are almost always perfectly understandable, especially in context. As a result, communication does not break down, negative feedback is not forthcoming (outside the classroom, "correcting" NNSs overtly is usually considered rude), and learners remain blissfully ignorant of the fact that they are even making an error, much less of what the correct version is. A teacher or textbook writer can make advanced students aware of such items – provide them with conscious knowledge – via some combination of negative feedback, a simple rule, or intensive practice of the correct form, all of which they are unlikely to receive from NS interlocutors in a naturalistic setting.

4.3.2 Increased perceptual salience

One way in which instruction can be very useful is through the added salience it brings to linguistic items that might otherwise go *unnoticed* or *undetected* (see Chapter 5) during naturalistic exposure for months, years, or even permanently. This is sometimes the result of the very low frequency of an item, but even frequent items can go unnoticed for a long time. Instruction can serve to draw advanced learners' attention to such items implicitly or explicitly.

A well-known example was reported as part of the diary study by Schmidt and Frota (1986) of Schmidt's learning of Portuguese during a six-month stay in Brazil. Schmidt was taking Portuguese classes in the morning and receiving plenty of natural exposure throughout the rest of the day. By comparing detailed notes he kept on his classes and use of the L2 outside the classroom, coupled with transcriptions of his Portuguese production during regular conversations with a NS (Frota), he concluded that neither being drilled on a form in class, nor a form occurring in the input, was sufficient for him to learn it; rather, he had consciously to *notice* the form in the input, and usually did so *after it had been the focus of a classroom lesson.*

Once, after a class that had focused on the imperfect verb suffix *-ia* (marking repeated actions in the past) in the morning, he noticed numerous examples of *-ia* in speech addressed to him later that day, and managed to use it correctly himself. He realized the form must always have been in the input many times every day, but that he had simply never noticed it. Assuming the retrospective, impressionistic observations are reliable, which we do, his appears to be a clear example of an important way in which instruction can potentially improve ultimate attainment, i.e., by adding perceptual salience to an otherwise non-salient form, even a frequent one. It is perfectly possible

that learners will eventually master such forms independently, but even cursory examination of the speech of many long-term residents in an L2 environment shows that, in fact, they often fail to produce many non-salient or low-salient items accurately, or at all, despite years of opportunity to acquire them, especially if the forms, like English verb *-s* or plural *-s*, are communicatively redundant. For example, **John work in a bank* and **two book* are ungrammatical but convey a speaker's intended meaning perfectly adequately.

The idea that a major purpose of instruction is to increase perceptual salience has taken on increased importance in recent years through the work of Nick Ellis. Correctly, in our opinion, Ellis (Cintrón-Valentín & Ellis, 2015; Ellis, 2005, 2006) sees *implicit learning* as the major way languages are acquired, including by adults if given the chance (sufficient time and input). The function of instruction, he maintains, is not to "teach" items in the way that is traditionally understood. Its main value lies in drawing attention to items in the input, especially non-salient items, so that learners are more likely to *detect them unconsciously* in future (as opposed to *notice them consciously*) when processing input *implicitly*, e.g., when focused on meaning during subsequent interaction with NSs or while listening to the radio or reading a newspaper. The explicit intervention establishes an initial representation in long-term memory (think of it as a faint memory trace) which functions as a selective cue priming the learner to attend to and perceive additional instances of the same item when processing implicitly. *Explicit teaching*, in other words, serves to kick-start *implicit processing*. That is important because implicit learning will increase implicit L2 knowledge, and it is predominantly implicit knowledge on which learners of all ages depend when using a language for communication. Ellis refers to "the general principle of explicit learning in SLA: changing the cues that learners focus on in their language processing changes what their implicit learning processes tune" (N. Ellis 2005:327). We will return to these ideas in Chapter 5, as there are major implications for instruction. We will also discuss whether it is possible to achieve the same results by non-explicit, unobtrusive means: *enhanced incidental learning* (Long, 2017, 2020).

4.3.3 Appropriately modified input

Explicit L2 knowledge is usually only provided in pre-digested form in classrooms or from pedagogic texts, although some naturalistic learners do consult grammars and dictionaries (making them partly instructed learners) or become aware of rules or statistical regularities after conscious reflection, resulting in explicit knowledge *about* the language. Something as basic as a

meaning-bearing grammatical suffix, like English *-ed*, apostrophe *-s*, or *-ing*, or Portuguese *-ia,* is likely to be presented and discussed. But inevitably, that will not always be possible. There are far too many rules, words, collocations, etc., to treat all of them explicitly. And instruction will very rarely be devoted to such "minor" grammatical constructions as the subject-verb inversion example or, especially, many lexical and semantic errors, if only, again, because there are so many of them. Also, most lexical items and collocations never occur in classrooms, since authors of grammar-based coursebooks use *simplified input* in their model dialogs and reading passages, which are designed to illustrate the workings of the grammatical structure of the day, not how lexical items and collocations are used. They highlight that using a stripped-down vocabulary. Low frequency lexical items and collocations, and many high frequency ones, rarely appear at all. Conversely, it is often through their sociolinguistically and colloquially appropriate exposure to lexis, collocations and formulaic expressions outside classrooms that naturalistic acquirers outperform classroom learners in those domains. The instructed learners experience of the L2 is typically much more repetitive and limited, often to the point of constituting *impoverished input*. This is not what students need to get to advanced levels. (How to provide optimal input for classroom language learning will be dealt with in several chapters in Section 2.)

A third way in which instruction can help, then, is by modifying the samples of the L2 to which instructed learners are exposed. This can happen in various ways, some much more effective than others (see, Long, 2020). Sometimes, the input may involve exposure to linguistically more marked[5] forms and constructions, with positive effects on learning less marked ones. For example, in a study of Italian learners of English, Pavesi (1986) compared relative clause formation in two groups. Group 1 (instruction only) consisted of 48 Italian high school EFL students, ages 14 - 18, who had received between two and seven years (an average of four years) of grammar-based teaching, three hours per week, and except for three who had spent eight weeks or less in England, no informal exposure to English. Group 2 (exposure only) consisted of 38 Italian adults, mostly restaurant waiters, aged 19 - 50, who had been living in Scotland for between three months and 25 years (an average of six years), exposed to English in a variety of home, work, and recreational settings, and had received minimal (usually no) formal English instruction. Pavesi found that, as usual, instruction had not altered the developmental sequence for relative clauses (RCs) (described in Chapter 3); both groups were following the stages in

[5] For a brief explanation of markedness, see Chapter 3, footnote 3.

the Keenan and Comrie noun phrase accessibility hierarchy. But despite group 2's far greater total hours of exposure to English, group 1, the school children, had progressed further down the markedness scale – a rate advantage. More of the school children had reached 80% accuracy on all five of the lowest (more marked) levels in the scale – statistically significantly more in the second lowest (genitive *whose*) position, and nearly significantly more ($p < .06$) at the lowest (object of a comparative) level. In fact, very few of the naturalistic learners could relativize at all from noun phrase positions at the more marked end of the hierarchy. EFL learners had achieved higher levels of attainment in less time (gone faster), ultimate or not.

Also of note, naturalistic learners made more errors with resumptive noun copies (**Picture number 4 is the woman who the cat is looking at the woman*) and pronominal copies (**Number 4 is the woman who the cat is looking at her*). The fact that neither English nor Italian allows either, and that the schoolchildren followed the same developmental sequence as the naturalistic learners, is more evidence, if more were needed, of the learner's powerful role in SLA. The question is: Would the rate advantage and earlier engagement with typologically more marked kinds of RCs translate into a higher level of attainment for the instructed learners in the long run?

Pavesi's explanation for her results was that the "planned discourse" to which classroom learners were exposed, as well as literary texts the students had read, would have contained more examples of linguistically marked structures. If, on the other hand, a focus on the language as object was responsible, she asked, why had the developmental sequence for RCs remained unchanged? While plausible, the planned discourse story fails to explain the resumptive nouns and pronouns, which would not have been present in either simple unplanned or more complex planned discourse. And if the nominal and pronominal copies were not being acquired that way, why should it be assumed the marked RC constructions were, and not as a result of the instruction itself?

The planned discourse explanation also has problems accounting for the finding of evaluations of long-term French immersion in Canada. While advanced enough in their receptive skills (listening and reading comprehension) by the time they graduate from high school at age 18 to be compared with monolingual French L1 age-peers, the Anglophone students typically still make errors with quite basic morphology and syntax in their spoken and written production (Swain, 1991; and see Chapter 9). Canadian French immersion essentially means ten or more years of education of

native English-speaking children through the medium of the French, and hence, of massive exposure to the L2, including years of planned discourse in regular subject matter lessons delivered in French (math, history, social studies, etc.) and out-of-class academic reading. Planned discourse may have been a contributing factor in Pavesi's study, but developmental sequences are presumably the product of universal processes, and not altered by instruction for that reason, as well as because most grammar-based instruction fails to respect processability constraints (see Chapter 3). Some details of the RC constructions would not have been perceptually salient for the Italian schoolchildren but would have been made so through instruction of various kinds drawing students' attention to them. We have already seen how form-focused exposure can improve learning not only of more marked RCs, but also of less marked ones.

It is potentially significant that the naturalistic acquirers had progressed so little with RCs, despite an average of six years of residence in the L2 environment, some for much longer than that. Does this mean that at least some of them were never going to acquire the full range of RCs in English, and that instruction had conveyed a long-term benefit on the schoolchildren? Possibly, but RCs are relatively infrequent in informal face-to-face conversation. Moreover aside from +/- instruction, other obvious differences between the groups (starting age, total exposure, age at time of testing, socio-economic status, general educational background, etc.) render it impossible to demonstrate a causal connection between instruction and the end result. Also, as is almost always the case, there is no knowing what the eventual 'end result' for either group might be. Thus, it is hard to produce conclusive evidence of long-term benefits of instruction.

This remains an important issue. Research that could help resolve it would include comparisons of children who receive explicit instruction and those who experience years of exposure to meaningful L2 use, e.g., classroom foreign language learners of English or French and students who graduate from English or French immersion programs. Immersion students experience massive exposure to elaborated, or planned, discourse, but (in theory, at least) little or no explicit focus on the language as object. The whole idea of immersion is that students acquire the L2 *incidentally* (see Chapter 5), while focused on something else, the subject matter being taught. The impressive overall achievement mentioned above (from evaluations of French immersion programs in Canada) – especially in students' receptive skills, after an average of seven years, but with persistence of a wide range of basic morpho-syntactic errors, including errors with *un*marked forms, such as possessive adjectives and gender

marking on determiners – are consistent with the idea that language instruction helps, including in the long term, more than the extensive exposure to elaborated discourse that immersion students experience as a result of receiving their content subject teaching delivered through French.

4.4 The long-term benefits of instruction

If instruction clearly has short-term rate advantages and probably has long-term benefits in the form of higher ultimate attainment, the question is: To secure these rate and potential long-term benefits, what *kind* of instruction works best for learners of different ages?

As we have seen, while the course of developmental sequences is impervious to change, instruction simultaneously demonstrated its positive effects on moving through the sequences, provided the timing is right. Also, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, reviews of studies comparing L2 development with and without instruction, and/or with different quantities of each, have found that instruction has little or no effect on the course of development, e.g., on error types or passage through developmental sequences, but can be facilitative in other ways with both children and adults, first by speeding up learning, and second, by improving the prognosis for forms and functions made difficult by their low saliency, typological markednss, rarity in the input, low communicative valency, and other factors (De Graaf & Housen, 2009; Doughty, 2003; R. Ellis, 1994; Long, 1983, 1988).

One way of finding out whether the benefits for rate of development are also precursors of superior long-term ultimate attainment would be to study groups of very advanced learners with sufficiently well documented language learning histories, as was the case with Julie and Laura (Ioup et al, 1984). Of interest would be learners who have enjoyed comparable overall learning opportunity – naturalistic, instructed, or mixed – of sufficient quality and duration to make it reasonable to assume they have acquired all, or virtually all, of the L2 they are ever likely to acquire. Support for that assumption might take the form of evidence of little or no progress for some period of time, i.e., of their having plateaued, or stabilized. It would then be interesting to compare the learners' mastery of the forms for which instruction is posited to be especially helpful in those who did, and those who did not, receive it.

Excellent work on very advanced Swedish learners of French, Italian and English by the Stockholm group (Hyltenstam, 2018) shows how such research needs to be conducted, the type of learners required, and the kinds

of lexical items, morpho-syntax and formulaic speech that prove hard even for long-term residents in the L2 environment. Most of the Swedish work involved mixed learners with long periods of residence in te L2 environment. Very high-achieving (near-native), purely naturalistic acquirers have been studied extremely rarely, unfortunately, the work by Ioup et al being the major exception, and even then involving only one of the two learners (Julie). Perhaps their very rarity is indirect evidence of the superior attainment of instructed learners.

Following Pica (1983), a reasonable starting hypothesis would be that it is easier for learners to relinquish negative side-effects of instruction, such as overapplication errors, than to add new features after long, communicatively successful periods without them, meaning that instruction will lead to more accurate production, and therefore, higher ultimate attainment. Notice that this would differ from the widely assumed need for substantial naturalistic L2 exposure if especially tricky L2 features and colloquial uses are to be acquired – things that "cannot be learned in the classroom." Instead, it could be that communicative success in a target-language environment may render learners oblivious to forms with low perceptual salience or communicative value, overriding the undoubted benefits of long-term residence. Implicitly or explicitly drawing their attention to such forms and inducing either *detection* (without conscious awareness) or Schmidt's *noticing* (with conscious awareness) at the time of perception of a new item will be necessary. This question relates to one of the longest-running controversies in LT today, the roles of incidental and intentional L2 learning, and of implicit and explicit learning and knowledge. They will be the focus of Chapter 5.

Summary

Contrary to what the robustness of interlanguage processes and developmental sequences might suggest, teaching can have very positive effects on rate of development and, potentially, on ultimate L2 attainment. Long-term advantages for instruction are probably due to (selective, constrained) use of explicit L2 knowledge, the increased perceptual salience that instruction brings to problematic items, and appropriately modified input. Long-term benefits of instruction are hard to demonstrate unambiguously, not least because learners who have achieved very advanced proficiency in an L2 through purely naturalistic learning are rare – or at least (not necessarily the same thing), have rarely figured in SLA research. But the common sequences in which new structures emerge, regardless of the type of

instruction learners receive or, indeed, whether they receive instruction at all, show that ultimately, teachers are facilitators, not controllers, of their students' language learning – partners, not masters, guides, not god**.**

Discussion questions

1. If students are taught a structure, and at least some of them can use it a week later, does that prove that (a) they learned it as a result of the instruction, and/or (b) that instruction is necessary in order to learn it? Would your answer change if there were a control group whose members did not receive the instruction and could not use the structure a week later?

2. What do you consider Julie's and Laura's abilities in Arabic reveal about the relative contribution of instruction and natural exposure, and about the relative merits of the order in which learners experience them?

3. How may explicit instruction help learners? Are there any limitations on what it can do?

4. What is meant by perceptual salience? What features of a target linguistic item increase or decrease its salience? How may instruction help in this regard?

5. What did Schmidt mean by *noticing*? How did his own learning of the Portuguese suffix -*ia* result in the idea?

6. What is the essential difference between *noticing* and *detection*?

7. Commercially published ELT materials almost all utilize linguistic simplification when providing listening or reading texts. What are some advantages and disadvantages of linguistic simplification?

8. What is meant by markedness (a) within a language, and (b) across languages of the world? How can markedness influence ultimate L2 attainment?

9. What are some examples of items (vocabulary, collocations, and grammar) and types of items that are more commonly acquired by learners after plenty of opportunity, or that are often not acquired at all?

10. With what kinds of items are naturalistic learners typically better than instructed learners, and vice versa? What data would you need to test your hypotheses?

Suggested readings

Collentine, J. (2009). Study abroad research: Findings, implications and future directions. In Long, M. H., & Doughty, C. J. (eds.), *Handbook of language teaching* (pp. 218-233). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Erman, B., Forsberg Lundell, F., & Lewis, M. (2018). Formulaic language in advanced long-residency L2 speakers. In Hyltenstam, K., Bartning, I., & Fant, L. (Eds.), *High-level language proficiency in second language and multilingual contexts* (pp. 96-119). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hakansson, G. & Norrby, C. (2010). Environmental influence on language acquisition: Comparing second and foreign language acquisition of Swedish. *Language Learning* 60, 3, 628-650.

Ioup, G., E. Boustagui, M. Tigi, & M. Moselle (1994). Reexamining the Critical Period Hypothesis: A case study of successful adult SLA in a naturalistic environment. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 16, 1, 73-98.

Spadaro, K. (2013). Maturational constraints on lexical acquisition in a second language. In Granena, G., & Long, M. H. (Eds.), *Sensitive periods, language aaptitude, and ultimate L2 attainment* (pp. 43-68). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

CHAPTER 5

COGNITIVE PROCESSES IN SLA

5.1 Introduction

The human mind is highly creative, not a blank slate, meaning that learners are active participants in the learning process. As illustrated in Chapters 1 - 4, interlanguages differ from one learner to the next, at least in detail, even if those learners share the same L1. In addition, the same learner's IL may also vary in detail from one moment to the next (synchronic variation) and over time from one version to the next (diachronic variation). Nevertheless, variation and, in some cases, volatility, notwithstanding, studies have revealed common learning processes, common developmental sequences, common errors, and common error types. The commonalities appear despite differences in acquisition context, instructional approach, learner age, and L1. In addition to systematic and free variation, volatility, and change over time, common well-documented processes in IL development include simplification, overgeneralization, stabilization and (most, but not all, scholars agree) fossilization, restructuring, backsliding, trickling, flooding, and more. (For details and examples, see, e.g., Andersen, 1984; Huebner, 1983; Kellerman, 1985; Lardiere, 2007; Long, 2003, 2009; Ortega, 2009a, b; Pica, 1985; Sato, 1990.)

As already mentioned in Chapter 2, if instruction really were king, learning processes and developmental sequences would vary with different kinds of syllabus, materials, or teaching methodology. If teachers and coursebook writers really were in control, as many of them assume, the orders in which items were learned would reflect the orders in which they were presented in class, but that is not what happens. Studies not just of naturalistic acquirers, but also of instructed learners (e.g., Eckman et al, 1988; Ellis, 1989; Fathman, 1978; Gass, 1982; Jansen, 2008; Krashen, 1977; Lightbown, 1983; Pica, 1983; Pienemann, 1984, 1989), have repeatedly shown that, with minor effects for L1, learners follow the same basic developmental routes, not whichever sequences are enshrined in the coursebooks their teachers happen to use.

The common patterns in IL development provide evidence of a strong role for the learner in language learning, and simultaneously, of the limits of instruction: what the teacher can do is constrained by what the learner can do. An unavoidable conclusion from 50 years of SLA research in and out of classrooms is that learners, not teachers, have most control over their language development. Students do not – in fact, cannot – learn (as opposed to learn about) target forms and structures on demand, when and how a teacher or a coursebook decrees that they should, but only when they are developmentally ready to do so. The research findings discussed in Chapter 3 and 4 show that instruction can facilitate development by speeding it up, and probably by raising the level of ultimate attainment. However, even then, teaching needs to proceed in harmony with the learner's powerful cognitive contribution to the acquisition process.

Neither the commonalities nor the creativity should be surprising. Language learning, like all human learning, is a cognitive process. It takes place in a social context, to be sure, but ultimately, in the learner's mind. Individuals may have stronger or weaker abilities in such areas as working memory and aptitudes for implicit and explicit language learning, but all normal human brains have the same architecture and innate capacities. As a result, the same basic cognitive processes – incidental, enhanced incidental, intentional, implicit, explicit and automatized explicit – are at work in all settings, foreign language, second language, instructed, naturalistic, and mixed.

5.2 Cognitive processes and products in SLA

Aside from their disregard for learnability, and the tendency for even the best grammar-based materials to result in content-free, boring lessons, coursebooks cause further collateral damage when it comes to language-learning processes (see Chapter 7). This is because users of a synthetic syllabus and PPP focus on trying to persuade students to produce complete, grammatically accurate sentences containing the "structure of the day" from the outset. That results in reliance by students and teachers alike on mimicry, *intentional learning* and *explicit instruction*. Even when successful, the end-product is fragments of *knowledge about* the language ("Present tense, third person singular, you put an *s* on the verb"), not necesarily an *ability to use* it creatively. Yet it is precisely the need for *functional* L2 abilities to satisfy current or future communicative needs outside the classroom that drives most adult learners to sign up for language classes in the first place. It may be useful at this point, therefore, to refresh

our understanding of some *fundamental cognitive processes* involved in language learning, and their end-products.

5.3 Incidental learning

People learn things, including languages, in different ways. As infants, they "pick up" their native language *incidentally*, while doing something else – interacting with their parents, listening to stories read to them (often the same stories multiple times!), playing with other children and older siblings, watching children's TV programs, or attending pre-school. They are always focused on *meaning* – on *communication*, on what is *happening* around them, on what they and others are *doing* – not on the language itself. Without planning to or intending to, *they pick up the language as a by-product of meaning-focused activities*. This is known as *incidental learning*.

Most incidental learning is also *implicit*, i.e., *without awareness* on the child or adult learner's part. People sometimes do become aware of things they are learning incidentally, or do so later, in which case they have conscious, or explicit, knowledge. However, as long as they remain *unaware* of what they are learning or of what they have learned incidentally, as is usually the case, the learning is not only incidental, i.e., without intention, but also *implicit.* The end-product is *implicit knowledge* – things they know but don't know they know.

Perception of new language items, form-meaning associations, or statistical regularities in the input that occurs without the learner realizing it, i.e., without conscious awareness, is known as *detection*. Young children are especially good at detection. It works very well for them for learning their native or any other language during their early years, especially ages 0 - 6, but school-age English-speaking students can also do it successfully, e.g., while receiving their regular school subjects delivered through the medium of a second language, as in French immersion programs in Canada or CLIL (content-and-language-integrated learning) programs for school-age children in many parts of the world (see Chapter 9).

Given a chance, incidental learning, implicit learning, and detection work for adults, too, although not as well as for young children, as the capacity for incidental learning weakens somewhat around age 12 (Janacsek et al, 2012), so incidental learning will need to be improved upon – sped up, made more efficient – or *enhanced*, in some cases, e.g., especially when new forms or form-meaning-function relationships are perceptually non-salient.

We will return to the idea of *enhanced incidental learning* (Long, 2017, and elsewhere) in Chapter 6.

Assuming it is of interest to them and pitched at the right level, an example of a classroom situation conducive to incidental learning by adults would be when students from different countries watch a short (two- or three-minute) You Tube video several times – perhaps a video demonstrating how to cook a traditional English dish of some kind, e.g., Yorkshire pudding or syllabub. As they watch, focused on the picture, the chef, the ingredients and the instructions, they will begin to learn some new vocabulary relevant for the task in question incidentally. Such vocabulary items will often not appear in commercial coursebooks, few of which are designed to prepare learners to do anything in particular. For example, while attending to a demonstration of how to make Yorkshire pudding, they will hear and begin to learn some of the most frequent lexical items (*bowl, tray, add, whisk, stir, sieve, sift, grams, pre-heat, batter, smoothe, pour, risen*, etc.), collocations (*stir in, crack the eggs, pinch of salt, pop in the oven/fridge, sieve in, fold in, leave to rest, golden brown, puff up*, etc.), and grammatical constructions – in this case, mostly imperatives (*take four eggs, fold in the flour*, etc.) or periphrastic future (*Now, I'm/we're gonna stir in the flour*). Learning will usually be better with items that are repeated several times, as many of the ones listed will be. The same effect can be obtained by watching the video several times.

Students need to be focused on meaning while they watch, so it is crucial that the video concern a task of genuine interest to them, and cooking may not be suitable for everyone. Videos on every imaginable subject are freely available on the internet, from cooking, to repairing a flat bicyle tire, to guided sight-seeing tours, to academic lectures on historical events, to scientific experiments. The key thing is that whatever you or the students choose, the content needs to be sufficiently interesting to hold their attention. (Asking them about their interests and why they want to learn English is a good place to start any course, and we will explain the advantages of doing a proper *needs analysis* in Chapter 8). In a follow-up activity, another bimodal presentation (this time, listening and reading, instead of listening and watching), students can listen to the video sound-track again (without viewing the picture) while reading a transcript, thereby associating sounds with the written words.

5.4 Intentional learning

Incidental learning contrasts with *intentional learning*. As the name implies, *intentional learning involves deliberately attending to some aspect of the target language, or the language as a whole, with the aim, or intention, of learning it*. Enrolling in an English course typically indicates a plan to engage in intentional learning, but if lessons are boring, simply turning up for class is no guarantee of a student's continuing attention (especially in the age of cell phones), and wandering attention may indicate loss of intention.

Formal instruction by a teacher is not a requirement for intentional learning. Intentional learning can involve self-study – everything from copying out sentences in a textbook at home, repeating a dialogue out loud as part of a distance-learning course, looking up words in a dictionary and memorizing them, doing grammar exercises in a coursebook, memorizing song lyrics, or playing language-learning computer games. The defining aspect is not where the activities take place, nor who with, but *the learner's focus on the language as object*, *the intention to learn language*.

This attentional focus may often be crucial. Schmidt (1990, and elsewhere) maintained that in order to learn a new linguistic item or form – meaning – function relationship, learners had to perceive the new item *consciously*, a process he referred to as *noticing*. *Detection*, in contrast, as we saw with incidental learning; it is perception *without awareness*. *Noticing* typically occurs as part of intentional learning; it is perception *with awareness*. As far as the end product goes, noticing does not necessarily imply understanding, Schmidt was quick to point out. A learner may, as he did in the diary study discussed above, perceive the *-ia* suffix in Portuguese input, or word-final *-s* in English input, for example, without understanding their grammatical function as markers of repeated past time actions and plurality. Some non-salient features, such as adverb placement, word choice, collocations or appropriate register use, may go unnoticed for a long time unless learners' attention is drawn to them, especially if, as is often the case, the errors do not cause a breakdown in communication. A major role for explicit instruction may be to draw learners' attention to such items, leading them to be noticed sooner than might occur as a result of purely naturalistic L2 exposure (see Chapters 4 and 6). Schmidt modified his position over the years, eventually settling on the more moderate claim that noticing is *facilitative* of learning, rather than a requirement – that more noticing means more learning (Schmidt, 2010).

5.5 Implicit learning

For the most part, children learn their first language *incidentally*, i.e., *without intending* to learn it, and mostly *implicitly*, i.e., *without realizing* they are doing so. Implicit learning, *learning without awareness*, occurs when the child or adult is not conscious of the learning that is taking place. For example, they may hear a new word (*discard*) or a new collocation (*throw away a card*) two or three times while playing a game of cards with NSs, but not notice, as their attention is firmly on the game itself. Two days later, they may hear the same item again (*throw away a receipt*) and remember its meaning, probably because they first encountered it in a memorable context.

Unless their work involves language in some way, most native speakers (NSs) have little or no awareness of how vast their knowledge of their native language is. They only realize they "know" that some people like their tea *strong* when they hear a non-native speaker (NNS) say they like theirs *hard*, or that one country *declared war* on another, when a NNS says *announced war*. NSs pick up vast numbers of lexical items and collocations (and many other parts of their L1) without being aware of doing so at the time. Their knowledge is *implicit* and remains so unless something happens that makes them aware of it.

The same can be true of at least some of an adult's knowledge of their L2. For example, some adults may watch TV news, movies or You Tube videos in English, or work in an English-speaking environment for a year, or they may be international students or recently arrived refugees or immigrants in an English-speaking country. Through their naturalistic exposure to English, they will gradually add to their L2 repertoire through hearing or reading some of the same things numerous times while focused on their everyday activities, their studies, their asylum applications, or their jobs. Once they get beyond the early stages, they may only be dimly aware of their increasing command of the language, and unaware of at least some of the new items they are picking up each day.

5.6 Implicit knowledge

The end-product of the implicit learning process is usually *implicit knowledge*, i.e., *knowledge of the L2 that learners have but do not know they have*. It is equivalent to the knowledge NSs have of their L1, but unless SLA begins when they are young children, not nearly as complete. If they are not linguists or involved with language(s) in some way as part of their studies

or their work (language teachers, interpreters, translators, hotel receptionists, tour guides, etc.), NSs "know" their native language to use it, but as noted above, know very little *about* that language, and are unaware of more than a tiny fraction of what they know. They learned it both incidentally and implicitly, mostly when they were young children – a period, after all, from which we remember very little about anything.

The magnitude of a person's implicit knowledge of their L1 often goes unrecognized. English NSs instantly know, for example, that **The deer was struck by a black little foreign car* is ungrammatical (has to be *little black foreign car*), but if asked, are hard pressed to say why, and unable to explain the rules for adjective ordering in English, i.e., to have access to meta-linguistc knowledge, and have probably never realized there *are* any rules or given the matter a moment's thought. They also know immediately that *sabfe* is not a possible English word, but that *sable* is, even if they have no idea that *sable* exists or what it means (a small carnivorous mammal found in forests in Russia, Siberia and northern Mongolia). They know that while **Genuine football fans all over the world admire very much Barcelona* is true (except in parts of Madrid), it is ungrammatical in English (although perfectly OK in many other languages), but not *why* it is ungrammatical – because adverb placement between verb and direct objectis illegal in English (**Marta liked very much Cambridge*. **Pierre drinks often two cups of coffee before breakfast*.) Similarly, not until they hear a NNS say **a hard* (bad) *headache*, **a soft* (mild) *heart attack*, **do* (make) *a mistake*, **shoot* (score) *a goal*, **arrive at* (in) *London*, **arrive to* (at) *the airport*, **don't beat around the tree* (bush), or **life and heart* (soul) *of the party*, do they begin to realize that they know countless English collocations and formulaic expressions. They know what is correct and what is not, but again, not *why* (where there is a reason at all).

How many novice English language teachers have been stumped when a student asked them why *take a photo* is correct, not **make a photo*, and so on? And how many have ever been aware that they know (as exemplified two sentences before this one) that *Not until they hear a NNS say X <u>do they begin</u> to realize that they know countless English collocations and formulaic expressions* . . . is grammatical, whereas **Not until they hear a non-native speaker say X <u>they begin</u> to realize* . . . is *un*grammatical, much less *why* it is ungrammatical? NSs know tens of thousands of things like these; that is to say, they have a vast store of implicit knowledge of their L1 – *things they know but don't know they know*. The great majority of us, including many language teachers, are unaware of how much we know or even *that* we know most of it. Needless to say, there are far too many such items for them to be

taught explicitly, one by one, so ways will need to be found to help students learn them incidentally and implicitly.

5.7 Explicit learning

Because of the way English is taught now, described in Chapter 7, especially when lessons are based on a coursebook, most learning in traditional ELT classrooms is both intentional and conscious, i.e., explicit learning, not implicit learning. Studying model sentences, applying grammar rules, translating, practising dialogs, doing drills and written exercises, answering surface comprehension questions about reading passages, memorizing vocabulary lists, etc., are all examples of explicit learning – intentional learning *with awareness*. The teaching is explicit, so (most of) the learning, too, is intentional and explicit.[1]

5.8 Explicit knowledge

The end-product of explicit learning is explicit knowledge, conscious knowledge of the L2. For example, after making an error, *I bought it in a library, and being "corrected" by a teacher, adult Spanish-speaking students learn that the Spanish word librería (bookshop) is *bookshop* in English, not *library*. *Librería* and *library* are false cognates. After the teacher has explained the difference, they "know" the new word, i.e., are aware of it, and know they know. Nevertheless, they are liable to make the same error again, even in an unspeeded translation exercise, when they are focused on language as object and have time to access their store of memorized vocabulary. And, of course, there is absolutely no guarantee that they will produce *bookshop* appropriately, and not *library*, later when participating in a communicative conversation, i.e., with their focus on meaning, when not thinking about the language as object. That is because, when their focus is on the message, on genuine communication, there is no time to stop, monitor what they are saying, and retrieve the new word from long-term memory. Instead, in the hurry of spontaneous speech, when their focus is on what

[1] 'Most' because, even in traditional grammar-based PPP lessons, students sometimes pick up a few words and expressions *incidentally*, often as unanalyzed chunks, if their teacher uses them frequently enough, e.g., during classroom management. For example, they may learn *What do we call X?*, *How do you say X in English?* or *What's another word for X?* that way well before they have been "taught" Wh questions. Sadly, such formulaic sequences are often products of the *only* communicative use of the L2 some students experience in "traditional" ELT classrooms.

they are saying, not how they are saying it, they have to rely on their implicit knowledge of English, and *bookshop* is not yet part of their implicit vocabulary knowledge store. Nor is its use "automatized" (see below).

The *librería - bookshop* example concerns a transparent lexical item, but the same is true of grammar. Beginners may be told that adjectives precede nouns in English – the reverse of the pattern in many students' native languages. At that point, they know the English word order and are aware that they know it. That is to say, they know the word order rule; they also have some metalinguistic knowledge. That should mean they will get the order right when doing an unspeeded written exercise; if in doubt, they can stop, retrieve the rule from memory, and apply it. But the declarative knowledge (knowledge that adjectives precede nouns in English) will not necessarily help them a few minutes later when they suddenly have to respond to an unexpected question in a real, unrehearsed, spontaneous conversation, or even in a fast-paced, language-focused, quasi-communicative classroom drill. In both those situations, their focus will be on meaning, on communication, and there will typically not be time to stop to think about what they know consciously before replying. They will have to rely on their implicit knowledge. But at this stage, because of the way English is taught, they are unlikely to have the implicit knowledge about word order they need – or in fact, much implicit L2 knowledge at all. To obtain that will require exposure to multiple examples of adjective-noun sequences in spoken or written input – input interesting enough to maintain their focus of attention on the message as they process it, not on the language as object.

5.9 Automatized explicit knowledge

An alternative explanation, courtesy of Skill Acquisition Theory (SAT), is that slow, tentative production soon after being "taught" new items like *bookshop* or adjective-noun word order explicitly is due to *declarative knowledge* (knowledge of facts and events, or knowledge *that*) not yet having been turned into *procedural knowledge* (knowledge *how*). This is comparable to the difference between knowing how to dribble a soccer ball after listening to a coach talk about it or watching a video explaining how to do it (declarative knowledge), and a young player getting out on the street with a ball or gradually increasing her speed around a line of cones on the practice field. Over many hours, sometimes months, of practice, the procedural knowledge gradually becomes *automatized* – *automatized explicit knowledge*. The same player can then run straight at a defender, do two step-overs, and drop her left shoulder, faking to go left and setting the

defender back on her right foot, before flashing past her on the right before she has time to recover, all the time focused on what the defender is doing and not having to think about "how to dribble" at all.

In the same way, an adult (but not a child) no longer has to think consciously about the speed of an approaching car, how far away it is, and "do the math", in order to decide whether or not it is safe to cross a road; the adult having crossed thousands of streets, the decision is now instantaneous. Automatized explicit knowledge, the result of massive practice, is deployed faster, with less effort and fewer errors, in fluent communication, just as on the soccer field, crossing a busy street, and in other areas of everyday life. (For an overview of SAT, see DeKeyser, 2017.) Automatized explicit knowledge is qualitatively different from implicit knowledge. It begins life as conscious knowledge, the product of different learning processes, and is stored in a different part of the brain. But if sufficiently automatized, its use in spoken communication can be "unthinking" and sometimes difficult to tell apart from the same thing utilizing implicit knowledge. (Modern SAT theorists are careful not to claim that practice turns explicit into implicit knowledge.)

Knowingly or not, much traditional explicit ELT around the world – PPP, grammar translation, structural pattern drills, "error correction", memorization of vocabulary lists, etc. – is based on SAT. In our view, SAT potentially offers a viable account of the development of *fluency*, of increasing speed of performance and decreasing error rate in use of existing knowledge in the performance of many skills – from driving a car, to playing a musical instrument, to doing basic mathematical calculations in one's head, to giving street directions to one's home, and using one's *conscious L2 knowledge* faster and more accurately when speaking. When it comes to language *learning*, however, as opposed to speeding up use of what one has already learned, the theory fails to account for many of the well-documented IL processes and developmental sequences described in Chapters 1 - 4.

Many widely attested phenomena in IL development, including backsliding, U-shaped behavior, production of IL structures not attested in the L1 or L2 input, and other examples of so-called "autonomous syntax," as well as the learning of constraints on "rules" (or statistical regularities), are all problematic findings for explicit learning and skill-building as a model for language learning. For example, if automatization is central, why is it that learners who can produce model sentences accurately, e.g., *John doesn't like apples*, and practice them multiple times within the confines of a classroom drill, subsequently revert to versions from earlier stages in

development of the structure (*John no like apples*), and why always to that pre-verbal negation stage? The speed and accuracy with which one can use what one already knows can undoubtedly improve with practice, but what one already knows has to be learned first. The fact that late starters do relatively poorly at SLA can be explained by their weaker capacity for implicit learning, but not by a loss of the ability to develop skilled behaviors, which is usually better than that possessed by children. Also, if adults mostly learn a new language explicitly, as skill-builders would have us believe, adults should do better than older child starters, whose capacity for explicit learning is not as developed. Studies of age effects have shown that older learners go faster with basic morphology and syntax in the early stages, but in the long run do worse (Krashen et al, 1979).

Learning a language is much more than, and in many ways qualitatively different from, a matter of speeding up skilled performance. Nevertheless, even if they have never heard of SAT (and few of them have), such ideas remain popular with authors and commercial publishers of coursebooks and advocates of traditional approaches to LT. That is because they fit well with PPP lessons on items in a grammatical syllabus, on which most coursebooks and profits are based. In any case, few students ever receive anything like enough practice required by SAT inside the language classroom, or the right kind of practice; there are usually too many students and too little time. So communication in the L2 based on *automatized explicit knowledge* outside the classroom is rarely an option, either.[2]

Consider another example concerning grammar. Through being given a few simple rules and/or translating some written sentences into English, Japanese EFL students learn that the canonical English word order is subject – verb – object (SVO). In other words, they acquire *declarative knowledge* of English word order (knowledge *that* it is SVO), and are conscious of

[2] Assume (round numbers for convenience) a 50-minute lesson for a class of 20 students. Over the course of a school year, an average of 20 minutes per lesson is occupied with reading, writing, testing, and classroom management. Research shows that teachers typically speak for two thirds of the time that remains, so unless group work or some other mechanism is deployed, the 30 minutes left over for 20 students means an average of 90 seconds for total group and individul talking-time per lesson per student, most of it devoted to repetition of the same small set of structures in the course book, not to communicative L2 use. Three classes a week over a 40-week school year translates into (3 x 40 x 1.5 =) 180 minutes per student per year. Three hours is obviously nowhere near sufficient for the practice required to learn to speak a new language automatically. How well could *you* speak a new language after three hours of practice a year?

knowing it. Their knowledge of English word order is explicit, the result of *intentional learning and explicit instruction*. Thereafter, if focused on language as object and if sufficient time is available, the students may consciously try to remember *not* to construct sentences that reflect the canonical word order in Japanese: subject – object – verb (SOV), and to correct written examples when they do, but things will often break down when they have to communicate orally under time pressure. The solution, and the priority in ELT, surely, is *implicit knowledge*.

5.10 Implicit knowledge revisited

Implicit knowledge is *unconscious* knowledge, and it is good. NSs use implicit knowledge of their L1 to function fast, fluently, and effortlessly, and that is what many adult learners wish to do, or in many cases must do, in their L2. Many will need implicit knowledge for their work as a salesperson trying to persuade a customer to buy a car, as an international university student trying to follow a lecture intended for native speaker students, as a refugee attending a hearing on their asylum application, or as a tourist attempting to convince a policeman that they do not deserve a ticket for a traffic violation. Implicit learning, Whong, Gil, and Marsden (2014, pp. 556-557) point out, is *more basic*, *more important* than explicit learning, and *superior*. Access to implicit knowledge is automatic and fast; it is what underlies real-time listening comprehension (e.g., attending a university lecture or watching a TV news broadcast), spontaneous speech, and fluency. It is also *more durable* than explicit knowledge. Two statistical meta-analyses of dozens of studies comparing short-term (immediate post-test) and long-term (delayed post-test) learning from implicit and explicit negative feedback (Goo & Mackey, 2007; Li, 2010) and another of implicit and explicit instruction as a whole (Kang et al, 2018) have found that explicitly induced gains tend to fade fairly quickly, whereas implicitly induced gains mature and increase over time.

The reasons for the long-term advantage of implicit knowledge are as yet unclear, but probably reflect the deeper processing and/or the greater number of encounters with target forms and constructions that implicit learning requires. Explicit presentations by textbook writers or teachers make target forms clear and obvious, requiring little processing by the student. New vocabulary items, collocations and grammatical constructions may be shown in isolation, or their salience enhanced in other ways, e.g., bolded or italicized in a written text (so-called ‘input enhancement’, of which more in Chapter 6), or accompanied by definitions, rules and

explanations. The new item is provided "on a plate", so to speak, ready to be consumed with minimal effort on the learner's part, rather like the gift of a new car received as a graduation present by children in some very wealthy families. The child did not have to work for it, so tends not to appreciate the car as much.

Implicit learning, on the other hand, demands more from the learner – deeper processing. It occurs incidentally, while their primary focus is on meaning, e.g., understanding a story they are listening to and/or reading and/or watching. The meaning of the new words or collocations may be tricky or ambiguous and have to be induced over time, with little or no outside help, from multiple instances in spoken or written input. The target items have the advantage of being encountered in context, integrated with pre-existing knowledge, but they are not isolated nor pre-digested for them artificially. Learners have to devote more attention, therefore, including to the unknown words. What they learn is more likely to be remembered, as a result, perhaps associated with "breakthrough" context(s) in long-term memory, because it was important for a listening or reading task at the time.

Summary

The same basic cognitive processes involved in all different kinds of human learning are implicated in language learning, as well. Incidental, intentional, implicit, explicit, and automatized explicit learning are present across the life span, although their relative power and importance varies somewhat according to the learner's age, as well as with the kind of instruction and kind of L2 exposure he or she experiences. Given the overriding importance of implicit knowledge for a functional command of a second language, incidental and implicit learning need to be prioritized in language teaching to a far greater extent than is typical in traditional, coursebook-driven teaching. Some general classroom implications will be identified in Chapter 6.

Discussion questions

1. What are the main differences between incidental and intentional learning? Which is more common in traditional classroom langauge teaching, and why?

2. Can you give two examples of incidental language learning activities, and two of intentional, language learning, and explain why they are examples of each?

3. What are the differences between implicit and explicit learning? Which is more common in traditional language teaching, and why?

4. Can you give two examples of implicit, and two of explicit, language learning, and explain why they are examples of each?

5. When is incidental language learning also a case of implicit language learning? Give two examples of activities which are, and two which are not, and explain their key differences.

6. Is implicit or explicit language learning more common in classroom language lessons? What are the long-term results of each, and which are more important for specific kinds of learners, or perhaps for all learners?

7. What are the differences between noticing and detection?

8. Can implicit knowledge turn into implicit knowledge with enough practice? What is the evidence for and against such a change?

9. How does implicit L2 knowledge differ from automatized explicit knowledge, and how can they be distinguished?

10. What do you consider the main strengths and weakeness of incidental, intentional, implicit and explicit learning, and which do you think can, or should, be emphasized in foreign and in second language classrooms?

Suggested Readings

Ellis, N. (2009) Optimizing the input: Frequency and sampling in usage-based and form-focused Learning. In Long, M. & Doughty, C. (eds.) *Handbook of second language acquisition*, (pp 63 -103). Oxford: Blackwell.

Long, M. H. (2007) Second language theories. In Long, M.H., Problems in SLA (pp 3 - 30.) Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Long, M. H. (2015). *Second Language Acquisition and Task-Based Language Teaching.* Routledge. Chapter 3: Psycholinguistic Underpinnings: A Cognitivist-Interactionist Theory of Instructed Second Language Acquisition, (pp. 30 - 63).

Williams, J. N. (2009). Implicit Learning. In Ritchie, W.C., & Bhatia, T.K. (eds.) *The new handbook of second language acquisition* (pp 319 - 353). Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing.

CHAPTER 6

SLA RESEARCH FINDINGS: FOUR BROAD IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION

6.1 Introduction

Despite the SLA research findings over the past 50 years summarized in Chapters 1 - 5 (by no means all the findings, we should note), most LT continues as if nothing had happened. Aside from upgrades to the artwork and some of the labels (e.g., 'task' instead of 'exercise'), coursebooks have changed very little. The basic model, described and illustrated in Chapter 7.2., remains the same: a synthetic syllabus (Wilkins, 1972) delivered via a combination of grammar rules and the notorious present – practice – produce (PPP) methodology. The target language is broken down into a list of linguistic items of one kind or another – usually grammatical structures, but sometimes notions (time, space, distance, location, cause, sequence, etc.); situations (at the store, at the restaurant, at the bank, etc.); functions (request, thank, accuse, deny, predict, define, etc.); lexical items, collocations and formulaic sequences; or a mix of all of them. Whatever the ostensible unit of organizaiton for the syllabus, the result is a series of isolated forms and constructions, typically presented one at a time, with exercises and drills intended to illustrate their workings. The syllabus is referred to as 'synthetic' because the learner's job is subsequently to (try to) synthesize the pieces for use in communication.

For reasons detailed in Chapters 1 - 5, similarly, the supposed knowledge sequence engrained in Skill Acquisition Theory (SAT) – from *declarative* to *procedural* to *automatized*, implemented via PPP – lacks psycholinguistic credibility. PPP lacks conceptual coherence, as well. 'Present' refers to the role of the *teacher* in introducing a new item, the "structure of the day". 'Practice' describes what *students* do next. 'Produce' switches to a different dimension of classroom interaction altogether, indicating the speaking and/or writing *skill(s)* students engage in – skills that could just as easily have been, and often were, part of the 'Practice' phase. The whole operation assumes, wrongly, that regardless of learners' developmental readiness,

teachers can teach, and students obligingly learn, whatever the course book writer (who has never met the students) has put on the next page, and therefore, on the classroom menu for the day. The assumption is that what they learn is what you teach, when you teach it. As we saw in Chapter 2, however, this is not what SLA research has shown to be the case. The findings of many empirical studies involving several different languages, and reflected in the same developmental sequences, independent of those eshrined in coursebooks, were summarized by Pienemann (1984) in his Processability, Learnability, and Teachability Hypotheses: What learners can process determines what they can learn, and what they can learn determines what teachers can teach (see Chapter 2).

The extent of learner autonomy notwithstanding, SLA findings have also clearly documented important benefits of certain kinds of instruction, especially where rate of development is concerned, but they do not necessarily explain how instruction works. That often has to be inferred from other findings. For example, we know that the *perceptual salience* of form-meaning-function associations plays a major role in determining how soon the items are perceived by learners and acquired (DeKeyser, 2005; Goldschneider & DeKeyser, 2001), with input frequency a significant component of salience. From that it can reasonably be inferred that instruction that increases the perceptual salience of non-salient items will improve the speed with which they are learned, and potentially, in some cases, whether they are learned at all, i.e., the level of ultimate attainment. (How to increase perceptual salience most effectively is a separate pedagogical issue, to which we return below.)

What, then, are some of the *general implications* for ELT of the SLA research findings summarized in the previous five chapters? For now, in light of the need for a functional command of the L2, we will focus on just four, all inter-related: (1) a priority for incidental and implicit learning inside and outside the classroom, (2) use of an analytic, not a synthetic, syllabus, (3) respect for developmental processes, sequences, and learnability, and (4) change in the structure of classroom discourse. *Specific applications* of these to materials design, classroom pedagogy, and assessment, will follow in later chapters.

6.2 Prioritize incidental and implicit learning

As concluded in Chapter 5, given the overriding importance of implicit knowledge for a functional command of a second language in today's world, incidental and implicit learning need to be prioritized in language teaching

to a far greater extent than is typical in traditional, coursebook-driven instruction. There are several *general implications* for the classroom.

6.2.1 Provide plenty of rich input and time to digest it

First, learners must be allowed the quantity and quality of L2 data required for successful incidental learning. That means lots of input – spoken and/or written, according to the students' future uses for the L2 – as this kind of learning often requires multiple exposures to the same grammatical patterns, vocabulary items, collocations, formulaic sequences, and so on. It also means rich input, not the simplified variety found in commercially published coursebooks, where obviously contrived, and often bland, unnatural-sounding "dialogs" and written texts are typically little more than vehicles for practicing the structure of the day using a tightly controlled, stripped-down vocabulary. Rich input here means samples of the L2 that contain realistic models of the way NSs use English, not a sanitized version bleached of low frequency items, for that is the input, with those items retained, that learners will encounter and need to be able to deal with outside the classroom.

To preserve the conditions for incidental and implicit learning as students process the input, their attention must primarily be focused on meaning, not language as object. Rich input is relatively easy to find in the era of the internet – from news broadcasts to short stories, interviews, panel discussions of politics, sports and the arts, soap operas, cooking shows, "how-to" demonstrations on YouTube, TV series, movies, academic lectures, and much more. It is vital that whatever is chosen is age-appropriate and aligns with students' interests or intended eventual uses of the L2, i.e., their so-called *target tasks* (see Chapter 8).

Comprehensibility is crucial for incidental learning, or learners may quickly cease to focus on content. Therefore, adjustments will often need to be made for all but advanced learners. Optimal ways of adjusting input (Long, 2020) – in particular, *input elaboration* – are described and illustrated in Chapter 8. For now, suffice to say, traditional *linguistic simplification* of "graded readers" is not the answer because, like the simplified dialogs and texts in coursebooks, the simplification process starts by removing most of the items that students at a certain "proficiency level" supposedly do not know, especially if they are related to particular tasks or discourse domains or involve colloquial usage. This can sometimes (but not always) be good for improving comprehension of the particular dialogs or reading passages concerned, but is self-defeating when it comes to acquisition; learners will

never encounter the coursebook materials again, and it is precisely the unknown items to which learners need exposure if they are ever to learn them.

There are many ways to maintain students' focus on meaning and communication. One is to organize tasks in such a way that there are clearly understood, tangible outcomes that students understand they will need to achieve – from answering (surface, synthesis, and inferential) comprehension questions to deciding on the best option in an emergency, to identifying ten false statements in a politician's five-minute election speech, to recommending alternative energy alternatives to fossil fuels and climate change. They may watch a "how-to" video (how to make a face-mask, how to repair a bicycle puncture, how to serve at tennis, and so on), read a text, or listen to an audio-recording while reading the text, because they know they will then have to demonstrate what they have learned by doing the task described themselves. (Again, examples follow in Chapter 8.)

Access to plentiful input is easy to come by through judicious use of technology, and even easier in a second language environment or quasi-immersion program, but less so in a traditional three-hours-a-week foreign language course. In an EFL setting, it may be necessary to supplement learners' possibly insufficient in-class L2 exposure by using carefully chosen homework activities involving extensive listening, reading, bi-modal (listening while reading, or listening while viewing) or tri-modal (listening and viewing while reading captions in the L2) performed outside the classroom, but – and this is important – the activities must be closely monitored and clearly linked to the students' concurrent classroom lessons.

There is a rapidly growing literature documenting the effects and effectiveness of such multi-modal activities both inside and outside classrooms. Years of research and practice with extensive reading, for example, can be found in the free, online journal, *Reading in a Foreign Language*. For (a small sample of) illustrative laboratory and classroom studies of incidental learning of English grammar and vocabulary from bi-modal and tri-modal input by school-age children and adults, see, e.g., Chang & Millett (2015), De Vos et al (2018), Feng & Webb (2020), Lee & Revesz (2018, 2020), Malone, (2018), Montero-Perez et al (2015), Pellicer-Sanchez (2017), Pellicer-Sanchez & Boers (2019), Pujadas & Munoz (2019), Rodgers (2018), Rodgers & Webb (2011), and Webb & Chang (2020). And see, also, the special issues on language learning through multi-modal input of *The Language Learning Journal* (47, 2019) and *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* (42, 3, 2020).

The need for more input and more time for both incidental and implicit learning is sometimes used as an argument in favor of the status quo, i.e., explicit learning of items in a grammatical syllabus, plus PPP. It should not be forgotten, however, that while a new grammatical structure or a list of new words can be "taught" explicitly (or, at least, appear to be taught) in a matter of minutes, perhaps in the space of a single class period, the new items are usually forgotten just as quickly. Even if, as writers of linguistically based materials assume, all students in a class are developmentally ready for the same structure on the same day, or happen to need the very same vocabulary items or collocations for their jobs, fields of study, or everyday lives outside the classroom, to believe that they can be taught in a matter of minutes implies that they can be learned in that time. As was described in Chapters 1 – 5, SLA research has long shown that intentional, explicit learning of linguistic items and constructions rarely happens so fast, or in the order enshrined in course books, even if, fortuitously, the timing is right for one or two students or (even more rarely) for everyone. Moreover, as explained earlier, the end-product is *explicit knowledge*, with all its limitations.

For students to learn the same structure or vocabulary items implicitly may require that they encounter multiple examples in use in spoken or written texts, or while doing communicative tasks, over a period of weeks. (Of course, they will be learning multiple structures, lexical items, collocations, etc., during that period, not just one.) But research has shown that implicit knowledge is more durable (Kang, Sok, & Han, 2018; Li, 2010; Mackey & Goo, 2007), and the classroom conditions created for both incidental and implicit learning allow for the reality that not all learners will be ready for the same item on the same day. Rather than attempt to force-feed a whole class with the structure of the day, a focus on incidental and implicit learning respects constraints on learnability and teachability, and the psycholinguistic reality of Corder's "learner syllabus".

6.2.2 Enhanced incidental learning (EIL)

Language teaching must be designed to be efficient for learning, not merely sufficient. In addition to more input and more time, therefore, since teenagers and adults have a less powerful capacity for incidental language learning than young children, and in particular, for instance learning, various kinds of interventions will be needed to speed up the process. The devices need to be *unobtrusive*, or else students' attention will shift to a conscious focus on the language itself, in conflict with the desired end-product: implicit, not explicit, L2 knowledge.

One obvious way of facilitating incidental learning would seem to be *input enhancement* (Sharwood-Smith, 1981, 1993; Sharwood-Smith & Truscott, 2014). Input enhancement (IE) usually refers to proactive modification of written input in the form of typographical manipulation (bolding, italics, color, larger font size, etc.), but can potentially be used with spoken input, too, e.g., through use of stress, pauses, or increased volume. The aim is to improve language development by increasing the perceptual salience of previously selected lexical items, collocations or grammatical constructions, drawing instructed learners' *attention* to the enhanced items in order to induce *noticing* (Schmidt, 1990, 2010), i.e., perception with conscious awareness, resulting in *explicit knowledge*. Pellicer-Sanchez and Boers (2019) suggest that IE is better thought of as creating the conditions for *semi-incidental learning* – neither purely incidental, nor (since no direction is given to study the target items) intentional. A study by Borro (2021), of which more later, found, indeed, that IE resulted in gains in explicit, but not implicit, knowledge of collocations.

Input enhancement has motivated numerous studies over the past 40 years. Reviewers (e.g., Han, Park, & Combs, 2008; Leow & Martin, 2018) have concluded that findings on the effectiveness of (mostly written) IE have been mixed, and benefits small, possibly due to IE often being confounded with other treatments, such as input frequency and pre-teaching of target items. One study (Choi, 2017) even found IE could *impair* recall of unenhanced text. Also, the reviewers noted, few studies have measured change in the supposed underlying variable, *attention*.

Not all research efforts have ignored attention or been unsuccessful, however. Targeting the present perfect/simple past distinction in English, a multi-modal study (Lee & Revesz, 2020) of listening while viewing news video clips, and reading either typographically enhanced or unenhanced captions, employed eye-tracking to measure learners' attention. Both types of captions were found to increase attention, with correlations observed between attention and improvements in 72 Korean college students' command of the English present perfect construction. Textually enhanced captions increased the salience of target forms, led students to pay more attention to them (longer and more frequent eye fixations), and produced the greatest gains on oral and written production tests. The superior performance of the enhanced captions group, Lee and Revesz suggest, could have been due to the IE providing students with more opportunities to apply their declarative knowledge of the verb tenses during the treatment tasks, and thereby to automatize their explicit knowledge to a greater degree, which then helped them on the oral production task. All three tests –

certainly written fill-in-the-blanks – may have favored application of conscious knowledge, thereby boosting the effects of IE.

Because pre-selected, rather than motivated by learners' real-time comprehension problems during face-to-face conversation, lexical or grammatical items receiving IE are the same for everyone, whether needed by them or not, so to some degree artificial. At least in the written mode, the modifications are also, by design, visible, therefore *obtrusive*. Regardless of how IE is conceptualized, and whether or not conscious awareness is the intended result, *consciousness-raising* of this nature is likely to produce explicit knowledge, useful in some situations, but a departure from the main goal. What is needed in the classroom is the creation of conditions under which students can really learn incidentally, thereby increasing the likelihood of unconscious *detection*, rather than conscious *noticing* – potentially leading to implicit knowledge – but at a faster than natural rate.

Enhanced incidental learning (EIL) (Long, 2017, 2020) differs from IE in several ways, as shown in Figure 6.1. EIL is intended to facilitate L2 development not by modifying the input itself, but by changing *the conditions under which input is processed*. And whether to speech or writing, the modifications are *unobtrusive*. The aim is to increase the depth of input processing while maintaining learners' attention on meaning, not form, and without switching the processing from unconscious to conscious, thus keeping learning incidental, with implicit knowledge a more likely outcome.

EIL takes two somewhat different forms, depending on whether the input in question is (a) spoken or written and intended for a whole student group, e.g., in the form of a news clip, a short story, or an informal academic talk, or (b) spoken and occurring in real-time interaction between the teacher and individual students. In the second case, those items which accrue added salience will depend on the outcome of the process in which teacher and student (or two or more students) *negotiate for meaning*, so will differ for individual learners, whose genuine, real-time comprehension and comprehensibility needs will set the agenda. Instead of overt, proactive modification of the same items for everyone, needed or not, to induce conscious *noticing*, interactional modifications are *reactive*, and designed to induce unconscious *detection*, i.e., perception without awareness. They occur naturally, in real time, as by-products of the negotiation process, and are individualized. One student may know a needed lexical item, for example, whereas another may produce the wrong one and require the teacher

Figure 6.1. IE and EIL compared

	IE	EIL
Goals and	increased input salience	deeper input processing
likely outcomes	explicit learning	implicit learning
	explicit knowledge	implicit knowledge
Learning	semi-incidental	enhanced incidental
mechanisms	conscious perception	unconscious perception
	noticing (with awareness)	detection (without awareness)
Changes	proactive (unmotivated)	reactive (motivated)*
	input modifications	interactional modifications*
	third party	interlocutor*
	uniform/non-negotiated	negotiated/tailored*
	artificial	natural*
	obtrusive	unobtrusive
	simplification	elaboration
Modality	mostly unimodal	often bi- or tri-modal
	mostly written	mostly spoken
Devices	mostly typographical	mostly aural (FTD-based)
	sometimes aural	sometimes visual
Side-effects	reduced comprehension	improved comprehenson
	reduced exposure to new items	increased exposure to new items
Direct evidence	considerable	limited
Effects	mixed	mixed/positive
	small	small

Note: * indicates properties of individually negotiated changes in real time

or another student to help, perhaps via a recast. The recast is a negotiation-for-meaning move that will occur just when the learner is conscious of the gap in his/her vocabulary, is vested in the exchange and, as a result, is attending to the input more carefully than usual.

When EIL is provided for a whole group of students, the unobtrusive modifications are generally not to the way particular pre-selected forms appear in the input itself, but overall changes in the way that input is presented – changes from which learners will benefit but, because they are unobtrusive, of which they will usually remain *unaware*. That said, the potential for increasing the salience of specific items exists, e.g., through use of subtle one-beat pauses before and/or after targeted items. An illustration (of which more later) of unobtrusive holistic changes is the use of *multimodal input*. For example, students may read a story while listening to an audio recording (spoken and written) played at a slightly slower pace than would be appropriate for NSs, or watch a slower-paced TV news bulletin (listening while viewing), perhaps with captions (tri-modal, listening while watching and reading). Assuming there is no subsequent consciousness-raising event of some kind, *detection* (perception without awareness) of new or only partially known items in the input is more likely to result in implicit learning of those items (implicit because the learners' focus will be on understanding the meaning of the story or news items) and result in *implicit knowledge*.

Most of the many possible unobtrusive modifications to spoken input are those first identified in research in the 1970s and 1980s on naturally occurring foreigner talk discourse (FTD), i.e., conversation between native and non-native speakers in which the NSs adapt the way they talk to match their perception of their NNS interlocutors' level of comprehension. These modifications include use of slower pace of delivery, increased stress or volume, lexical switches, appositional phrases, exact and semantic repetition, prosodically highlighted word groupings that help NNS readers recognize utterance constituents (noun phrases, verb phrases, clauses), collocations, and other multi-word units, and the previously mentioned one-beat pauses before and/or after key information-bearing words. (For reviews of research findings on these and other input modifications to NNSs in and out of classrooms, see Chaudron, 1988; Long, 1983a.)

In all these examples, it is not the *external input* that is being manipulated, at least, not overtly, as is the case with *obtrusive* devices, such as bolding or italics, in traditional *input enhancement*. Those are designed to switch learners' attention from meaning to form, and thereby increase *conscious*

noticing of target items. EIL employs subtler, *unobtrusive* modifications so that students' attentional focus will remain uninterruptedly on *meaning*. With EIL, the aim is to enhance not the input itself, but *the efficiency of the internal incidental learning process* by speeding up learners' *unconscious detection* of target items. *Incidental learning conditions + unobtrusive enhancements = enhanced incidental learning (EIL)*.

Provided learners' attention remains on message, or content, and provided the enhancements truly are unobtrusive, most will not be noticed. Debriefing interviews in a listening-while-reading study by Cho & Reinders (2013) showed that even unnaturally long, so potentially obtrusive, 1.5-second pauses before and after targeted passive constructions had not been noticed by learners. Interactional modifications are typically reactive, when used to repair communicative trouble, but can also be proactive, when functioning to preempt communication problems (Long, 1983b). Even when applied proactively, as in the design of task-based language teaching materials (Long, 2015, 2020), and incorporated into *elaborated input*, they have proven effective for improving *comprehension* (e.g., Yano et al, 1994; Oh, 2001).

Does EIL also facilitate *acquisition*? The jury is still out, with only a few studies as yet on which to base a conclusion. However, although usually without EIL as its explicit motivation, some research has already provided indirect evidence of its effectiveness. Relevant work includes: a bi-modal (aural and visual) study of vowel-changing verbs in German by Godfroid (2016); a listening-while-reading EIL study of vocabulary by Malone (2018); the previously mentioned tri-modal (reading while listening and viewing) study of syntax by Lee and Revesz (2020); a study of the effects of elaborated input on comprehension and incidental vocabulary learning by Kobayashi-Hillman (2020); and in the most comprehensive work to date, a bi-modal (reading while listening) study of the acquisition of collocations by Borro (2021). Due to space limitations, we provide very brief synopses of three of those investigations below.

In a study of 38 upper-intermediate American college students, Godfroid (2016) demonstrated implicit learning of a subtle and complex L2 feature, vowel-changing allomorphy on strong verbs in German, through a computer-delivered input flood presented via a bimodal (aural plus visual) picture-matching task. Implicit learning was induced through increased input frequency – an enhancement of incidental learning that was unobtrusive, in a task that kept students focused on meaning by requiring them to match each sentence they heard to one of two pictures presented on

a computer screen. Toward the end of the task, the vowel change was omitted, so the students heard ungrammatical examples. There were no additional changes, such as unusual stress or increased volume, much less any explicit treatment. Debriefing interviews showed that 33 of the 38 learners had remained unaware of the morphological change, yet displayed significant learned sensitivity to grammaticality during listening as revealed by a slow-down in their reaction times on those ungrammatical examples at the end of the task (showing they had internalized some knowledge of the new rule, so were "put off" by sentences that violated that rule), and also by improved pre- to post-test scores on a word-monitoring task measuring implicit learning.

Malone (2018) manipulated input frequency and modality in an EIL investigation of low frequency English vocabulary items by 80 adult college students randomly assigned to four treatment groups in a 2 × 2 factorial design: (1) two exposures to target words (TWs), with no aural enhancement (AE); (2) two TW exposures with AE; (3) four TW exposures, with no AE; and (4) four TW exposures with AE. The oral versions were recorded at a relatively slow rate of 120 to 140 words per minute. Surprise post-tests assessed initial form-recognition and form-meaning connections. Malone expected that AE should stimulate deeper processing of lexical information, thereby improving learning outcomes, and that learners with superior working memory (WM) would be better equipped to cope with the increased WM burden. The results showed that two exposures with no AE produced significantly better than chance performance by the students on both form-recognition and form-meaning post-tests. Four exposures led to even more learning than two exposures. Exposures with AE further improved students' scores on both outcome measures in the two-exposure condition, and on form-meaning association in the four-exposure, condition. The advantage for AE in establishing form-meaning connections suggests a facilitating effect for deeper processing of new word meanings as a result of EIL, realized on this occasion by simultaneous listening and reading while focused on comprehension of the passages. That places a heavier burden on WM than reading alone, which is consistent with the predicted positive effect for WM Malone found on both outcome measures, especially the form-recognition scores, in the bi-modal condition (students with higher WM did better than those with lower WM).

In the most comprehensive study to date explicitly motivated by the EIL hypothesis, Borro (2021) targeted the learning of L2 Italian formulaic sequences by Mandarin-speaking college students in Italy. The collocations were often semantically opaque: *aria fritta*/fried air = nothing important or

concrete; and *toccare il cielo*/to touch the sky = to be very happy. All the students in the study read and simultaneously listened to the text (bi-modal input). The EIL condition was unobtrusive. The EIL condition involved the students reading silently while hearing the input read aloud with slight, one-beat pauses before and after the target items (aural enhancement, AE). Borro included an IE condition, which was obtrusive; target items in the written input were bolded. Borro employed eyetracking to measure processes during reading. At the process level, students showed a growing familiarity with the target items on the eye-tracking early measures (skipping words, first fixation, and gaze duration), i.e., those associated with automatic processes. Exactly as predicted, EIL led learners to allocate more attention to the target items, yet (as revealed by a debriefing questionnaire) *without awareness of doing* so, resulting in *unconscious detection*, and at the product level, in the development of *implicit knowledge*, as measured by a word-monitoring task. Students in the written IE condition (reading, with no AE), where the targeted items were bolded, improved their explicit, but not their implicit, knowledge, as measured by L1 to L2 translation and multiple-choice form recognition tasks. There was a significant difference from the control group (same population, no treatment). In addition to providing evidence of the positive effects of EIL on the incidental learning process and the implicit learning product, Borro's findings lend support to the suspicion expressed by Pellicer-Sanchez and Boers (2019) that IE tends to produce *semi-incidental learning*, developing explicit, but not implicit, knowledge.

Incidental learning can be implicit or explicit, whatever the kind of intervention or lack of intervention. By design, however, if a task is such that the focus of students' attention remains on meaning and communication, EIL will usually be something of which they are unaware, and foster detection and implicit learning, with implicit knowledge the potential end-product. To repeat, with EIL, the aim is not to enhance the input itself (as is the case with IE), but to improve the efficiency with which that input is processed incidentally, and especially increase the potential for implicit learning, thereby speeding up unconscious detection of target items. Further research is obviously needed before any firm conclusions are drawn. Meanwhile, early evidence is supportive, and a testable claim – the EIL Hypothesis – is that *incidental learning conditions plus unobtrusive enhancements induce enhanced incidental learning (EIL), resulting in detection, implicit learning, and implicit knowledge.*

6.3 Use an analytic, not a synthetic, syllabus

The distinction between two types of syllabus, synthetic and analytic (Wilkins, 1972, 1974) is simple but, in our view, one of the most fundamental in language teaching. Whichever option the coursebook writer or classroom teacher chooses, many other decisions follow automatically. The terms refer to the learner's supposed role in the learning process.

A *synthetic syllabus* is one in which the target language is broken down into linguistic "units" of some kind for presentation to the learner – usually grammatical structures, but sometimes also sounds, lexical items, collocations, notions, functions, or a mix. The items are sequenced from "simple" to "complex" for classroom presentation, mostly on the basis of the coursebook writer's intuitions. Modules in coursebooks then focus on one or more items, treated separately, with model sentences provided to illustrate their operation, sometimes accompanied by meta-linguistic explanations, and usually by dialogs and reading passages, interwoven with drills and exercises designed to "practice" the item(s). The dialogs and readings often sound artificial (and are) because they are seeded with unnaturally high frequencies of the item(s) of the hour. Although few coursebook writers or publishers may realize it or care, the approach is broadly consistent with the tenets of Skill-Acquisition Theory (SAT). Delivered via PPP, a central role is accorded to explicit teaching and learning, moving from *declarative knowledge* (conscious knowledge about some piece of the L2), through *proceduralized knowledge* (the ability for controlled use of the item, e.g., in a repetition or question-and-answer drill), to *automatized knowledge* (progressively faster and more accurate use of the item in comprehension or production).

Grammatical, structural, notional-functional, and lexical syllabi are the most common examples of a synthetic syllabus. It is is referred to as 'synthetic' to identify the learner's task, which is to put the pieces together, i.e., synthesize them, for communicative language use. Pedagogic materials that embody the syllabus, as well as discrete-point tests, are synthetic, too. It is often said (e.g., Skehan, 2002) that the immense commercial success of the synthetic syllabus, despite its obvious conflict with SLA theory and research findings, is chiefly due to its attraction for poorly trained or untrained novice teachers; synthetic materials are easy to understand and use, and explicit learning is easy to test and score. Coursebook modules follow a formula; each has the same components and follows the same series of steps, often exactly the same (see Chapter 7). Aside from problems with what are often very boring lessons, use of a synthetic syllabus assumes that

it is possible to prescribe the sequence in which items will be learned (by all learners on the same day). The goal, using PPP, is rapid achievement of accurate NS-like use, before the next items are introduced and "learned" in the same way – pearls on a string. The lack of credibility of such an approach was detailed in Chapters 1 - 5.

An *analytic syllabus* (in theory, at least) is qualitatively different. Instead of starting by dividing the target language into bite-size pieces, holistic samples (usually linguistically simplified, but sometims genuine) of target language use are presented to learners, whose job it is, with help from the coursebook writer or teacher, to *analyze* the input and induce the rules governing grammatical items, words and collocations and how they are used. In theory, at least, there is no overt or covert linguistic syllabus. The idea is for students to discover new target language items in context, while focused on understanding the content of dialogs, talks or texts, and as they do so, gradually to recognize how the new items function.

Common examples of an analytic approach are immersion programs, the process syllabus (Breen, 1984), some kinds of content-based language teaching, e.g., content-and-language-integrated learning (CLIL), sheltered subject-matter teaching (Krashen, 1991), the Natural Approach (Krashen & Terrell, 1983), and English medium instruction (EMI). We discuss these in Chapter 9. EMI is the tertiary equivalent of CLIL increasingly used in universities in several parts of the world where either single subjects, like law, business, chemistry of petroleum engineering, or even the entire curriculum, are taught in English.

In theory, at least, if the gestalt samples are interesting enough to hold students' attention, an analytic approach may seem compatible with incidental learning. However, the L2 samples are typically far too short for that, and in practice usually soon "mined" by the teacher (as in *explication de texte*, popular in some government-sponsored teaching of French), who goes through the input drawing students' attention to grammatical, lexical, or notional-functional learning targets (grammar in context). When it comes to classroom practice (as opposed to theory), the main difference between synthetic and analytic is that with a synthetic syllabus, the focus on isolated linguistic items occurs first, followed by examples of the items in (rather stilted) use, whereas with the analytic syllabus, the order is temporarily

reversed. A classroom visitor can be hard put to tell which kind of syllabus is in play.[1]

However discredited it may be, synthetic language teaching remains the norm in EFL and most ESL, whatever the label attached to it, and it is revealing that Wilkins (1994) himself later classified the synthetic notional-functional syllabus as analytic. In practice, commercially published notional-functional materials, most of them British, differed from grammar-based materials mostly in the labels given to coursebook units ('Interviewing a job applicant' instead of 'WH questions', 'Asking for directions' instead of 'Imperatives and Locatives') and, more usefully, in the fact that different constructions and vocabulary relevant for a notion or function would be grouped together. Within minutes of starting a unit on, say, 'Requesting', students might find themselves learning the various forms requests can take, from *Pass the salt*, to *Pass the salt, please*, to *Could you pass the salt (please)?* to *Would you mind/I wonder if you would mind passing the salt (please)?* to *Would you be so kind as to pass the salt*?, and so on, complete with exercises and notes about context, politeness and formality.

It is clear that in practice, neither the synthetic nor the analytic syllabus is appropriate for the development of implicit L2 knowledge. A genuine analytic approach holds greater potential for incidental learning, but depends on how it is used in the classroom. However, if spoken and written dialogs and texts are simply exploited as sources of linguistic items for explicit treatment, the lessons will largely involve intentional and explicit learning, so will be no different from the usual fare in a traditional grammar-based PPP lesson. As noted in Section 6.1, even if conditions are created for incidental and implicit learning in the classroom, e.g., by having students work individually or together on any of a potential multitude of interesting pedagogic tasks (see Chapter 8), or at home through listening while reading short stories, enhancement devices will still need to be added to the mix.

As we saw in the previous section, EIL embraces a wide range of devices, with detection an important implicit learning mechanism. Occasionally, however, situations will arise that call for *focus on form* (Long, 1991, 2000, 2015, pp. 27-28; Long & Robinson, 1998) to reduce the time students may require to perceive a problematic item. Focus on form (as distinct from focus on *forms*, where syllabus and lesson content consist solely of a series of

[1] For a far more detailed discssion of synthetic and analytic syllabi, and of their strengths and weaknesses, see Long, 2015, pp. 19-29).

linguistic items) involves brief *reactive* use of a variety of pedagogic procedures, ranging from subtle implicit recasts to provision of simple grammar "rules" and overt explicit error "correction" (likely to boost implicit and explicit learning, respectively), designed to draw learners' attention, in context, to target items that are proving problematic. Focus on form can serve one or both of two purposes: to draw students' attention to items they might otherwise neither detect nor notice for a long time, thereby speeding up the learning process, and, secondly, as proposed by Nick Ellis (2005, 2006), to create and store a first impression, or trace, of the item in long-term memory, thereby increasing the likelihood that it will subsequently be detected when examples are encountered during subsequent *implicit* input processing.

N. Ellis' emergentist, usage-based theory of language learning is becoming increasingly influential, and has major implications for classroom practice. Ellis claims that most language knowledge, of both L1 and L2, is implicit, the product of bottom-up statistical learning from exposure to large, rich samples of the language. Learners unconsciously perceive regularities (sometimes mistaken by linguists for rules) in the input concerning which forms, functions and meanings co-occur, leading to generalizations that form the basis for prototypical "constructions" Goldberg (2006). These range from fixed formulaic expressions (*How are you*, *at a moment's notice*) to items of very limited scope, like greetings (*Good morning, How are you?)*, to increasingly more abstract, productive morphological and syntactic schemata. Examples include: [Adj - *ly*], based on numerous encounters with such exemplars as *quickly*, *happily*, and *quietly*; [Noun - PL], from *boys*, *dogs*, *houses*; [Adj - Noun] from *tall woman*, *small houses*, *corrupt politicians*; [The Comparative Pronoun Verb, the Comparative Pronoun Verb] (*The bigger they are, the harder they fall*, *The harder you practice, the better you become*, *The closer she approached, the worse it looked*) and [Subject - Verb - Object – Object] (*Peter gave John the money*, *Frenkie de Jong passed Messi the ball*). With constructions, however, learners do not simply pick up and memorize exemplars; they increasingly abstract away from them, generalizing from archetypes of the statistical patterns they have induced to recognize and produce new instances. Exemplar-based learning is one component of this emergentist, usage-based model of SLA (see, e.g., Ellis, 2005, 2008; Ellis & Wulff, 2020; Robinson & Ellis, 2008; Wulff, 2019). According to Rastelli, "SL [statistical learning] has primacy in both early and late language acquisition. It represents the initial, starting option for children learning their L1 and the default option for adult L2 learners" (2014, p. 65).

Explicit interventions, e.g., via focus on form, are needed, however, in cases of items that are insufficiently salient to be learned statistically (or at least, learned sufficiently fast). Whatever explicit knowledge is gained that way does not subsequently "become" implicit through practice (see Chapter 5), as some Skill Acquisition theorists have claimed, and the items "taught" are not learned immediately as a result of the interventions. Their function is to plant the first seeds (the traces) in long-term memory, and thereby to prime the learner for subsequent *implicit* learning of the items. Unlike either the synthetic or (as it tends to be used) the analyic syllabus, such ground-up learning from encountering multiple examples of items in use *is* appropriate for incidental and implicit learning.

6.4 Respect developmental processes, sequences, and learnability

As detailed in Chapter 2, one of many things documented by research on instructed SLA (ISLA) is that teachers cannot simply teach what they or coursebook writers want when they want, but only when learners' processing capacity makes learning the item possible. Processablity Theory first provided a way of predicting when instruction will and will not work over 30 years ago, along with an explanation of why and why not. Synthetic approaches to language teaching ignore what has been shown and persist in attempting to impose some kind of pre-set external linguistic syllabus on students, usually a grammatical syllabus, with predictable results. Analytic syllabuses have more potential in this regard, but as just noted above, they often promise more than they deliver. Incidental learning, on the other hand, is entirely compatible with the research findings. Learners are provided with large quantities of meaningful input (some of it outside the classroom) and allowed to develop their command of the L2, guided by their "internal syllabus". Both incidental and implicit learning, in other words, respect developmental pocesses, sequences, and learnability.

As should be clear from Sections 6.1. and 6.2., this amounts to much more than simply exposing learners to lots of input, retiring to a safe distance, and hoping for the best. The need for *efficient* language teaching, coupled with recognition of the limitations age effects impose on purely incidental and purely implicit language learning for older children and adults, means more is needed from the teacher. Grammar must still be taught – just not in the traditional way. Rather, students should be provided with plenty of opportunities to perceive statistical regularities in rich *elaborated* (not

simpified) input, and the learning speeded up by such means as EIL, detection, and focus on form.

Conversely, explicit instruction, rote memorization of vocabulary lists, and the skill-building model are limited in scope – viable mostly with easy grammar and high aptitude learners (DeKeyser, 2015). If explicit instruction helps, it is mainly in a reactive mode to increase the saliency of problematic items. If need be, explicit interventions are also available, but not with traditional expectations: "Even though many of us go to great lengths to engage in explicit language learning, the bulk of language acquisition is implicit learning from usage. Most knowledge is tacit knowledge; most learning is implicit; the vast majority of our cognitive processing is unconscious" (Ellis & Wulff, 2015, p. 8).

6.5 Change the structure of classroom discourse

Numerous studies of teacher - student interaction in second and foreign lnguage classrooms over the years have found multiple instances of the same three-part IRF structure: Initiation (I) – Response (R) - Feedback (F), with the Feedback move optional (e.g., Long & Sato, 1983; Tollefson, 1988; White & Lightbown, 1984). In content classrooms, the pattern has been so familiar for decades as to have earned the label, 'The persistence of the recitation' (Hoetker & Ahlbrand, 1969). The theory is that, short of a serious intervention of some kind, teachers tend to teach as they were taught, thus passing on the way lessons are performed to the next generation.

Initiating moves commonly take the form of simple questions to which the teacher already knows the answer. It is usually a 'closed' question, with a single correct answer, designed to show whether students can regurgitate facts they have just been taught, or simply that they are paying attention. They are sometimes referred to as 'known information', or 'display', questions, as opposed to so-called (usually much less frequent) 'referential questions', where the questioner does not know the answer, among many potential ones, that they will receive. Asking students their opinion about something, or about their life outside the classroom or in their home country, are a few of numerous easy ways of producing referential questions (assuming teachers do not already know students' opinions, etc.). Compare these two short exchanges. Each follows the IRF structure, but the Initiation in #1 consists of a display question, and in #2, a referential question:

#1
T: Is Barcelona the capital of Spain? (I)
S: No, it isn't. Madrid is the capital. (R)
T: Yes. Good. Madrid's the capital. (F)
#2
T: Have you ever been to Madrid? (I)
S: No, I haven't. (R)
T. It has a famous art museum, the Prado. (F)

IRF fits very well with use of a synthetic syllabus and PPP, e.g., as in #3, in the conduct of a question-and-answer drill targeting the structure of the day, based on a simple story the class has just read about Peter's daily schedule:

#3
Teacher: Where does Mary work? (I)
Student 1: She work at the university. (R)
Teacher: No. She works at the university. Works. (F)
Student 1: She works at the university. (R)
Teacher: Where does Mary's husband Peter work? (I)
Student 2: He works in a supermarket. (R)
Teacher: Good. (F) Does Peter work in a bank? (I)
Student 3: No. He works in a supermarket. (R)
Teacher: Yes. He works in a department store. (F)
Does Mary work in a department store? (I)
Student 1: No. She works at the university. (R)
Teacher: Very good. Mary works at the university. (F)

Display questions have always been found to constitute the overwhelming majority of questions in traditional grammar-based "focus on forms" lessons. Referential questions are rare, reflecting the paucity of communicative L2 use in such lessons. When they do occur, it is often for the purposes of classroom management (*Did everyone remember to do their homework? Do you have someone to work with, Pepe?*). The value of display questions is usually claimed to be that they help a teacher know if students are understanding, "keeping up" (or just still awake), and that is sometimes true, although there are more imaginative options. But even that function may be wishful thinking. The focus of display questions is on language as object, not on meaning, so some students, at least, may simply be echoing what they just heard, not showing whether they have really learned verb ending *-s* or whatever. Their ability to produce a structure accurately when using it for genuine communication will be the real test. A classroom study found that it was easy for teachers to use more referential

questions if they were shown how, and that, just as has been demonstrated in subject-matter teaching, referential questions typically elicit longer, linguistically more complex, communicative responses from students – responses that in turn, as in #2, above, often elicit further communicative 'reacting' moves from teachers or other students (Brock, 1986; Long et al, 1984).

Aside from the boredom PPP often produces, there are at least two major problems with that kind of discourse from an acquisition point of view, the first of which is the problem of learnability. As discussed at length in Chapter 2, research by Pienemann (and many others since) has shown that teachers cannot teach what they want, when they want, yet PPP and the IRF structure are designed to do precisely that. Given the robustness of developmental sequences, a better option is to expose learners to plenty of rich input delivered in the context of tasks or other communicative activities of sufficient interest to them to maintain their focus on meaning, and establish conditions that lead them to process it for linguistic items that currently *are* processable, so learnable for them.

The second major problem concerns input and output quality and quantity. Lengthy series of IRF exchanges mean that input tends to be limited and repetitive, i.e., impoverished. Typically linguistically simplified, it consists primarily of model sentences illustrating the workings of a target structure, using a stripped-down vocabulary devoid of most of the relevant lexical items, collocations and formulaic utterances – just enough to provide a minimal context for the grammar point. Consequently, student output tends to be limited and repetitive, too, as in the "dialog" concerning where Mary and Peter work, not creative. Teacher feedback is focused on grammatical accuracy, so typically consists of a few praise markers (*Yes*, *Good*, *Right, Well done*, etc.) or "corrections" (*No*, *Not X, Y*, etc.).

The tight focus on accuracy with a particular grammar point also has the knock-on effect of preempting creative language use on the students' part. Evaluations of the form of what students say blocks openings for communicative language use one would expect to find in conversation outside the classroom. Compare #4 and #5:

#4
T: Did Peter go to the game? (I – a display question)
S: Yes, he did. (R)
T: Good. (F)

#5
T: Did you go to the game? (I – if the teacher does not know, a referential question)
S: Yes, I did. (R)
T. How was it? (React)
S: It was fun. But we lose. (React)
T: You lost? (React – a recast). What a pity. (React)

In #5, the final three utterances are communicative reacting moves, responding to the content of what the student says, not its form. And as tends to happen in real conversations, one reacting move leads to another. Outside classrooms, new topics are often initiated (topic-initiating moves) by statements, not questions, and people usually react to what other people say using topic-continuing moves.

As we have already discussed, learning an L2 is not simply a matter of skill-building and practice to speed up retrieval of memorized forms. It requires development of new L2 knowledge, and opportunities to use it to communicate. There will be errors, but as we noted in Chapter 1, errors are an inevitable and important part of language learning; they show that students are trying to use newly acquired items in new contexts, which is exactly what they will need to do in the real world. The IRF pattern has a serious negative impact on the quality of classroom language use from an acquisition point of view; it also affects the quantity of practice negatively. Teachers own the first (I) and third (F) moves, meaning they will usually be talking for two thirds of the time. As explained in Chapter 5, that results in a grossly insufficient quantity of practice for anyone to learn a new language. In short, the normal structure of classroom discourse arising from use of a synthetic syllabus and PPP needs to be changed.

Summary

As we saw in Chapter 1, research has shown that teaching cannot change language-learning *processes*, which are universal. Nor, as described in Chapter 2, can it alter the *developmental sequences* that students follow (sometimes with minor variation at the individual level) as they learn grammatical structures, i.e., the *route* of acquisition, which is broadly the same for naturalistic and instructed learners, regardless of their age and L1 background. Nevertheless, while instruction is quite limited in its effects where processes and sequences are concerned, it can be effective in other areas. As documented in Chapters 3 and 4, respectively, it can certainly

improve the *rate* at which learners progress, and probably, the level they eventually achieve in the L2, i.e., their *level of ultimate attainment*. Both are obviously matters of considerable practical importance to learners and teachers, alike. As we saw in Chapter 5, at a more general level, non-language-specific cognitive processes operate in language learning, as they do in learning in general. In this chapter, we have drawn four general inter-related implications (as distinct from specific applications) of these findings: (1) priority for incidental and implicit language learning inside and outside the classroom; (2) use of an analytic, not a synthetic, syllabus; (3) respect for developmental processes, sequences, and learnability; and (4) changes are needed in the structure of classroom discourse. *Specific applications* of these generalizations to materials design, classroom pedagogy, and assessment, follow in later chapters.

Discussion questions

1. What is meant by 'rich' input, and why are large quantities of it especially important for incidental learning?

2. Can you suggest three classroom activities likely to provide rich input, and explain why they are likely to do so?

3. Can you explain why students need time to digest input?

4. What is meant by multimodal input? Why is there so much research interest in it these days?

5. Of the many differences between input enhancement (IE) and enhanced incidental learning (EIL), which two or three strike you as the most important, and why?

6. Why is it important that students' attention remain on meaning and communication in EIL?

7. Can you identify three devices for achieving EIL, one of them perhaps not being among those identified in the chapter? Why is it important that enhancement devices are unobtrusive? What is meant by semi-incidental learning?

8. What are the particular strengths of Ilaria Borro's study as a test of the effects of EIL?

9. What are the main differences between an analytic and a synthetic syllabus? Name three examples of each. Why is one more syllabus type consistent (or less inconsistent) with SLA research findings than the other?

10. How can simple changes to the traditional structure of classroom discourse create a more nutritious linguistic environment for L2 acquisition?

Suggested readings

DeKeyser, R. (2017). Knowledge and skill in ISLA. In Loewen, S., & Sato, M. (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of instructed second language acquisition* (pp. 15-32). New York: Routledge, 2017.

Ellis, N. C. & Wulff, S. (2015). Usage-based approaches to SLA. In VanPatten, B., & Williams, J. (eds.), *Theories in second language acquisition. An introduction* (pp. 75 -93). New York: Routledge.

Long, M. H. (2015). Synthetic and analytic approaches to LT. In Long, M. H., *Second language acquisition and Task-Based Language Teaching* (pp. 19-29). Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.

Long, M. H. (2017). Interaction in the L2 classroom. In Leontas, J. (ed.), *TESOL Encyclopedia of English language teaching*. Oxford/Washington, D.C.: Wiley/TESOL International.

Whong, M., Gil, H.G., & Marsden, E. (2014). Beyond paradigm: the 'what' and the 'how' of classroom research. *Second Language Research* 30, 4, 551-568.

SECTION 2.
HOW ADULTS ARE TAUGHT EFL AND ESL

Section 2 Introduction

All EFL and ESL teaching relies on context: where and with whom the teaching takes place will have a crucial effect on both the content and the way English as an L2 is taught. Nevertheless, certain general considerations apply. Section 1 has argued that teaching should be informed primarily by what we know from research about how adults learn an L2. Here, in Section 2, we argue that regardless of variations among teachers in how they interpret and implement the syllabus they use, if that syllabus is based on false assumptions about how adults learn an L2, the efficacy of their work will be adversely affected.

Chapter 7 describes how ELT practice has ended up in the clutches of a synthetic syllabus, implemented in coursebooks which oblige teachers to devote their efforts to engaging students in studying the language as an object. We argue that using such a syllabus to guide their work is inefficacious (as we also saw in Chapter 6). Thus, Chapter 8 suggests an alternative to coursebook-driven ELT. It gives a brief summary of the original version of TBLT (Long, 2015), which provides an alternative syllabus. Given that it respects SLA findings, and also because it embraces the principles of learner-centeredness, collaborative learning and egalitarianism, we argue that implementing Long's TBLT is a more efficacious way of doing ELT.

Chapter 9 examines alternatives to traditional EFL courses, giving special attention to immersion approaches to ELT, such as content-and-language-integrated learning (CLIL) and English medium instruction (EMI). CLIL involves teaching subject matter through the medium of a foreign language, most often English, but the validity of claimed distinctions between current incarnations of CLIL and other forms of content-based instruction (CBI), including immersion, are contested. Studies reveal that CLIL and EMI have important disadvantages when compared to immersion programs. Three "pre-CLIL/EMI" studies, by Mackay (1986, 1993), Long and Ross (1993), and Lynch (1987), and three "post-CLIL/EMI" studies, by Al-Thowaini

(2018), Long et al (2018), and Dallinger et al (2016) are discussed. It emerges that subject-matter learning suffers when delivered by and for NNSs of the language of instruction, prompting the question of whether CLIL or EMI really offer an alternative type of course where students get "two for the price of one".

Finally, Chapter 10 examines second language teacher education (SLTE). We suggest that teachers are badly prepared, and that the most important factor in explaining this poor preparation is the scant regard given to the question of how adults learn an L2. We argue that radical reform is needed to deal with the severe weaknesses identified. Pre-service language teaching courses must give far more importance to an understanding of second language learning, and devote far more time during the course to genuine teaching practice. Meanwhile, employers must accept their responsibility for on-going professional development, which should be organized and delivered by local experts.

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CHAPTER 7

HOW MOST LEARNERS ARE TAUGHT ENGLISH TODAY, AND HOW WE GOT HERE

7.1 Introduction

In Section 1, we saw that language learning is not the same as other kinds of learning because of the crucial difference between knowing *about* the target language, and, on the other hand, knowing *how* to use it. Recall that knowing about language is referred to as explicit knowledge (conscious knowledge of grammar rules and of other parts of the language), while knowing how to use the language is referred to as implicit knowledge (unconscious knowledge of how to take part in a conversation in English, for example). To be a competent user of English as an L2, learners need to develop fluency, and this depends largely on their ability to rely on implicit knowledge; hence the consensus among a growing number of scholars of adult L2 learning that implicit learning is more important. A fundamental question in ELT is, therefore: In current ELT practice, why is so much emphasis placed on teaching students about the language, and so little on helping them to use it? Our answer involves looking at how we got to this sorry state of affairs, at the history of ELT.

In discussing how to organize ELT, Anthony (1963) used three terms: 'technique', 'method', and 'approach'. The approach sets out a view of language and of language learning, the method describes the teaching plan, and the techniques describe how the method is implemented. "Techniques must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well" (Anthony 1963, p. 63). Our own view is that this three-way distinction is unhelpful, doing little to resolve the confusion found in modern tracts on ELT (e.g., Brown, 2007; Burns & Richards, 2012; Harmer, 2016; Scrivener, 2005; Thornbury, 2006; and Ur, 2009) about the difference between "method" and "approach", where the terms are often used interchangeably. Instead, like Anthony, we use 'approach' to refer to a view of language and of language learning, but we add considerations of a philosophy of education and of progressive social and political values.

Then, when it comes to talking about how to teach, we make a simple, two-way distinction between Methodological Principles and Pedagogic Procedures, of which more later (in Chapter 8).

When we look at the history of ELT, the most common view is to see it as a "procession of methods", starting with Grammar-Translation and ending with Task-Based Language Teaching, with the Direct Method, Situational Language Teaching, the Audio-Visual method, Total Physical Response (TPR), Community Language Learning (CLL), the Silent Way, and Communicative Language Teaching, among others, in between. However, this kind of treatment has been criticised by Howatt and Smith (2014), who say

> "Oversimplified 'procession-of-methods' views of the past have remained common (Hunter & Smith, 2012: 432). 'Potted histories' have tended to prevail which reproduce a kind of mythology intended to set off the past from the present, itself viewed as superior (ibid.). Highly influential in legitimizing this kind of approach, we would suggest, have been Richards & Rodgers' book, Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching, first published in 1986 and in its fourth edition already, and Larsen-Freeman's (1986) Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching, an even more reductive, ahistorical account, also in its fourth edition" (p. 76).

Such reductive accounts, the authors argue, construct a historical outlook that "foregrounds paradigm shifts, while de-emphasising continuity". It is certainly the case that there has been a great deal of overlap among these so-called "methods" (which at the classroom level differ from one another less that is often imagined), and that while there have been some dramatic changes in the last seventy years, the "progression narrative" has little basis in historical fact. It is likely that none of the different putative methods was ever implemented in its pure form; rather, blends of older and newer influences can be observed, while different versions of grammar-based syllabuses, using different versions of the Presentation – Production - Practice (PPP) process, can also be observed, waxing and waning but running throughout the whole story, a depressing constant[1].

Howatt and Smith (2014) go on to say that the progression narrative appears to give the same importance to all the methods described, thus denying them their very uneven historical impact. They also point out that the account is based on what happened in parts of the West, ignoring narratives from other

[1] It is important to note that our references to PPP are to various versions of it, particularly that used by the Situational approach.

parts of the world. To deal with these major weaknesses, Howatt and Smith offer a "periodization" approach, which divides the history of ELT into four periods. The first, "Classical", period went from 1760 to the end of the 19th century and included the grammar-translation method. Next came what the authors refer to as the "Reform" period, where we find the Berlitz Method and the Direct Method. The third, "Scientific" period, from 1910 to 1970[2], included the Oral Method, Hornby's extremely influential Situational Approach, and the Audiolingual Method. In the authors' opinion, these methods all shared the belief that English language teaching should be based on the scientific evidence provided by linguistics and psychology. Finally, the "Communicative" period arrived in 1980s and includes all the different forms of communicative language teaching, plus various types of English for Specific Purposes, including English for Academic Purposes.

While Howatt and Smith can reasonably claim that their 'four periods' view stresses the continuity in ELT, and at the same time situates different methods within "broader social, political, economic and cultural transformations" (p.98), it does little to alter the progression narrative and is equally Western Centric. Nevertheless, for our purposes, their account is valuable. First, it highlights the continuity that lies behind the claimed paradigm shifts that were supposed to have happened; and second, it makes it easier to understand how the modern coursebook appeared. We choose to concentrate on what happened in Europe and the USA from the late 1950s to the end of the twentieth century, because this is when the important distinction was drawn between synthetic and analytic syllabus types, it is when Communicative Language Teaching emerged, and it includes the period when the modern General English coursebook snuffed out the flickering flame of progress.

7.2 Situational language teaching

The Situational Approach to second language teaching is the most durable and influential example of the PPP approach in the history of ELT. PPP adopts a synthetic, grammar-based syllabus, as discussed in Chapter 6, where the English language, having been cut up into hundreds of discrete "items", is presented to the students, who then practice it in carefully controlled ways, and then "produce" it in less-controlled oral and written activities. The Situational Approach, introduced by A.S Hornby in 1950,

[2] We note that Howatt and Smith give no dates for the "Reform" period. Assuming that the Scientific Period began in 1910, perhaps it overlapped with the Reform Period.

rested on the assumption that the language to be presented, practiced and produced in the classroom should grow out of situations, real or imagined. So, for example, to teach the structure *too + adj. + to*, the teacher might create situations where a book she holds is *too big to fit in her bag*; or the light bulb she wants to replace is *too high to reach;* or, at break, it's *too cold to go outside;* or, looking back at the school's history, she herself is *too young to remember the war*. It was Hornby's view that, using appropriate texts and visual materials, all parts of the language can be taught in this way.

In a typical Situational classroom, lessons started with the presentation of a situation, in the form of a written or spoken text or dialogue, where a particular grammar point was embedded, after which students were asked to produce and practice the point in spoken and written language by doing oral drills, written tests, and "freer" practice. Vocabulary was strictly controlled, starting with core vocabulary based on frequency, and grammar content was also strictly controlled, starting with what were considered the "simple" structures, progressing to the more "difficult". The spoken language was emphasized, language being presented orally before students saw the written forms. Grammatical explanation was discouraged, as was use of the L1, and repetition was emphasized.

Audio tapes and visual aids were essential components of Situational ELT, and in the 1970s, when the approach was widespread and very popular in the UK, the USA and Europe, this led to the introduction of "language labs", first in the USA and then in Europe in the better-equipped language schools. The language lab consisted of individual booths, each one containing a tape recorder, allowing students to listen to pre-recorded material, and also to record themselves. Everything was controlled by the teacher from a master console. After a classroom lesson, where the structure referred to above (*too + adj. + to*) - had been presented and then practiced a little, the students would be taken to the language lab, where they could listen again to the recording they had heard in class, and then do listen-and-repeat exercises, followed by various types of transformation drills.

The Situational Approach was exemplified in the UK by *Kernel Lessons Intermediate* (O'Neil, 1971). The following were the first few units:

1. Present simple and position of time adverbs
2. Present continuous
3. Simple past tense, regular and irregular verbs
4. Mass and unit
5. Some, any, a few, a little

6. Past tense with ‘ago’ and questions with ‘how long ago?’
7. Adjectives and adverbs
8. Comparison of adverbs
9. Going to.

In Unit 1, the present simple and the position of adverbs are the two “items” singled out for attention. There are pictures of situations (*Tom gets into his car to go to work*; *Julia arrives at the office*; etc.) and accompanying short texts (*Tom always drives to work*; *Julia rarely arrives late*; etc.). The teacher leads the students through the short texts, checking for comprehension and explaining any new vocabulary. Next comes the “Formation and Manipulation” section, where the grammar point is displayed in boxes. Having presented the grammar with the aid of these boxes, the teacher then leads the students through a series of written and oral exercises which practice the structure in its affirmative, negative and interrogative forms. In Section 3, there is a longer text, which runs through the entire book, called “The Man Who Escaped”. Since the focus of Unit 1 is the present simple, the text is all about an average day in Edward Coke’s life in prison, where he always/usually/never does this and that. Section 4 of Unit 1 gives “Further practice” – transformation drills, pronunciation practice, grammar work - and finally there is a summary of the grammar, revision exercises and homework.

7.3 Communicative Language Teaching

When one looks back to the late 1970s, one sees more general agreement about what Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) referred to than one does today. It is now common to refer to CLT as an “umbrella” term, under which one can find a myriad of “weak” and “strong” versions, and the only thing everyone agrees about is that nobody knows what it is. As Spada (2007, p. 272) says, “What is communicative language teaching? The answer to this question seems to depend on whom you ask.”

When it started, those who used the term were at least clear about what CLT was *not.* And that is because it began as a protest, a rebellion, whose proponents were signalling their dissatisfaction with the then dominant approaches to ELT, including the Situational Approach sketched above. Influenced both by Hymes (1971) and Halliday (1976), those who championed CLT voiced a desire for change. They wanted to replace teaching the structural aspects of language with “doing” language, with

helping students to express themselves in the L2. This was truly revolutionary; they argued that the typical classroom routine:

- Teacher: "I am leaving the room". (Walks towards the door.) "What am I doing?"
- Students: "You are leaving the room"

should be replaced with

- Teacher: "I am leaving the room". (Walks towards the door.)
- Students: "Hurray!", or "Wait for us!"

Or, to paraphrase Hymes and Halliday, they thought their job should focus on helping students to appreciate the communicative value of utterances, the functional, as well as the structural, aspects of language. For, after all, there is rarely a direct equivalent between form and function: the illocutionary force (i.e., the speaker's intention) of "I'm leaving the room" can be "I feel ill"; "I've had enough"; "It's dangerous to stay"; and many other things besides. As Hymes (1971) put it, "There are rules of use without which rules of grammar would be useless."

CLT stressed that language should be treated not just as a collection of grammatical and structural features, but also as a system of categories of functional and communicative meaning which are used to construct discourse. There is thus an interdependence between form and meaning: Both functional and structural aspects of language must be attended to. CLT's emergence in the 1980s coincided with important developments in the study of second language learning, and thus it also stressed the importance of teaching in a way that respected SLA research findings. Perhaps the most important assumption here is that learners learn a language through using it to communicate. Following on from this, CLT adopted a humanistic theory of learning and insisted, therefore, that learning can often be promoted by getting students to work together, often in small groups, on activities which involve them in using the target language in meaningful communication. so as to complete relevant tasks.

The aim of CLT was to teach students how to communicate effectively and appropriately, which involved making them aware of much more than the structural aspects of the L2. After Hymes' (1971) landmark paper, Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) mapped out the new terrain: in order to communicate well in the L2, students must develop not only linguistic competence, but also discourse competence, pragmatic competence, and

sociolinguistic competence. Later, Bachman (1990) provided an even more complete description in his framework for Communicative Language Ability.[3] The framework included three components:

- language competence,
- strategic competence ("the mental capacity for implementing the components of language competence in contextualized communicative language use"), and
- psychophysiological mechanisms: "the neurological and psychological processes involved in the actual execution of language as a physical phenomenon" (Bachman, 1990: 67).

As a final step, Bachman elaborated the four components of language competence, namely: grammatical, textual, illocutionary, and sociolinguistic competence, thus giving "the full picture" of what communicative language teaching (CLT) might be expected to deliver.

The question remained: how to teach communicative competence? Maley (1986) suggested some "inevitable consequences" of adopting a CLT approach. Teachers' roles would change from experts dispensing knowledge to facilitators who set up and monitor learner-centered activities. There would be a preponderance of authentic over simplified materials. Skills practice would be integrated rather than isolated. Classroom procedures would encourage interaction among students, and this would mean changes in classroom layout. It is ironic to see how Maley's initial enthusiastic endorsement of CLT, and of the radical changes to ELT which it entailed, has dissipated into his current support for its nemesis, coursebook-driven ELT, and disdain for the scholars who highlight its weaknesses (see, for example, Maley, 2016). Likewise, Littlewood (2012) fails to recognize that the horse has long since bolted when he suggests that CLT has these characteristics:

> "message focus, e.g. information sharing and information transfer; cooperative learning, such as group and pair work; free practice; risk taking; communicative tasks as a basic organizing unit; the use of substantive content such as school subject matter to develop language; psycholinguistic processing; attention to appropriateness of language use; and opportunities for learners to focus on the learning process" (p. 549).

[3] Note that Bachman was primarily concerned with assessment in ELT, but his framework became widely cited by those interested in developing CLT).

Where, one wonders, was this kind of approach to be found in 2012?

Meanwhile, back in the early 1980s, CLT slowly blossomed in Europe and the USA. There was never any single method, or any single coursebook that "represented" CLT, and many of the variations bordered on the bizarre. Stevick (1980) describes three of the most famous. First, Caleb Gattengo's The Silent Way. As Stevick makes clear, this approach made great demands on the learner, the teacher often remaining silent, eliciting responses and encouraging them to correct their own errors. A special sound-colour chart was used to teach pronunciation, and Cuisenaire rods to practice anything from imperatives to story-telling. Teachers who were won over by Gattengo's arguments often exhibited an almost scary missionary zeal as they went about their work. Next, Suggestopedia, the brainchild of Georgi Lozanov, a psychiatrist who worked in Bulgaria, which at that time was largely isolated from foreign contact. Accounts of students staggering out of a theatre speaking fluent English having gone through a marathon session listening to Lozanov read long texts accompanied by a string quartet playing Bach were never confirmed. Finally, Stevick devotes a chapter to Charles Curran's Community Language Learning. This put the teacher in the role of a counsellor and paraphraser, and the learners in the roles of clients and collaborators. The learners sat in a circle and built up a recorded conversation among themselves, while the teacher stood outside the circle, moving around and providing translation from the learners' L1 into the target language as requested, i.e., trying to move from zero to target language accuracy from the get-go (see Chapters 1 and 2 for problems with that). The transcribed recording then formed the basis of further work.

The scant research basis for language teaching at the time rendered teachers vulnerable to outside "experts', most of who had no training, minimal classroom experience, and no knowledge of SLA theory or research, Stevick being an exception. Such rather outlandish attempts to escape the confines of PPP highlight the fact that in the early 1980s, in a wide variety of European and North American contexts, teachers who claimed to have adopted a communicative approach were involved in all sorts of different classroom teaching practices, which stemmed from all sorts of different ideas about language and language learning. As a minimum, we may say that CLT was based on the principle that the best way to learn a language was by using it to communicate. Meaningful communicative activities were regarded as the most important ingredient of classroom practice, and language learning was seen as a process of creative construction involving trial and error. To get a better feeling for how this played out in practice, below is a brief case study.

7.4 CLT in action: A Case Study

ESADE Idiomas was a language school in Barcelona, Spain which at its height offered a wide range of general English courses to more than 3,000 adult students a year, and full-time employment (with work permits, official contracts, full social security coverage and a pension plan) to more than 60 language teachers. The founder and director, Pat Mills, started out in the early 1970s using a Direct Method course, but he gave teachers almost total freedom to decide how they would use classroom time, and he was keen that they all keep up to date with the new ideas about ELT that were coming out of the UK and the USA. Teacher development played a big part in the life of ESADE Idiomas; the staff room was always buzzing with animated discussion about what was going on in the school and in the wider world of ELT, and there were frequent workshops during the year exploring all the new materials and methods, including workshops devoted to the approaches discussed above.

By 1985, ESADE Idiomas had become established as one of the best language schools in Barcelona, with a reputation for its fresh approach to ELT. Students wanting to enroll did an interview with a senior teacher in order to be placed in one of eight General English courses, each one consisting of approximately 100 hours of classroom time, spread out over three or five months. At the end of the interview, having been assigned to a level, students were given a rather vague description of what level of proficiency they could expect to reach at the end of the course, and briefed on the ESADE method. “We focus on oral communication, on talking *in* the language, not *about* it. We don’t study grammar here”, they were told. “We talk about things, we do things, we practice using English for real communicative purposes, and our aim is to help you feel confident when you have to use English in your jobs”.

On any given weekday, walking around the building, dropping in on any of the thirty classes that were going on in the evening, you’d encounter a tremendous range of materials and methods being used by a disparate collection of teachers, all of them informally dressed and all of them obviously enjoying their jobs. Despite the promotional spiel, there would be some grammar teaching going on, but there would be a great deal more student talk than teacher talk. Students would be doing role plays, giving presentations, preparing debates, working through business cases, doing information-gap activities, solving problems, making videos, discussing the news. There would be lots of moving around the classroom; here and there a bit of TPR, everybody lying on the floor; a CLL session, chairs in a circle;

a teacher using Cuisenaire rods; the sound of jazz chants; a student explaining Pamplona's San Fermin. There would be a generally animated atmosphere throughout the building, a buzz, a collective energy. And while there was no "ESADE method", the students thought there was: they thought they were learning how to communicate in English, and they assumed that whatever their teacher was doing was part of the method.

This, then, was CLT in action. It was eclectic, experimental, energised. It was unorthodox, unscripted, unpredictable. It was spontaneous, invigorating, fun. It seemed, at least to those of us teaching in Europe at the time, that CLT had for once and forever swept away grammar-based, PPP-driven ELT and tossed it where it belonged: in the dustbin of history. But we were wrong, for along came the modern coursebook, which slowly but surely took back the lost ground and returned ELT to the dark days of yore.

7.5 The Emergence of the Modern Coursebook

Headway Intermediate (Sears and Sears, !986) has many claims to be regarded as the first example of a modern coursebook, although many other books, such as *Kernel Lessons Intermediate* (O'Neil, et al, 1971); *Strategies* (Abbs and Freebairn, 1977); and *The Cambridge English Course* (Swan and Walters, 1984) pre-date it and have some claims to the title. Nevertheless, it was the *Headway* series that did more than any other to set the scene; it was immediately more popular than its two rivals, and it remains a worldwide best seller today. The first edition was published in 1986. The authors, Liz and John Soars, were at the time teachers at the International House (IH) school in London, and, as they readily admit, they were heavily influenced by the views of IH's founders, John and Rita Haycraft, who never flinched in the face of all the "communicative commotion" going on around them. In 1986, the IH "Method" was exactly the same as it had been ten years earlier, and, remarkably, it has remains largely unchanged to the present day.

In the 1980s, teaching in IH was carefully prescribed, all teachers being expected to closely follow "the IH way". In each classroom session, teachers started by describing a situation, using short written and spoken texts and visual materials, and led up to the "Marker Sentence" (e.g., *Jill has just arrived*) which encapsulated the grammar focus of the lesson. They used "concept questions" to check understanding (e.g., *Where's Jill? She's here, now, isn't she? Has she been here long? No, she hasn't. Was she here ten minutes ago? No. she wasn't*), and then they explained the grammar point, on the blackboard as it was back then, and perhaps with a handout,

too, consisting of "grammar in a box". The next step was controlled practice, with oral drills and fill-in-the-blanks written exercises, after which the teacher led students through various types of exercises and controlled practice of the four skills. Finally (often with only a few minutes remaining), some less structured speaking practice was attempted. In 1986, IH teachers used a variety of materials, some in-house, some commercial and some they made themselves, and what Liz and John Soars did when they wrote *Headway Intermediate* was to bring all these materials together into a single source: the coursebook. Importantly, as we will now see, they preserved the same situational approach and the same PPP process.

Each Unit in *Headway Intermediate* (Soars and Soars, 1986) was divided into Language Input (Structure, Use and Vocabulary) and Skills Development. In Unit 1, the language input consisted of:

Structure: Present Simple and Present Continuous

Use: Present Simple: to express habits and states; Present continuous: to express activity in progress; and to express temporary activities.

Vocabulary*: go –ing* versus *play* (*go skiing* versus *playing tennis*) with games and sports.

Activities to develop the four skills included:

Reading: using prior knowledge; skimming

Speaking: Role play; finding your way around a strange town

Listening: listening for specific information

Writing: Form filling.

An examination of the book reveals the following characteristics:

1. It provides a complete syllabus for a classroom-based English course. It includes cassettes with recorded materials, a Teachers Book and a Workbook.
2. The synthetic, grammar-based syllabus is delivered via a Situational approach to ELT and is implemented through a PPP process.
3. The topics treated in the texts are mostly concerned with the daily lives of middle-class European families; controversy is avoided and there is no mention of "PARSNIP"s (Politics, Alcohol, Religion, Sex, Narcotics, Isms and Pork).

4. Teachers are expected to work their way through the book in the prescribed order, from beginning to end.
5. The teacher leads all the activities.
6. Classroom time is mostly devoted to explicit teaching and learning about the language. Far less time is devoted to students engaging in communicative tasks, where they talk together about non-language matters.

Headway Intermediate was an instant success, a publishing phenomenon. Everybody (well, nearly everybody: see below) loved it. It was so practical, so useful, so easy to use; like the washing machine in the 1950s, it would soon be difficult to imagine life without it. It was a ready-made English course with a crystal clear, transparent syllabus providing direction and continuity; teachers and students knew what they had done, what they were doing, and what they were going to do next. Each unit in the book had the same format, which gave a sense of coherence and consistency. The ready-made activities and lessons drastically cut down class preparation time and made life a lot easier, especially for new and inexperienced teachers, who could find lots of help in the Teacher's book. In brief, it was by far the cheapest, easiest, most convenient way of organizing a classroom-based English language course ever devised.

For the rest of the 1980s and into the 1990s, the sales of *Headway Intermediate* climbed inexorably as those in charge of ELT centers realised its economic worth and pedagogical convenience, while more and more teachers surrendered to its labor-saving charms. It took other publishers a while to catch on to the coursebook concept, but catch on they eventually did: *Reward Pre-Intermediate* was published in 1994, followed by *English File* in 1996 and *Cutting Edge* in 1998. All of these were *Headway* look-alikes, using the same approach, the same grammar-based syllabus, the same PPP methodology, the same safe topics, the same type of grammar boxes, the same sort of fill-in-the-gaps and multiple-choice exercises, the same accompanying listening materials, Teacher's Book, and Workbook. By the turn of the century, the major ELT publishers offered a range of coursebooks, from Elementary to Advanced, and commitment to the principles of CLT largely disappeared.

For the last twenty years, coursebooks have evolved, taking advantage of developments in modern technology to offer an ever-wider range of text-types and media support. The *New Headway Intermediate,* Fifth Edition (Soars, Soars and Hancock, 2019), is written by a team of over thirty, and includes:

- New Headway Intermediate Student's Book and iTutor pack
- New Headway Video Intermediate Student's Book
- New Headway Intermediate Class Audio CD
- New Headway Intermediate Audiobook CD
- New Headway Intermediate Student's Site
- New Headway Intermediate Workbook with iChecker
- New Headway Intermediate Teacher's Book

But underneath the new bells and whistles, it is the same old thing, relying on exactly the same approach and method as *Kernel Lessons*, 1971. The contents of each Unit of the *New Headway Intermediate* are organized in the same way as the original: Language Input, and Skills Development. A synthetic, grammar-based syllabus, using a Situational approach to ELT, is still implemented through PPP. The topics of the texts have broadened somewhat, but controversy is still avoided, and there remains no mention of PARSNIPs. The teachers lead all the activities and most classroom time is devoted to explicit teaching and learning.

Other coursebooks have now joined the "Big Four", more recent ones claiming to use different types of syllabus – lexical, or notional-functional, for example. Nevertheless, they all present language items one by one in a linear sequence, and they all give learners the same job, namely to build up, or 'synthesize', the knowledge incrementally. Thus, coursebook writers take the target language as the object of instruction, and they divide it up into bits of one kind or another – words, collocations, grammar rules, sentence patterns, notions and functions, for example – which are presented and practiced in a sequence. The criteria for sequencing can be things like valency, criticality, frequency, or saliency, but the most common criterion is 'level of difficulty', which, as always, is intuitively defined by the writers themselves. Invariably, pride of place is given to explicit teaching and learning. The syllabus is delivered by the teacher, who works through written and spoken texts on a particular theme (e.g., the home, city life, holidays, parenting, eating out), highlights particular grammar points and vocabulary with the help of grammar boxes, vocabulary lists, diagrams, pictures, and so on, and then leads students through a series of activities aimed at practicing the language and "the four skills".

Let us return for a moment to the story of ESADE Idiomas. By 2001, the school was on its last legs; the energy, creativity, and enthusiasm had disappeared, and every teacher, without exception, was using a coursebook. Was the coursebook to blame for ESADE Idiomas' collapse? Yes and no.

Correlation is not causation, and one could very well argue that the coursebook was simply the outward manifestation of the underlying transformation of ESADE Idiomas from a school dedicated to teaching into a commercial business dedicated to profit. In the new environment, with its new vocabulary of placement incentives, follow-on schemes, drop-out avoidance measures, time management, customer satisfaction feedback loops, on-going teacher evaluation, can-do objectives, etc., etc., there was no place for the unruly approach to teaching that had flourished in the late 1970s and the 1980s.

7.6 A Critique of the Domination of Coursebook-based ELT

In a survey of current practice in ELT, Akbari (2008) suggested that, such was the domination of coursebooks ("textbooks" as he calls them), CLT was now "part of history" and that those who refer to the "post-method" era of ELT are mistaken.

> "It seems, then, that the concept of method has not been replaced by the concept of post method but rather by an era of textbook-defined practice. What the majority of teachers teach and how they teach (the things that are supposedly taken care of by methods) are now determined by textbooks" (p. 647).

Despite continuing lip-service being paid to it, the basic principle of CLT – classroom time should be mostly devoted to students communicating in the target language – has been abandoned. In most ELT programs around the world today, teachers talk most of the time, and they use global General English coursebooks like *Headway* to lead students through a sequence of lessons based on the Situational approach, where the general theme of each unit provides the context for the presentation and practice of discrete items of the English language.

The most popular ELT educators, including Nicky Hockley, Adrian Underhill, Sandy Millin, Katherine Bilsborough, Silvana Richardson, Peter Medgyes, Rachel Roberts, Alan Maley, Jack Richards, David Nunan, Marisa Constantinides and Vicki Hollet, continue to enthusiastically endorse coursebooks, as do Jeremy Harmer (2016), Penny Ur (2012) and Jim Scrivener (2011), the authors of best-selling books on how to teach English as an L2.

Despite this solid wall of support, not everybody is quite so convinced that coursebook-driven ELT is a "good thing". Below we provide brief summaries of the views of some dissenters.

7.6.1. The Gómez-Rodríguez (2010) Report

The article reports on a series of five coursebooks, which remain anonymous. In 2010, they were all marketed by their publishers as being suitable for teaching EFL in Colombia, and they were all, according to Gömez-Rodríguez, regarded as major resources to help students develop communicative competence. The aim of the report was to evaluate the extent to which the coursebooks include authentic language activities set in meaningful communicative situations to enhance communicative competence. Gómez-Rodriguez evaluates the coursebooks according to the extent to which they use three different types of language practice: mechanical, meaningful, and communicative. This criterion was proposed by Paulston (1971) and taken up by Richards (2005). Gómez-Rodríguez reasons that if coursebooks are designed to develop language competence, they must contain a "well-balanced" number of activities pertaining to the three types of language practice first proposed by Paulston. Three representative units from each of the five coursebooks EFL textbooks were examined.

The results show that only 20.66% of all the activities in the five coursebooks can be considered communicative practice. The commonest formats are repetition, formal grammar study, drilling activities, and matching exercises, all used for mechanical practice. Meaningful practice formats include answering questions, matching activities, filling in the blanks, and multiple-choice questions. As Gómez-Rodríguez comments, none of these is entirely authentic. As for authentically communicative activities, these are rarely practiced. The "limited set" includes dialogues, writing letters and e-mails, answering open-ended questions, and exchanging ideas and opinions through small talk. The paucity of real communicative activities in the coursebooks is the main finding, but the author adds the following important points: the answers in many of the activities are very predictable; the exercises are obvious and unchallenging; the language practice activities are too short to provide enough practice; the units follow a repetitive pattern, becoming monotonous; and the thematic sequence and story line of some units lack coherent development.

The report concludes that, given the dominant emphasis on mechanical and meaningful practice, none of the coursebooks can be expected to help students attain communicative competence. Too much time is given to

grammar-oriented activities and too little to authentic tasks. Unless more communicative practice is included, students will not receive the opportunities they need "to negotiate meaning and to produce spontaneous language on a genuinely communicative basis" (Gómez-Rodríguez, 2010, p. 33).

7.6.2 Thornbury's "Grammar McNuggets" View

Thornbury (2006, 2010, 2014) has frequently voiced the view that coursebooks are purveyors of "grammar McNuggets", a term he coined as part of a talk at the IATEFL Conference in Dublin in the year 2000. Grammar McNuggets refer to the carefully selected formal items of language which make up the flimsy backbone of coursebooks. Like their famous namesakes, McDonalds deep-fried chicken nuggets, grammar McNuggets have had "the skin, gristle and bones" of language removed, leaving the grammar deprived of any real relationship with other aspects of language, such as vocabulary and phonology. Citing Biber (2014), Thornbury adds that the pedagogic grammar found in coursebooks does not accurately reflect authentic language use as revealed from studies in the field of corpus linguistics, and that, furthermore, while the books ignore many frequent linguistic constructions, they give extensive treatment to other more obscure ones. For example, the grammar McNuggets of "the future-in-the-past", "the past perfect continuous", and "the conditionals, first, second and third", are all firm favorites in coursebooks, re-worked at successive levels from Intermediate to Advanced, despite being "features of the language that have little or no linguistic, let alone psychological, reality" (Thornbury, 2014, p. 2).

Thornbury sees grammar McNuggets as the main ingredient of coursebooks. These artificially packaged, bite-sized chunks of grammar are at the heart of the syllabus and they pervade each unit of the coursebook, where they are served up, accompanied by side dishes of phonology and lexis and topped with a fine sprinkling of carefully controlled, sanitized social interchange. Thornbury goes on to say that his term refers to "not just the discrete-item nature of the grammar syllabus, but the way that this is exploited, particularly by publishers, for the purposes of the global marketing of ELT" (Thornbury, 2010, p.5). Given the enormous economic power of the publishers and related stakeholders, Thornbury is pessimistic about the chances of overthrowing the hold of coursebooks on ELT, but he encourages teachers to ameliorate their stultifying effects by simply closing the book as often as possible, turning instead to communicative activities prompted by the interests of the students in the room. Without the injection

of such supplementary protein and vitamins, Thornbury warns, coursebook-driven ELT leads not only to low motivation among students and to generally poor results, but also to de-skilled teachers, whose poor working conditions and low pay are partly explained by their employer-enforced reliance on coursebooks. In a comment on Brown's (2015) post on coursebooks, Thornbury gives a number of suggestions to teachers about where they can find alternative syllabuses, texts and class activities. He concludes: "Syllabus. Texts. Activities. Is there anything else a coursebook offers? Comfort. Complacency. Conformity. Professional atrophy. Institutional malaise. Student boredom. Slow death by mcnuggets".

7.6.3 The Tomlinson and Masuraha (2013) review

Tomlinson and Masuraha have published a series of reviews of coursebooks over the past thirty years; the 2013 review which we summarize here is the most recent. Tomlinson has a long and distinguished career as a teacher, an expert in materials for ELT, and is a long-standing critic of General English coursebooks. He has been engaged in a good-natured but doggedly determined argument with publishers for more than 30 years, fighting against the disregard for the findings of second language acquisition research, the increasingly bloated form of coursebooks, their increasing reliance on explicit grammar teaching, and the scarcity of intelligent adult content, cognitive challenges, and "real tasks". Years ago, halfway through a class, an exasperated Tomlinson told all his students to stand up, and, on the count of three, throw their coursebooks out the window. In their 2013 article, Tomlinson and Masuraja begin by citing a British Council survey (2008), which showed that 65% of the teachers polled frequently used a coursebook and that only 6% never did. They also cite a survey that was conducted by Tomlinson (2010) among the teachers who attended the IATEFL, MICELT, and University of Hue conferences, which revealed that 92% of the respondents used a coursebook regularly, and that 78% of them expressed negative opinions about them.

The 2013 review examines six of the most popular UK coursebook series, namely *New Headway, The Big Picture, Speakout, Outcomes, Global*, and *English Unlimited.* Units 5 and 10 of each book are examined in the light of 15 criteria, including these: provide extensive exposure to English in use; engage learners effectively and cognitively; provide an achievable challenge; provide opportunities to use the language for communication; and cater for the needs of all the learners. Each criterion is scored on a scale of 1 to 3 according to whether the coursebook is 1, unlikely to be effective; 2, likely to be partially effective; or 3, likely to be effective in facilitating

long-term acquisition. The average overall score was 1.4, and the authors conclude that none of the books is likely to be effective in facilitating long-term acquisition. They describe the texts as "short", "contrived", "inauthentic", "mundane", "decontextualised", "unappealing", "dull" and "uninteresting". They describe the activities as "unchallenging", "unimaginative", "unstimulating", "mechanical" and "superficial".

The coursebooks are judged to focus far more on explicit teaching of language than on engagement, and to consist largely of the presentation and practice of the language in such a way that "only shallow processing is required", and "only short-term memory is engaged". There are, say the authors, very few opportunities for cognitive engagement; most of the time, use of the coursebooks entails teachers talking about the language, and students are asked to read or listen to short, artificial, unchallenging texts devised to illustrate language points. When they are not being told about this or that aspect of the language, they are being led through a succession of "frequently mechanical linguistic decoding and encoding activities" which are unlikely to have any permanent effects on interlanguage development.

In their concluding remarks, the authors say that the explanation for these unsatisfactory results is simple: publishers' interests prevailed. Publishers seek profit; they are risk averse and see no interest in making any radical reforms to a model that has endured well for over thirty years. They choose to give priority to face validity and to the illusory achievement of "instant progress", rather than to helping learners make progress towards the achievement of communicative competence.

7.6.4 Copley's (2018) Analysis

Developing Tomlinson and Masuraha's (2013) point about publishers' motives, Copley (2018) argues that coursebooks exemplify the commodification of education. In 1956, a UK Ministry of Education report first used the word "commodity" to describe the "valuable export" that English teaching had become (Pennycock, 1994, cited in Copley, 2018, p. 60), since when, the ELT industry has expanded into a global commercial concern with an estimated annual turnover of close to $200 billion (Pearson, 2018). Copley argues that coursebooks spearhead a relentless drive towards packaging and marketing ELT in the interests of profit, to the detriment of educational principles. A critical examination of coursebooks highlights important questions about the ELT industry, its strategic role in the political economy of neoliberal globalization, and the practices that it promotes. He

cites Cox and Nilsen's (2014) nicely observed remark that the legitimacy of any dominant ideology is largely dependent on its being seen ahistorically as "just the way things are", a position that conveniently ignores the time when things were different, or the possibility that they will ever radically change. This seems to us to describe the current state of ELT very well indeed.

One of Copley's main concerns is the way that publishers seek to package and present language as a standardized commodity within an ideological framework that portrays the world "in terms of aspirational, atomized, competitive individuals pursuing their self-realization through a "free" market" (p. 43). He goes to some lengths to show that earlier ELT materials embodied quite different values and a different view of ELT's role, and then shows how the ideological positioning of ELT coursebooks has evolved into today's support for the political economy of neoliberalism. Copley argues that current coursebooks promote and reinforce the perceived link between English and the notions of individual success and consumerism; not only do they *reflect* a neoliberal zeitgeist, but they are also "strategically positioned within it". Looking back to earlier epochs of ELT, including the 1970s, Copley describes a time when ELT practitioners increasingly recognized that language should be seen not as a simple set of structure-habits, but rather as a tool for communication. This new approach was, Copley argues, grounded in a rejection of behaviorist pedagogy and informed by a broader view of education, a view often informed by those working in the area of community education, many of whom were political and social activists. Today's coursebooks, in contrast, pay no more than lip service to the discourse of inclusivity, or to the welfare of those at the bottom of the economic pyramid, who make up most of the world's population. "Rather, they focus on the new urban middle class, with the disposal income to buy into "brand English" (Copley, 2018, p. 58).

Copley ends by noting than many teachers today feel uncomfortable with the cultural and political messages found in coursebooks, making considerable efforts to ameliorate the content. While this is to be welcomed, what is really needed in Copley's opinion – an opinion we wholeheartedly share – is a more effective challenge to the current hegemony of the coursebook and the wider practices of the ELT industry that support it.

7.6.5 Jordan and Gray's (2019) ELTJ article

Jordan and Gray (2019) make a number of criticisms of global coursebooks produced by publishers such as Pearson, National Geographic, Oxford

University Press, Cambridge University Press, Delta, and Macmillan, which are used to deliver "General English courses" aimed at secondary and tertiary education students and adults all over the world. Coursebooks of this type are produced in series following the CEFR proficiency scale, going from *Beginner* (A1) to *Advanced* (C2) (see Chapter 11). They are divided into units, and each unit has a common format (described above).

The article briefly reviews findings of SLA, in order to highlight the weaknesses of a synthetic syllabus and to draw out four false assumptions made by coursebook authors:

1. Explicit knowledge of the L2 forms the basis for language learning.
2. Declarative knowledge about the L2 converts to procedural knowledge.
3. SLA is a process of mastering, one by one, an accumulated collection of "items".
4. Learners learn what they are taught when they are taught it.

As we have already seen in Section 1, these assumptions are all refuted by robust, reliable evidence from SLA research findings.

The next section of the article looks at ELT as a commercial industry. In line with the views of those discussed above, it describes how English is packaged through coursebooks, thus greatly facilitating the marketing and delivery of classroom-based English courses by transforming them into easily recognized, tangible products. Coursebook-dominated ELT programs offer "order, security, purpose, direction, a beginning and an end, and a clear way through" (Jordan & Gray, 2020, p.442). Most importantly, perhaps, they also "save a great deal of time"; and in most of today's teaching environments, time is money. The authors then give the example of Pearson's "Global Scale of English" (GSE) framework to illustrate how international publishing companies are expanding their products and developing the ELT market. The GSE has four strands, which together make up "an overall English learning ecosystem":

1. The Scale itself, aligned to the CEFR.
2. Learning Objectives – over 2,000 "can-do" statements across "the four skills".
3. Coursebooks for each level.
4. Assessments – placement, formative/ summative, and high stakes proficiency exams aligned to the GSE.

Copley (2018), echoing the work of Fulcher (2010, 2015), characterizes Pearson's GSE as the "reification of language learning", where the abstract concepts of its "granular descriptors" are treated as real entities, which are then assumed to represent language learning and communicative competence. The Pearson GSE attempts to flatten out, granularize and turn into measurable entities all the difficult-to-define-and-measure processes involved in language learning, and all the myriad kinds of knowledge and skills which make up communicative competence. Jordan & Gray remind readers that learning an L2 is gradual, incremental, dynamic, uneven, exhibiting plateaus, U-shaped or zigzag trajectories, and having no fixed end point, and argue that, this being the case, it seems reasonable to suggest that the motivation for Pearson's GSE is not to respect research findings and maximize the efficacy of ELT practices, but rather to facilitate packaging and marketing in pursuit of maximum sales and profits. The commodification of language learning permeates coursebook series, which see learners moving unidimensionally along a line from beginner to advanced user, "making steady, linear progress along a list of can-do statements laid out in an easy-to-difficult sequence, leading to communicative competence" (Jordan & Gray, 2019, p. 43). We should add that such a smooth, steady, unidimensional trajectory towards communicative competence is a fiction (see Section 1).

Attempting to reply to those who defend coursebook-driven ELT, Jordan & Gray suggest that the main lines of defense can be put into five categories: 1) coursebooks should not be treated as one homogenous product; they vary widely in format and content; 2) coursebooks are designed to be adapted, modified and supplemented by teachers according to different local considerations; 3) language items are re-cycled, and thus students get several bites at the same cherry; 4) the synthetic syllabus gives order, continuity and direction to a language course; and 5) coursebooks are convenient and time-saving. Regarding the claimed variety of coursebooks, Jordan and Gray are careful to delineate 'General English coursebooks' in such a way as to exclude locally produced coursebooks, ESP books, EAP books, exam preparation books, and any coursebook which does not fit the description given. This description fits not only the coursebooks discussed in the article, but also the books reviewed by Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013), those referred to by Thornbury (2006, 2010, 2014) and Copley (2018), and all those that have dominated ELT practice for the past thirty years.

As to the second point, it is simply not the case that coursebooks are designed to be adapted, modified and supplemented, as any examination of

them makes clear. Nevertheless, it is certainly the case that many teachers do not stick strictly to the coursebook from page one to the end, and then the question is the extent to which they modify coursebooks. If they do so to a great extent, then the coursebook serves not as a syllabus but as a materials bank, thus losing its raison d'etre. If, on the other hand, teachers only slightly modify and supplement the coursebook, then it drives the course, and the argument holds. (Jordan & Gray are at pains to point out that the real contribution of teachers consists of *ameliorating* coursebooks in myriad different ways, including many suggested by Tomlinson and Thornbury.)

Moving to the third issue, while re-cycling is a feature of coursebooks, it fails to address the underlying problem posed by coursebook-driven ELT, which is that it expects students to synthesize the declarative knowledge that they are taught about bits and pieces of language into procedural knowledge of how to use the L2 for communicative purposes. As to the final two objections, Jordan & Gray do not contest that coursebooks provide an orderly, convenient, time-saving method of organizing ELT; they limit themselves to the claim that this is inefficacious.

Summary

The enormous global demand for help in learning English has turned ELT into a commercial industry, and at its core is the use of coursebooks. While many accounts of the history of ELT see it as a chronological progression of methods or approaches, in fact, for the last sixty years, the Situational English approach, implemented through a grammar-based synthetic syllabus, has been by far the most influential. Its dominance was interrupted in the late 1970s by the emergence of CLT, which in its more radical versions, called for the synthetic syllabus and PPP methodology to be replaced by an analytic syllabus and a learner-centerd teaching approach which focused on providing students with opportunities to engage in meaningful communicative activities. CLT was displaced in the late 1980s by the modern coursebook, which implemented a synthetic, grammar-based syllabus very similar to those used in the 1960s. We are now in an era of coursebook-driven ELT, where what and how most teachers throughout the world do their jobs is determined by coursebooks.

Coursebooks represent the commodification of ELT. Grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, lexical chunks, discourse, the whole messy, chaotic stuff of language is re-constituted and neatly packaged into items, granules, bite-sized chunks, served up in sanitized short texts and summarized in a well-

sequenced procession of simplified lists and tables. Communicative competence itself, as Leung (2013) argues, is turned into "inert and decomposed knowledge", and language teaching is increasingly pre-packaged and delivered as if it were a standardized, marketable product. ELT becomes just another market transaction, in this case between teachers and learners. De-skilled teachers pass on a set of standardized, testable knowledge and skills to learners, who have been reconfigured as consumers. At the heart of this neoliberal version of education is the coursebook, which dominates a huge, profit-driven ELT industry. The publishers use multi-million-dollar marketing budgets to persuade stakeholders that coursebooks represent the best practical way to manage ELT, they deprive alternative approaches of oxygen, and they stunt the growth of innovation. A hydra of publishing companies, examination boards, educational institutions and teacher training outfits (to which we return in Section 3) together offer a unified set of well-packaged products, with the coursebook as the centerpiece. The coursebook rules, to the detriment of learners, teachers and good educational practice everywhere.

Discussion Questions

1. What is "PPP"? How does it work in classroom-based ELT?

2. How does the Situational English approach use PPP?

3. Can you give examples of "concept questions" in ELT? What is their function?

4. The chapter claims that CLT was a rebellion. A rebellion against what?

5. What are the main assumptions and criteria of CLT? Why is there so much disagreement about what CLT entails?

6. Do you consider yourself to be a communicative language teacher? Why / Why not?

7. How are General English coursebooks organized? Why are they organized the way they are?

8. What are the common criticisms of coursebook content made by Gómez-Rodríguez (2010) and Tomlinson and Masuraha (2013)?

9. What do Thornbury (2014), Copley (2018), and Jordan & Gray (2019) mean by "reification" and the "commodification of ELT"?

10. How do you respond to the arguments given in this chapter against coursebook-driven ELT?

Suggested Reading

Akbari, R. (2008). Postmethod Discourse and Practice. *TESOL Quarterly*, 42, 641–652.

Copley, K. (2018). Neoliberalism and ELT Coursebook Content. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, 15, 1, 43-62.

Hornby, A.S. (1950). The Situational Approach in Language Teaching (I). *ELT Journal*, 4, 4, 98–103.

Jacobs, G. M. & Farrell, S. C. (2003). Understanding and Implementing the CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) Paradigm. *RELC*, 34,1.

Jordan, G. & Gray, H. (2019) We need to talk about coursebooks. *English Language Teaching Journal,* 73, 4, 438–446.

CHAPTER 8

HOW ENGLISH COULD BE TAUGHT MUCH BETTER: TBLT

8.1 Introduction

We have argued that coursebooks lead to inefficacious English language teaching, and it behooves us to offer what we think is a better alternative, which we do now. Our alternative is Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT). We make a distinction between task-supported language teaching and task-based language teaching. Task-supported language teaching is the weak version of TBLT, where 'task' refers to an activity that provides communicative practice for language items which have been previously presented as part of a synthetic syllabus. We reserve the term task-based language teaching for strong versions where tasks *are* the syllabus, i.e., where tasks are considered "as both necessary and sufficient for learning" (Zhao, 2011, p. 46). The strong version of TBLT briefly summarized here is the original, described and discussed in detail in Long's (2015) *Second Language Acquisition and Task-Based Language Teaching.*

8.2 The psycholinguistic basis

We argue that TBLT must be based on an analytic syllabus consisting of a series of tasks, where classroom time is spent using the L2 communicatively to complete those tasks. Such an approach is in keeping with SLA research findings; it respects the internal learner syllabus discussed in Section 1, acknowledging that learners go through developmental sequences and U-shaped behaviour in their gradual approximation to target norms. As explained in Section 1, we see second language learning as a process of interlanguage development which relies mostly on implicit learning. Robust research findings from studies on interlanguage development point to a default mode for SLA that is fundamentally implicit, and to the need to

avoid declarative knowledge when designing L2 pedagogical procedures (Doughty 2003, p. 298).

However, we view adult L2 learners as partially “disabled” language learners (a term coined by Cutler, 2001). Why "disabled"? And why only "partially" so? Firstly, learners’ capacity to implicitly notice formal features of the L2 deteriorates with age (Long, 2003). Secondly, it is an unfortunate fact that adult learners suffer from so successfully learning their L1, since the success results in implicit input processing mechanisms being set for the L1; and the knock-on effect is that the entrenched L1 processing habits work against them, leading them to apply L1 habits to an L2 which has different parameters (see, e.g., Lukyanchenko, Idsardi, & Jiang, 2011). The combination of a deteriorated capacity for implicit learning, and the filtering of L2 input to L1-established attractors, leads to adult learners failing to acquire certain parts of the L2, which are referred to as its “fragile” features (a term coined by Goldin-Meadow, 1982, 2003). Fragile features are non-salient – they pass unnoticed – and they are identified as being one or more of infrequent, irregular, non-syllabic, string-internal, semantically empty, and communicatively redundant. However, the many exceptions to these generalizations lead us to suggest that fragile features in SLA are more likely to be accurately identified by their psycholinguistic qualities – frequency, regularity, semantic transparency, communicative redundancy, and perceptual saliency.

As a result of the difficulties that adult L2 learners face, there is an important role for explicit teaching. But, for the reasons discussed at length in Section 1, this does not warrant the use of explicit grammar and vocabulary teaching to first establish declarative knowledge of the L2. Evidence from psycholinguistic research (e.g., Long, 2015; N. Ellis, 2017) suggests that teachers instead should use explicit teaching to facilitate implicit learning, and we therefore argue that the principle aim of explicit teaching should be to help learners modify entrenched automatic L1 processing routines, so as to alter the way subsequent L2 input is processed implicitly. The teacher’s aim should be to help learners to consciously pay attention to a new form, or form–meaning connection, while they are engaged in a task, and to hold it in short-term memory long enough for it to be processed, rehearsed, and an initial representation stored in long-term memory. Nick Ellis (2017) calls this “re-setting the dial”: the new, better exemplar alters the way in which subsequent exemplars of the item in the input are handled by the default implicit learning process.

Thus, explicit teaching should take a constrained, albeit important role. It should not dominate; rather, it should encourage learners to notice linguistic features which might otherwise go undetected or unnoticed. Through timely feedback, teachers can help learners to "notice the gap," i.e., see mismatches between native input and their own output; they can provide the basis for utterances whose processing aids development of implicit knowledge of the same rules or items; and, most importantly, they can help learners to re-set the dial. Giving L2 teaching a psycholinguistic base does not imply that explicit grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary teaching should be ignored. Instead, it suggests that allowing learners to do most of the learning is likely to be more efficacious than trying to spoon-feed them. The grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, etc., that learners need must be present in the course materials, but not loom large, as they do in the pages of coursebooks, where grammar and vocabulary boxes abound. Rather, such linguistic information should be carefully crafted for the learners' needs and unobtrusively embedded in texts that are designed to help learners work things out for themselves. If we add to this the right help from teachers, including the right kind of explicit teaching, then our students can learn faster and better.

The psycholinguistic basis for TBLT may be stated succinctly as follows: implicit learning remains the dominant, default process of second language learning, suggesting a limited role for explicit teaching. However, adults' reduced powers of implicit learning suggests that facilitating intentional noticing of new forms and form–meaning connections may have significantly beneficial effects. Providing students with opportunities for intentional and explicit learning is likely to speed up acquisition, especially by "re-setting the dial", which affects how certain types of input are implicitly processed.

8.3 Task-based syllabus design: Overview

Any syllabus must offer an organizing "unit of analysis", course content, and a way of sequencing the content. In TBLT, task is the unit of analysis, the course content consists of Pedagogic Tasks (PTs), and the PTs are sequenced from simple to complex (defined cognitively, not linguistically). The steps involved in designing a TBLT syllabus are as follows:

- Step 1: Carry out a learner needs analysis
- Step 2: Identity target tasks
- Step 3: Classify target tasks into target task-types

- Step 4: Derive pedagogic tasks
- Step 5: Classify and sequence the pedagogic tasks

We will deal with each of these steps in detail below.

8.4 Learner needs analysis

A TBLT course begins with a needs analysis (NA). In the British Council's (2020) web site *Teaching English*, NA is said to involve "doing some kind of activity with a learner in order to find out what their learning needs are". Such a view of NA strikes us as wholly inadequate. In TBLT as we define it, NA begins by identifying "target tasks" for a particular group of students. These tasks specify the communicative uses to which that group of learners will put the L2 in the real world (called the "domain" of use). The NA consists of gathering information from a number of sources. We consult domain experts and 'insiders', the learners, and other stakeholders, using questionnaires and interviews. Once we have identified target tasks, we gather genuine samples of people performing the tasks, such as recorded speech samples (e.g., university economics lectures, IT conference presentations, medical consultancies), and written texts (e.g., menus and recipes, application forms, and equipment manuals). These samples are subjected to an analysis of target discourse to produce prototypical examples of the way the target tasks are handled successfully by NSs. Such examples are then used for the design of pedagogic tasks and their materials (see below).

This type of NA recognizes the limitations of simply asking students about their needs at the beginning of a pre-determined course of English. The needs of a university student, a doctor, a hotel receptionist, or an automobile mechanic, for example, differ greatly from one another, and, as we saw in Chapter 7, are simply not catered for in General English coursebooks, nor, as it turns out, in the majority of ESP and EAP coursebooks, which use a synthetic syllabus and follow the same pedagogic procedures. (For sample needs analyses, see Long, 2005.)

8.4.1 NA Part 1: Identifying target tasks

The most important sources of information for identifying target tasks are the domain experts and 'insiders'. Rather than just ask the learners themselves – who are sometimes pre-service students, and often have a partial view – we consult the professionals, tradespeople, human resource

managers, etc., who have the best understanding of what the learners need to do in and through English. If the course is being designed for hotel receptionists, for example, then we consult hotel managers, heads of Reception, head porters and those working in travel agencies who get feedback from hotel guests. The normal way to gather information is through questionnaires and follow-up interviews, and the domain experts can also be asked for examples of their authentic documents. The learners are consulted, of course, and if possible, so are other stakeholders, such as parents, customers, and clients, for example. Other useful sources of information in helping to identify target tasks are publications in the domain, and especially useful are Brown's (2009) *Foreign and SL needs analysis*, and Informational Technology Associates' (2020) *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, which gives task-based descriptions of 12,000 occupations.

As an example, below are some of the TTs reported in Kobayashi Hillman & Long's (2020) task-based needs analysis, carried out for a group of US Foreign Service Officers. Eight of the 52 work-related TTs identified for the officers were:

- Watch TV news reports and discussions
- Conduct site visits to factories, companies and small businesses
- Deliver a celebration speech at a formal anniversary event
- Conduct a visa interview
- Converse with police and prison officials about US citizen issues
- Interview a nominee for a cultural exchange program
- Order a product or service from a vendor
- Obtain directions or information from a receptionist or guard.

And here are nine of the 15 TTs identified for FSOs' semi-private life:

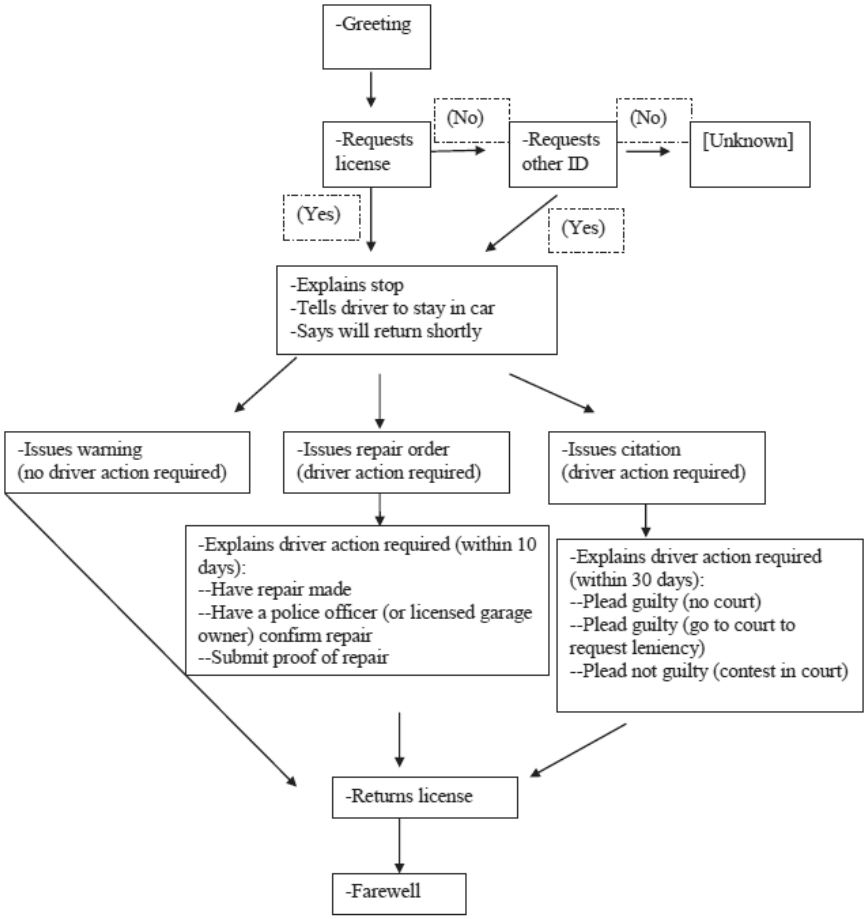
- Check in and out of a hotel
- Rent a car
- Make a reservation at a restaurant
- Order a meal in a restaurant
- Purchase a train ticket
- Request and follow street directions
- Give directions to taxi drivers
- Go shopping
- Visit a museum.

Taking needs analysis a step further, Gilabert (2005) reports on a case study of journalists in Catalonia, Spain. His needs analysis produced a list of target tasks, one of which was "Journalist interviews a source". This overall task was broken down as follows:

- Contacting the source
- Documenting the interview
  - gathering different information sources (previous interviews, documents, Internet items, etc.)
  - selecting materials for questions
  - producing a set of questions
- Arranging the interview
- Doing the interview
- Translating the transcript or interview for publication.

Finally, Long (2015: 279-286) reports on a project carried out at the University of Maryland in 2009 to design and implement an English course for recently arrived Latino and African migrant workers in USA. During the research phase, Long and his students discovered that the participants were often stopped by the police while driving to work, partly because their cars were old, and partly because of the way they looked. With the cooperation of four police departments, O'Connell (2014) obtained scripts of police stops, recorded various actual stops himself, and interviewed police officers who made traffic stops. From his data, O'Connell produced the schematic representation of a traffic stop shown in Figure 8.1.

Figure 8.1: Linear Schematic Structure of the Traffic Stop (O'Connell, 2014, p. 124.)



8.4.2 Target task-types

Once the main target tasks have been identified, they are classified into target task-types, with the aim of reducing time and effort and dealing with the needs in heterogeneous groups. Long et al (2019) give the example of making or changing a restaurant, theater, train, or plane reservation. These four target tasks can be reduced to the single target task-type: making or changing a reservation. Likewise filling out application forms for a visa, a credit card, a telephone line, a job, or a driver's license, are all examples of the target task-type, filling out an application form. In a more detailed example, Long et al (2019) discuss presenting an oral or written annual sales report. This could be one of the target tasks identified in a NA of a company employee in charge of the company's UK sales division, for example, yet it has much in common with giving a public talk, or writing a newspaper article on climate change, or reporting on empirical studies at scientific conferences, or writing academic journal articles, lectures, and term papers. For example, they will include narrative segments describing change over time, requiring reference to a series of past events (*first, next, then, before, afterwards, past and past perfect verb tenses*), cause and effect (*because, as a result, consequently, hence*), and some of the same lexis and collocations (*rose, fell, increased, decreased, a rapid/sharp/notable/encouraging/ alarming increase/ decline/improvement/drop/fall in X, reduced, doubled, halved, shrank, soared, plummeted*).

8.4.3 NA Part 2: Analyzing target discourse

The second part of a NA involves analysis of the language that the learners will need in order to carry out the identified target tasks, i.e., the genres, registers, lexis, collocations, functions and grammar that are involved in carrying out different tasks. We cannot expect applied linguists, or ELT materials writers, or language teachers to be familiar with the communication that goes on in the domains of use, e.g., academic disciplines, occupations, or vocational training fields of interest to their students. They have, after all, no expertise in such fields as law, architecture, medicine, nursing, cooking, or automobile mechanics, much less in the way language is used in social encounters within these domains. Studies have shown that even the language used in such every day social events as ordering a cup of coffee (Bartlett, 2005), or making a restaurant reservation (Granena, 2008), or buying a railway ticket (Long, 2015) is often wildly misrepresented in coursebook dialogues, which is why Part 2 of a NA is necessary.

In order to decide on the language to be used in any particular TBLT course, we distinguish between the more extensive, sociolinguistic discourse analysis (DA) and analyzing target discourse (ATD), the latter referring to when discourse is analyzed for the particular purpose of identifying categories of language use surrounding the successful performance of target tasks. The ATD compares samples of task performance to reveal their typical internal structure. This sometimes takes the form of a flow-chart showing a sequence of obligatory and optional sub-tasks or moves, as shown above (Kobayashi Hillman & Long, 2020; O'Connell, 2014), the aim being to identify the critical and/or most frequent linguistic correlates of those components. Formulaic expressions, lexical items, collocations, morphology, syntax and pragmatics are all of potential interest. Prototypical models of the target task are produced, and these, together with the internal structure of the target discourse and the list of linguistic correlates, make up the core ingredients for the materials writer when producing the pedagogic tasks.

An example of ATD is Kobayashi Hillman's (2017, 2018) study, which describes an analysis of discourse carried out on a target task identified for Foreign Service Officers at the US embassy in Tokyo and in consulates elsewhere in Japan, 'Delivering celebration speeches in a formal setting'. Kobayashi Hillman's raw material consisted of transcripts of recordings of six celebration speeches. Having identified patterns in sequences of sub-tasks, she then tagged important nouns, verb phrases, collocations, and politeness formulae and linked them to the sub-tasks. The results were used to produce prototypical celebration speeches, and from those, modified elaborated versions were used to make the materials for pedagogic tasks. The use of modified elaborated (not linguistically simplified) versions of the samples of written and spoken discourse models collected during the initial NA stage is a vital part of the overall NA. The pedagogic tasks which result from the analyses of these samples constitute the major source of new language for learners; given that they are based on genuine samples of the language NSs use to perform the target tasks, they are rich sources of relevant, new language.

8.5 Pedagogic Tasks

Target tasks are the end-state view of what the learner needs to be able to do, while pedagogic tasks (PTs) are seen from the learner's perspective. PTs are simpler versions of target tasks, and they gradually increase in complexity until they reach the full complexity level of the target task. The

normal way to simplify a target task is to break it down into sub-tasks. Long (2015) gives the example of the task-type 'Filling out an application form'. Depending on the starting proficiency of the students concerned, the first pedagogic task might concentrate on the first step, providing personal information – name, address, telephone numbers, email address, and so on – and, depending on the kinds of applications identified by the NA as relevant for the students in question, the second pedagogic task might focus on sections pertaining to educational qualifications and/or prior work experience. A third PT might then deal with how to list the applicant's training, skills, abilities, and experience relevant for a particular job. A fourth PT might involve provision of information about sources for personal, academic, or work references. The final PT is a simulation of the full target task, i.e., filing out the entire application form

8.5.1 Sequencing Pedagogic Tasks

Any syllabus rests on the sequencing of its material. Coursebooks use the quite rational criterion of "from easy to difficult" in order to inform the way that items of the language are presented and practiced. The problem is, of course, that, as we have seen in earlier chapters, learners do not – indeed cannot – learn the bits and pieces of language presented to them according to materials writers' intuitive ideas of the relative difficulty of these items, typically starting with declining the verb *to be*, and ending with convoluted manipulations of the so-called *third conditional*. If we reject this approach and replace it with a syllabus based on tasks, then the sequencing of pedagogical tasks from easy to difficult must be guided by better principles. As we have seen, pedagogic tasks simplify the target task, and sequence these tasks in terms of their complexity. But how is their complexity to be measured?

Robinson (2001a, 2001b, 2005, 2007, 2011) claims that pedagogic tasks should be sequenced in an order of increasing cognitive complexity, and suggests that cognitive complexity has three elements:

1. "Task Complexity" (cognitive factors affecting the cognitive challenge of the task)

2. "Task Condition" (interactive factors during task performance)

3. "Task Difficulty" (factors contributing to variations in the learners' ability to perform a task).

Let us deal with task complexity first. Robinson makes a distinction between two dimensions of task complexity. On one hand, *resource-directing variables* direct learner attention and effort towards how the L2 system works, thus driving interlanguage development, and leading to improvements in both the complexity and accuracy of performance. On the other hand, *resource-dispersing variables* direct learner attention and effort to performance and procedural demands, which drives fluency. How, then, does this inform the sequencing of pedagogic tasks?

Key resource-directing variables are the time and space framework of the task, the number of elements involved, and the amount of reasoning required. In a simple task, events take place in the here and now, in a mutually shared context, where few elements are involved, and where little reasoning is involved. In a complex task, events happen in the past or unreal time, at an unfamiliar location, where multiple elements and a lot of reasoning are involved. A complex task which involves learners describing and explaining the past actions of historical figures will demand that learners pay attention to producing complex syntax, for example, cognitive state verbs (*he thought that*…; *she assumed that* …), compared to simple tasks that require no such reasoning. Robinson claims that sequencing pedagogic tasks from simple to complex in terms of the resource-directing dimension leads to interlanguage development and L2 learning. He claims that making the mental effort needed to deal with more demanding cognitive distinctions in language directs learners' attentional and memory resources to aspects of the L2 system required to understand and convey them accurately. This facilitates "noticing" (see Chapter 6) and promotes the use of more complex syntax.

The resource-dispersing dimensions refer to the performative/procedural demands of the task. Key resource-dispersing variables are planning time, familiarity with the task, and the number of sub-tasks. The claim here is that increasing these demands requires increasingly fast access to and control over current interlanguage L2 resources. In a simple task, learners have plenty of planning time, good prior knowledge of the subject, and a single task to deal with. In a complex task, they have little or no planning time, little or no prior knowledge of the task, and multiple tasks.

To considerations of task complexity, Robinson (2011) adds the considerations of task conditions and task difficulty, which he calls "methodological influences", affecting a teachers' on-line decisions about repairs and groups. Task conditions refer to participation and participant (interactional) factors, such as whether the task is open or closed, convergent or divergent, and the

composition of the group. Task difficulty refers to the challenge a task presents to different types of learners, in terms of affective factors such as their motivation, anxiety and confidence, and ability factors such as their current level of L2 proficiency, their IQ, and their language aptitude, for example. Task difficulty can be raised or lowered by manipulating task conditions.

Table 8.1 below summarizes Robinson's framework. Note that task complexity is the key to sequencing pedagogic tasks in any given syllabus. In brief, Robinson argues that increasing complexity on the resource-directing dimensions of task demands leads to interlanguage development by promoting attention to increasingly complex form-function/concept mappings. On the other hand, increasing complexity on the resource-dispersing dimension helps learners gain faster access and better control of their current linguistic resources by promoting increasing automatic access to them.

Table 8.1. Robinson's triadic framework for sequencing Pedagogic Tasks

Task Complexity **Moves from simple to complex**	**Task Conditions** (Interaction) **Vary with each group**	**Task Difficulty** **Varies for each learner**
Resource-depleting (improves use of current interlanguage resources) • +/- planning • +/-prior knowledge • +/- single task	**Participation in task** • open / closed • convergent / divergent • one-way / two-way	**Affective factors** • motivation • anxiety • confidence
Resource-directing (develops interlanguage) • +/- here & now • +/- no. of elements • +/- reasoning demands	**Participants** • gender • familiarity • power / solidarity	**Ability** • aptitude • proficiency • intelligence

Robinson (2005) suggests the following sequencing of tasks:

- Stage 1: demands made in the resource-dispersing and resource-directing dimensions are low.
- Stage 2: demands made in the resource-dispersing dimension are high, emphasizing performance demands in such a way as to consolidate the learner's current L2 interlanguage system, thus helping the learner achieve increasingly automatic access to the current system in responding to task demands.
- Stage 3: resource-directing variables are raised, thus directing learners' attention and memory to aspects of the L2 system which are needed to encode more complex concepts and to express more complex functional operations. This promotes development of the interlanguage system (via more noticing of task relevant input, more uptake of forms, and more memory traces) and leads to more accurate and complex learner production.
- Stage 4: demands made in both dimensions are raised, in such a way that the task approximates to the final exit task: a simulation of the target task.

Robinson (2011) reports on a study of the relationship between task complexity, difficulty, and production, which provides some support for the Cognition Hypothesis. A meta-analysis by Malika & Sasayama (2017) of studies on the Cognitive Hypothesis indicated more robust support for resource-dispersing variables than for resource-directing variables.

An alternative to Robinson's Cognition Hypothesis is Skehan's Trade-off Hypothesis (Skehan, 1998, 2007, 2009). As already alluded to above, successful performance in task-based contexts is generally measured in terms of the complexity of the language used, the avoidance of error, leading to higher accuracy, and the ability to produce speech at normal rate and without interruption, resulting in greater fluency. Skehan argues that performance in each of these areas, complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF), requires attention and working memory involvement, and that learners have a "single pool" of limited attentional resources, such that committing attentional resources to one area will have a negative impact on others. Thus, there is a tension between form (complexity and accuracy), on the one hand, and fluency, on the other, "more demanding tasks consume more attentional resources simply for task transaction, with the result that

less attention in available for focus on form" (Skehan, 1998, p. 97). A limited attentional capacity forces the learner to prioritize one aspect of speech over another when performing complex tasks, and if the learner prioritizes meaning, focusing on the communicative aim of the task, then less attention is available for focus on language. Moreover, within attention to form, attempting to use more challenging (complex) language will negatively affect accuracy. As a result, tasks can be so designed as to result in gains in accuracy or complexity, but not both.

Skehan's Trade-off Hypothesis contradicts Robinson's Cognition Hypothesis, which claims that learners have 'multiple pools' of attention and that both accuracy and complexity can be improved by having learners perform more cognitively demanding tasks. Skehan (2011) adds a more theoretical dimension to his argument by using Levelt's (1989) model of speaking to offer "a theoretically motivated and empirically grounded account of CAF in second language performance" (Skehan, 2011, p. 512). He also reports on three studies which provide some empirical support for his view.

We conclude for the present that while, in principle, gradually increased task complexity offers a rational basis for sequencing PTs, research findings have been mixed and that the search for reliable dimensions of task complexity goes on. Among the problems facing the identification of reliable dimensions are that researchers use different pedagogic tasks, different operational definitions of complexity, and different outcome measures in their studies, and that it has been difficult to attribute the claimed complexity of a task to manipulations of task features. Despite these difficulties, sequencing pedagogic tasks from simple to complex remains a guiding principle in designing the TBLT syllabus. More specifically, the basic principles for designing and sequencing PTs (all of which are based on the empirical evidence reviewed in Section 1) are:

1. Simplify the task, not the language.
2. Use modified elaborated (not linguistically simplified) versions of samples of written and spoken discourse collected during the NA.
3. Build schema where necessary.
4. Sequence input-based PTs before production-based PTs.
5. Use parts of the target task before attempting the whole thing.
6. Use foreigner-talk adjustments (redundancy, input elaboration, slow pace, intentional pausing, repetition, etc.) initially.
7. Gradually remove the interactional crutches.

Thus, the initial pedagogic tasks in any given sequence are simpler (how simple depends on students' current abilities), becoming progressively harder until they reach the full complexity of the target task that motivated their inclusion. The final task in a sequence is the full target task, or a simulation thereof, and serves as the exit task for the module.

One example of the sequencing of pedagogical tasks is given in Malicka et. al.'s (2017) study of hotel receptionists. The NA identified 'making recommendations for guests' as a target task, and from that, a sequence of pedagogic tasks was designed. In the simple task, the receptionist is familiar with the area and with the types of restaurants available, and there are few options to choose from (only those found in the leaflets available at the hotel). In the complex task, there are multiple options; the receptionist does not know the area well, the options are open, and the receptionist has not been to the restaurant they recommend.

Another example is the series of PTs designed for airline flight attendants, based on the target task 'serving food and beverages' reported by Long (2005). In the first PT, the trainee flight attendants see 'the real thing': they watch video clips of real flight attendants serving food and beverages to passengers during flights. In PT2, trainees hear 100+ utterances and identify corresponding picture between two choices (*Would you like the fish or the lasagna? Would you like tea or coffee? Would you like a newspaper, a pillow, something to drink, some ice with your drink, some water?* etc.). In the third PT, trainees hear 100+ utterances and identify corresponding pictures among multiple possibilities[1]. In the fourth PT, trainees see pictures of items and offer them to a passenger accordingly, first with models, then without. In PT5, trainees listen to and observe complete exchanges between flight attendants and passengers involving multiple items, and this leads to a role play in PT6, where the trainees take the flight attendant's turns in exchanges. Next, in PT7, trainees watch video clips of flight attendant – passenger exchanges, with some items unavailable (*I'm sorry. We're out of X. Would you like Y, instead? I can offer you Y, instead*.), and in PT8, the trainees take the flight attendant's turns in these, more complex, exchanges.

[1] Note that the students' focus will be recognizing lexical items that will tell them which is the correct picture. 'Would you like' X? will be learned incidentally from the massive input (200+ models, so far). Adults can and do learn incidentally, from spoken, not just written, input. (See, e.g., this recent statistical meta-analysis on incidental vocabulary learning: de Vos, et al, 2018).

The final exit task is a full simulation with verbal presentation of choices and identification of passenger selections.

A final example is the following sequence of pedagogic tasks, designed to help students gain proficiency in the identified TT "Following Street Directions" identified by Chaudron et. al., (2005):

1. Listen to numerous samples of target discourse surrounding target-task completion, i.e., genuine examples of NSs giving directions.
2. Listen to fragments of elaborated directions while tracing them on a very simple, 2-D map. Within this task, the fragments increase in complexity.
3. Listen to ever more complex fragments while tracing them on a more complex, 3-D map, periodically answering questions like *Where are you now?*
4. In collaborative pairs, read scripted (first pair) and follow (second pair, collaboratively) directions on a simple map.
5. Using real maps, listen to elaborated target discourse samples and follow routes already marked on the map with colored lines.
6. Given a starting point, follow an unknown route, with periodic comprehension checks like *Where are you now?* along the way, and at the end.
7. Do the same as in PT 6, but in one "go," i.e., without breaks or comprehension checks along the way, but labeling the building/space/etc. on the maps at the end of each route as evidence of having successfully reached the destinations.
8. Virtual reality map task. Using video from the target location and audio of the target discourse, complete a simulation of the target task. (Use as the exit test if not in the target community).

8.6 Task-based materials

In Long's version of TBLT, task-based materials are not linguistically controlled in the way that coursebook materials are. Coursebooks authors customarily restrict texts to "appropriate" structures and lexis, as determined by "proficiency scales", such as the CEFR, or the Pearson scale (see Chapter 10), with the result that the linguistically graded spoken and written texts often come across as stilted and inauthentic, providing impoverished input to the learners. In the design of task-based materials, it is tasks that are simplified, not the linguistic input, and elaborated texts ensure that the realism of the speech samples collected during stage two of the NA is preserved. In the case of lexical items or collocations that are

appropriate for a task, but unknown to students, these are all retained in the texts (rather than removed as they would be in a coursebook) and they are made comprehensible by building redundancy into the text, e.g., by paraphrasing or the addition of synonyms. Below is an example.

First, here is a genuine short text about a traffic accident:

*The only **witness** just **caught a glimpse** of the driver as he **fled the scene**, so she could only provide the police with a **rough description**.*

If this were part of a text to be included in a lower intermediate coursebook, the words in bold type would be considered too difficult for such a level, and so they would be removed. This simplified version would replace the original:

A woman was the only person who saw the accident. She saw the driver for only a moment. The driver did not stop. He immediately drove away fast. The woman could only tell the police a little about him.

While no doubt more comprehensible, the simplified text gives students little opportunity to learn new vocabulary. Rather than remove the difficult vocabulary, we create an elaborated version of the text, where the words and collocations in bold are explained.

*The only person who saw the accident, the only **witness**, was a woman. She only **caught a glimpse** of the driver, just saw him for a moment, because he **fled the scene**, driving away fast without stopping, so she could only provide the police with **a rough description** of him, not an accurate one.*

The final step is to deal with the complex sentence structure that sometimes results from adding clauses which help comprehension. In the modified elaborated version, the second sentence in the elaborated version has been divided into two.

*The only person who saw the accident, the only **witness**, was a woman. She only **caught a glimpse** of the driver, just saw him for a moment, because he **fled the scene**, driving away fast without stopping. As a result, she could only provide the police with **a rough description** of him, not an accurate one.*

Empirical studies (e.g., Oh, 2001; Yano, Long, & Ross, 1994; see Long 2015, pp 255 – 259 for a full account) have confirmed that elaboration achieves roughly comparable improvement in comprehension to simplification,

even though the texts are longer and contain more complex input. To reiterate, elaboration does its work without removing from the input the very items to which students must be exposed if they are to progress - while achieving nearly as great an improvement in overall comprehension as simplification, elaboration retains almost all unknown material, thus providing new language for acquisition.

8.7 Methodology and pedagogy

As discussed in Chapter 7, debates over optimal approaches, methods, and techniques for language teaching demonstrate the problematic nature of the three terms, and arguments about 'approaches' versus 'methods' are particularly vexed. Recognizing the problems, Long (2009) makes a distinction between methodological principles (MPs) and pedagogic procedures (PPs). MPs are, precisely, principles, i.e., universally desirable instructional design features, motivated by theory and research findings in SLA, educational psychology, philosophy of education and general educational curriculum design. In contrast, PPs comprise the potentially infinite range of options for instantiating the MPs at the classroom level, where the best option will depend on considerations of the different ages, aptitudes, cognitive abilities, proficiency, and literacy level of the students concerned. In choosing among the PP options, we recognize that the classroom teacher is the expert on local conditions. Given the lack of research on their relative effectiveness, choice among PPs is still mostly a matter of teacher judgment.

8.7.1 Methodological Principles

MP1: Use Task, Not Text, as the Unit of Analysis

In TBLT, lessons focus on the completion of tasks, not the study of a decontextualized linguistic structure or a list of vocabulary items, or a text. The syllabus consists of tasks, and when task is the unit of analysis, the question of the sequencing of course material is of prime importance. Coursebooks use a poorly defined, intuition-based notion of linguistic difficulty to inform their sequencing of structures from easy to difficult. In contrast, pedagogic tasks are sequenced in terms of task complexity, not putative linguistic difficulty, as described above.

MP2: Promote Learning by Doing

The principle here, discussed at length above, is that practical hands-on experience with real-world tasks makes abstract concepts more understandable and facilitates the integration and retrieval of knowledge (see Chapter 5). The hands-on, problem-solving quality of most pedagogic tasks combine language learning and action, thus arousing learners' interest and holding their attention.

MP3: Elaborate Input

Both genuine and simplified texts are inappropriate for learners. Genuine (popularly known as "authentic") texts are usually too complex for all but very advanced learners, while simplified texts of the sort used in coursebooks are unnatural and unrealistic, with little or none of the usual implicitness, open-endedness, and intertextuality that characterizes authentic discourse. Furthermore, the gains that simplified texts offer in terms of comprehensibility come at the cost of sacrificing much of their value for language learning: learners cannot be expected to acquire items that have been removed from the input.

The alternative to genuine and simplified texts is elaborated input, where genuine discourse is modified to make meaning comprehensible. Modifications include partial and complete, exact and semantic, self- and other-repetition; confirmation checks, comprehension checks, and clarification requests; rearrangement of utterances so that order of events and order of mention are iconic; paraphrase; lexical switch; decomposition; a preference for intonation and yes/no questions over WH questions; use of redundancy of various kinds; and many other scaffolding devices. Elaborated input is a feature of the materials used in pedagogic tasks, but also occurs naturally in teacher speech and in learner-learner discourse, as long as participants are focused on task completion and, therefore, on communication.

MP4: Provide Rich Input

Rich input is not just a matter of linguistic complexity, but of quality, quantity, variety, genuineness, and relevance. Linguistically simplified input tends to be impoverished input. Controlling grammar, vocabulary and sentence length means providing learners with a limited source of target-language upon which they rely to learn the code. Coursebooks work and re-work small samples of the language, unrealistically expecting students to learn the L2 on the basis of access to such limited data. Rich input mean task-specific and domain-specific target-language use of the sort rarely

found in coursebooks. As we have seen, studies show large discrepancies between the models presented in coursebooks and genuine NS use on real tasks. So students need lots of elaborated texts derived from a wide range of target tasks and discourse domains, and texts motivated by tasks that a needs analysis has shown to be relevant.

MP5: Encourage Inductive ("Chunk") Learning

Achieving anything more than basic communicative abilities in English requires mastery of formulaic language of all kinds, including lexical chunks and particularly collocations. Studies reveal statistically significant correlations between the number of formulaic sequences learners produced during story-retelling tasks and oral proficiency ratings (Boers et al. 2006; Stengers, et. al., 2010). The vexed question of how best to facilitate learning of these key parts of English remains unanswered. While children learn collocations implicitly, adult learners, even near-native L2 speakers who have lived in the target language environment for decades, continue to make errors with collocations (Boers, et. al., 2006).

We get some idea of the enormity of the collocations problem by looking at research on word learning. Nation (2007) calculates that learners require knowledge of between 6,000 and 7000 word families for adequate comprehension of speech and 9,000 for reading. Intentional vocabulary learning has been shown to be more effective than incidental learning in the short term, but, the authors conclude that there is simply not enough time to treat so many words that way in class. The conclusion is that massive amounts of extensive reading outside class, but scaffolded by teachers, is the best solution. As for lexical chunks, there are very large numbers of such items, probably hundreds of thousands of them. Swan (2006) calculates that "memorizing 10 lexical chunks a day, a learner would take nearly 30 years to achieve a good command of 10,000 of them". So how does one select which chunks to teach explicitly, and how does one teach them?

The authors of the *Outcomes* series of coursebooks, Dellar and Walkley, suggest in their (2005) book *Teaching Lexically* that the syllabus, the materials used and the teacher should all draw attention to collocations and make students aware of them by giving students exposure to carefully composed written and spoken texts where the collocations are embedded. Once introduced, drills, concept questions, input flood, bottom-up comprehension questions, and staged repetition will, the authors assert, allow the explicit knowledge taught to become fully proceduralized (i.e., automatically accessible). No answer is provided to the obvious question of

how many collocations can be given such exhaustive treatment (trying to teach thousands is out of the question), and, furthermore, as indicated above, there are good reasons to question the assumption that such instruction will have the desired result.

A review by Boers and Lindstromberg (2012) of research since 2004 suggests that drawing learners' attention to formulaic strings does not necessarily lead to memory traces usable in subsequent receptive L2 use, and in any case, there are far too many to deal with in that way. Furthermore, giving students opportunities to use concordance software to interrogate corpora and identify chunks has so far failed to produce measurable advantages, and activities to get learners to concentrate on collocations on their own have had poor results. Also, grouping collocations thematically increases the learning load (decreasing transfer to long term memory) and so does presentation of groups which share synonymous collocates, such as make and do. And exposure to input floods where collocations are frequently repeated has poor results. Finally, the popular matching activity found in *Outcomes* and other coursebooks, where lists of verbs in one column are to be matched with nouns in another, produce some erroneous groupings that, even when corrective feedback is available, can be expected to leave unhelpful memory traces.

We conclude that it remains unclear how best to realize chunk learning in practice. Long (2015) offers two promising pedagogic procedures, with the caveat that they there is as yet insufficient research to support them fully. The first is to add an extensive reading and listening program (as in Webb, Newton, & Chang 2013) to the main course. Students read while listening to lively recordings of the texts made especially for language learning by a native speaker with excellent diction and articulation. The recording should draw students' attention by adding salience to collocations known to be useful to the particular students concerned, in light of the needs analysis findings. There is emerging evidence that multi-modal processing is more effective than processing input in one mode (e.g., Malone, 2018; Rodgers & Webb, 2017).

The second makes use of students' exposure to realistic samples of target language use (the input components of PTs) to help them to incorporate, store, and retrieve collocations within that input as prepackaged chunks This is done by a pedagogic procedure which encourages what Long terms "overt plagiarism." The teacher reads aloud or plays a recording of an appropriate TL sample text two or three times. After that, the teacher reads or plays a recording of the text bit by bit in progressively larger segments as many

times as necessary until students can repeat them verbatim. This goes on until teacher and students can recite most of the TL sample from memory. Only then are students shown the written text, and teacher and students read it aloud together two or three times, thereby associating spoken with written form. Provided the models are lively, the activity is neither as dreary or time-consuming as it may sound, and it becomes easier with new TL samples with practice. Students are then encouraged to "plagiarize," i.e., to re-use as large chunks as they choose when talking or writing about a new topic.

MP6: Focus on Form

As we have seen in Chapter 5, a focus on meaning alone is insufficient to achieve advanced communicative competence; comprehensible L2 input is necessary, but not sufficient. Some periodic attention to formal aspects of the L2 language is required. And as Long has argued for more than thirty years, this is best done during an otherwise meaning-focused lesson, when, using a variety of pedagogic procedures, learners' attention is briefly shifted to linguistic code features, in context, to induce "noticing" (Schmidt, 1990, and elsewhere). These brief, punctual interventions are sparked by students experiencing problems as they engage in communicative tasks. Such interventions, which occur in a sequence determined by the students' own internal syllabuses, current processing capacity, and learnability constraints, are called focus on form (Doughty & Williams, 1998b; Long & Robinson, 1998).

Focus on form techniques range from less to more explicit and include (a) input flood, where texts are saturated with L2 models; (b) input elaboration, as described in MP2; (c) input enhancement, where learner attention is drawn to the target through visual highlighting or auditory stress; (d) corrective feedback on error, such as recasting; and (e) input processing, where learners are given practice in using L2 rather than L1 cues (Doughty & Williams, 1998a). Given that these techniques should be employed only when a learner need arises, teachers will need training and relevant materials at hand to successfully use them. Recasting is one of the most obvious and potentially useful pedagogical procedure for teachers to gain practice in, and more generally, once an L2 problem has been diagnosed for a learner, then pedagogical procedures may be decided upon and materials developed for use when the need next arises (see e.g., Doughty & Varela, 1998).

MP7: Provide Negative Feedback

As indicated above, the value of negative feedback lies in drawing learner attention to some problematic aspect of their interlanguage, and this implies that the timing of the feedback is critical. Where corrective recasts are concerned, the information must be provided within some as-yet-little-understood cognitive processing window (for instance, but not necessarily, in working memory), such that learners can make some sort of comparison between the information provided in the feedback and their own preceding utterance (Doughty, 2003). Recasts are proposed as an ideal (but not the only) form of negative feedback in TBLT for some classes of grammatical and lexical problems, at least, because they are not intrusive on the processing of meaning during task accomplishment and do not depend upon metalinguistic discussion of a language problem. Recasts are pervasive in child-adult discourse and in L2 classroom discourse. The psycholinguistic mechanism by which they are believed to work depends upon the juxtaposition of the learner utterance and the recast. It is claimed that learners have sufficient working memory to hold both utterances, thereby enabling the comparison to take place.

MP8: Respect Developmental Processes and "Learner Syllabuses"

As we saw in Chapters 1 and 2, there is strong evidence for various kinds of developmental sequences and stages in interlanguage development. The sequences are impervious to instruction, in the sense that teaching cannot alter stage order or make learners skip stages altogether; thus, teachability is constrained by learnability (Pienemann, 1984). The idea that what you teach is what they learn, and when you teach it is when they learn it, is not just simplistic, but wrong. On the other hand, there is, as we also saw in Chapter 3, a great deal of evidence to support the claim that instruction can accelerate passage through the developmental sequences and generally improve accuracy, rate of learning, and level of ultimate attainment. The question, then, is how to harmonize instruction with the learner's internal syllabus, with so-called "natural" developmental processes.

TBLT does this in a variety of ways, first and foremost by employing an analytic, not synthetic, syllabus, thereby avoiding futile attempts to impose an external linguistic syllabus on learners (e.g., the third conditional because it is the third Wednesday in November), and instead, providing input that is at least roughly tuned to learners' current processing capacity by virtue of having been negotiated by them during collaborative work on pedagogic tasks. The learner syllabus is also respected through use of (by definition,

reactive) focus on form and a preference for recasts where the results are comparable with more overt forms of "error correction", as their use implies learner direction to at least some classroom communication. In other words, not only in that course content is determined by student needs, but also in this psycholinguistic sense, TBLT is radically learner-centered. Universal developmental processes and the learner's internal syllabus are clearly and consciously allowed to guide and mediate instruction.

MP9: Promote Co-Operative/Collaborative Learning

As was discussed in detail in Section 1, Research findings in both child first language acquisition and child and adult SLA show that collaborative, "scaffolded" discourse across utterances and speakers plays an important facilitative role in language development. Furthermore, research in general education indicates the positive effects of co-operative, collaborative group work on attainment (Johnson & Johnson, 1999), and research on cooperative learning and small group work in second language learning provides similar findings (Long & Porter, 1985).

MP10: Individualize Instruction

Research in general education and in foreign language teaching has long shown the benefits of tailoring instruction to cater to individual differences in goals, interests, motivation, cognitive style, and learning strategies. In TBLT, individualization occurs in the selection of syllabus content, in respect for individual internal syllabuses, and in modifications of the pace at which and manner in which instruction is delivered, as suggested by diagnostic information gathered on individual learner differences.

8.7.2 Pedagogical Procedures

The MPs are realized at the local classroom level by pedagogic procedures (PPs). Selection of appropriate PPs is best left to the teacher, who is usually the expert on local circumstances There are no universal or "best" PPs. Rather, choices should vary systematically to cater to individual learner differences (age, proficiency, language aptitude, etc.), type of linguistic feature (salient or non-salient, marked or unmarked, fragile or robust, etc.), and so on. For example, regarding MP7, provide negative feedback, a teacher might decide that persistent errors with inversion, e.g., **Mary asked why did John leave so early,* need to receive quite explicit feedback, for example, a prompt or a pedagogical rule of thumb because the error is non-salient and does not obstruct communication. However, for a more perceptually salient adverb-placement error, e.g., **They watch every day the*

ten o'clock news, the teacher may decide that a recast or a clarification request will suffice.

At the heart of TBLT is classroom interaction (assuming an NA has shown listening and speaking skills to be relevant for the learners concerned) and precisely how the teacher facilitates this interaction will depend on making use of appropriate PTs. But, in any case, the interaction that goes on in a task-based course will be very different from that normally found in grammar-based PPP lessons. Given that the primary focus is on communication, working on tasks means that new information must move in both directions between teacher and student(s), and among students, for the task to be completed successfully. The teacher will have to make use of a wide range of PTs in order to ensure that turns at talk and conversational roles are evenly distributed, and that students collaborate, initiate exchanges, respond to initiations by others, and give feedback, e.g., to confirm or check their understanding of what the teacher or another student has said, or to request clarification.

8.8 Effectiveness of coursebooks and evaluating TBLT programs

How can we evaluate the relative efficacy of a TBLT program and that of, for example, a program where one of the coursebooks discussed in Chapter 7 is used to deliver a synthetic/focus on forms/PPP type of syllabus? Ideally, evaluation would involve using a pretest–post-test experimental design involving a TBLT group, a coursebook group, one or more control groups, and random assignment of teachers and students to groups. Unfortunately, such an approach is rarely feasible for practical, logistical reasons. The design would, in any case, make every effort to control for six classes of variables, any one of which can threaten the internal validity of an evaluation. These are usually referred to as history, maturation, testing, instrumentation, selection, and mortality, and are discussed in Long's (2015) detailed treatment of program evaluation.

Our view is that the particular element(s) of interest or, where possible, the whole program type should be evaluated under experimental conditions first, because such conditions are most likely to isolate a causal relationship between pedagogic procedures and outcomes. In classroom settings, the effectiveness of a treatment may be masked by any number of confounding variables (Long, 2015); so we cannot be entirely sure that the observed results were due to, for instance, focus on form, not forms, and not to the

fact that the teachers in the more successful group(s) were better trained, more enthusiastic, and so on, or their students more intelligent, more motivated, or of superior language aptitude. However, if a causal relationship between, for example, focus on form and gains in accuracy and complexity, has been demonstrated in laboratory studies under controlled conditions, and if the same statistically significant advantages are obtained in real classrooms for the same pedagogic procedure (or if, in a program evaluation, the same meaningful, large, beneficial, clear, valued effects are observed), then the researcher/evaluator can begin to make more confident claims about efficacy. Thus, we suggest that the evaluation process should begin in the lab, focusing on low inference, high frequency behaviors, and then move to the classroom so as to compare the outcomes of programs that have employed TBLT and some alternative approach.

Long (2015) concludes that in studies comparing grammar-based /PPP programs and TBLT programs, the TBLT programs were as efficacious as the grammar-based/PPP programs on forms-focused or discrete outcome measures, but significantly more efficacious on communicative outcome measures. Most recently, Bryfonski & McKay (2017) used meta-analytic techniques to investigate the effectiveness of TBLT programs on L2 learning. Findings based on a sample of 52 studies revealed an overall positive and strong effect (d = 0.93) for TBLT implementation on a variety of learning outcomes, including parts of the Middle-East and East Asia, where sceptics claim it could never work for "cultural" reasons, and also in primary and secondary foreign language settings, where sceptics dismissed TBLT as unworkable. Additionally, results also showed positive stakeholder perceptions towards TBLT programs.

Summary

In TBLT, task is the unit of analysis, the course content consists of pedagogic tasks, and the syllabus is organized by sequencing the pedagogic tasks from simple to complex. TBLT programs start with a needs analysis aimed at identifying target tasks, and, in contrast to coursebook-driven programs, the derived pedagogic tasks entail *students doing things in the L2*, rather than *teachers talking about the L2*. TBLT treats the language holistically, respects SLA research findings, and emphasises implicit learning. As noted by Long, et. al. (2019), hundreds of studies in the published literature make task-based language learning and teaching the most extensively researched approach to language teaching the field has ever seen. Results so far are extremely encouraging and give strong support

to our claim that TBLT is a much better way of teaching English than coursebook-driven ELT.

Discussion questions

1. What is the difference between a strong and a weak version of TBLT?

2. What is the unit of analysis in TBLT, and how is course content sequenced? How does this differ from coursebook-driven ELT programs?

3. How does the Needs Analysis identify Target Tasks?

4. The second part of the needs analysis involves analyzing target discourse. How is this done?

5. What is the significance of Robinson's distinction between resource-directing and resources-depleting variables? How does Robinson use this distinction to sequence PTs? What problems are associated with this principled way of sequencing PTs?

6. In designing materials, what is the role of modified elaborated texts?

7. What are the implications of MP6: Focus on Form?

8. What are some pedagogical procedures that teachers can use to give feedback to students?

9. How does task-based, criterion-referenced performance testing differ from discrete item, norm-referenced testing?

10. Why is it difficult to evaluate different types of ELT programs? What is your provisional evaluation of TBLT?

Suggested readings

Long, M. H. (2015) *Second Language Acquisition and Task-Based Language Teaching.* Oxford, Wiley.

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CHAPTER 9

IMMERSION APPROACHES TO ELT: CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LANGUAGE LEARNING AND ENGLISH AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

9.1 Introduction

Traditional foreign language (FL) classes often fail to graduate school-age children and university students with sufficient command of the language concerned for them to be able to communicate. In many parts of the world, that is particularly true of EFL instruction, but most of what follows could apply just as well to the teaching of French, Spanish, German, Arabic, Mandarin, etc., in other words, to FL learning and teaching in general. The reason EFL is so often the target of criticism is probably because it is the most widely taught FL around the world, largely due to the extent to which English has come to facilitate access to higher education, travel, employment and the mass media over the years, and in many settings serves as a lingua franca. Given how most FLs are traditionally taught (see Chapter 7), consumers are much more likely to be aware of their or their children's shortcomings when what they require is not *knowledge about*, but *communicative abilities in*, a FL.

In many countries, dissatisfaction with the end-product of traditional courses has led to new programs intended to remedy the situation. For school-age children, one of the best known is content-and-language-integrated learning, or CLIL. For university students, similar programs are referred to by a variety of names, with English medium instruction (EMI) the most common. In both cases, inspired by the success of French immersion programs in Canada, the idea is that students will learn more English, French, German, Mandarin, etc., if FL classes are replaced by content classes (math, history, architecture, computer science, etc.) taught through the medium of the L2. After receiving most of their content classes taught through French throughout their education, evaluations have found

that many English-speaking children in Canada graduate from high school with strong functional abilities in the language. Perhaps children in Belgium, Germany or Spain can learn more English if, say, math or history is taught through English at secondary school for three or four hours a week, or computer science or even the entire science and technology curriculum through English at a university in Italy, the Netherlands or Saudi Arabia.

Before turning to the evidence, or the lack thereof, of the effectiveness of CLIL, it is instructive to compare this type of immersion with a variety of other kinds of language and content programs that have been tried in North America. The comparisons suggest some important factors that might be expected to affect outcomes of CLIL and EMI.

9.2 Some content-based options for language learning and teaching

A number of approaches to the education of children and adults through the medium of a second or a foreign language have been adopted in North America during the past 50 years, and sometimes in Europe and elsewhere (Cenoz, Genesee, & Gorter, 2014; Collier & Thomas, 2007; Genesee et al, 2006; Harley, Allen, Cummins, & Swain, 1990; Liquanti, 1999; Johnson & Swain, 1997; Met, 1998). While each comes with many variants, and the borders between some are porous, it is instructive to recall their typical characteristics, and which ones tend to be associated with success, before considering the likely and observed outcomes of CLIL and EMI, popular in many parts of Europe and spreading rapidly from pre-kindergarten to university there, in East Asia, the Middle East, and elsewhere (Cenoz, Genesee, & Gorter, 2013; Coyle, 2008; Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010; Dalton-Puffer, 2011; Munoz & Naves, 2007; Perez-Canado, 2012).

9.2.1 Immersion

One of the most effective approaches, immersion, was first introduced as an educational option in Montreal in the 1970s. Early cohorts consisted mostly of middle-class Anglophone children who received their elementary and/or secondary curriculum through French (Cummins, 2009; Genesee, 1995; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Lyster, 2007; Swain & Lapkin, 1991). In subsequent years, student populations diversified socio-economically, and French immersion programs developed many variants (early/middle/late, complete/partial, one/two immersion languages, etc.). Research has shown that the best students graduate from high school with their native language,

English, intact, and French listening and reading skills statistically comparable to those of monolingual French-Canadian age peers, although their speaking and writing are often still marked by a range of grammatical errors (Swain, 1991). Meanwhile, the students' mastery of subjects taught through French is as good as that of Anglophone children taught exclusively in English throughout their school years. French immersion in Canada, in other words, is a case of *additive bilingualism* with no adverse effects on content mastery – two for the price of one.

Not surprisingly, parental support for immersion has always been strong in Canada, motivated in part by the positive results of the early programs and in part because bilingualism in English and French is required for someone to be eligible for many government jobs. Placement in immersion pograms is voluntary, and usually much sought-after. Programs inspired by the Canadian example are now to be found in many countries around the world (see, e.g., Johnson & Swain, 1997).

It is important to remember that the advanced French abilities achieved by so many immersion students are the product of a decade or more during which at least 50% of classroom exposure and use was in the L2 – far more than the three or four hours a week experienced by students in some CLIL programs. Also, the regular content curriculum in Canadian immersion programs is mostly delivered by trained subject-matter teachers who are native speakers or highly proficient non-native speakers of French, to groups of students with a homogeneous (initially, little or no) command of the L2. The homogeneity means that teachers can adjust their speech to make lessons understandable for potentially all students in a class, simultaneously providing them with usable input for learning French. In CLIL classrooms, on the other hand, content teachers' own command of the FL in some countries may be relatively weak, and students' FL proficiency even weaker. Moreover, students' language proficiency within the same classroom (and in some urban locations especially, their L1 background and exposure to the L2 outside school) often varies considerably, meaning that teachers' speech adjustments may make lesson content comprehensible to some, but not to others, potentially jeopardizing curriculum content, and resulting in input that is also usable for L2 development by some, but not others. Finally, most students begin Canadian immersion programs while still young enough to be able to learn much of the L2 incidentally, the same way young children learn their L1, i.e., without intention, while doing something else – in this case, while focused on the subject matter being communicated though French. Even in cases where CLIL begins early, the few hours typically available per week mean that students tend still to be

involved in relatively basic L2 development when in secondary school, by which time the capacity for incidental language learning, while still in play, is weaker.

9.2.2 Bilingual education

Bilingual education (BE) programs, in which most school subjects are initially taught through the children's L1, e.g., through Spanish for recently arrived immigrant Latino children with limited or no English, vary considerably in such fundamentals as starting age, the number of subjects and proportion of the school day taught in the L1, and – of special significance – the duration of L1-medium instruction. Two basic types of BE are found in the USA: so-called transitional (early-exit) and maintenance (late-exit) BE programs. The former, lasting from one to, at most, three years, is intended to move students into English-only classrooms as soon as possible, with little interest in preserving children's command of their native language. The latter, supposedly lasting for six years, but in reality for far less in most cases, is aimed at preserving the L1 while gradually equipping students with enough English for study in mainstream English-medium classrooms.

Cummins' 'developmental interdependence' and 'threshold' hypotheses (Cummins, 1979, 1981, 2008) predict that such children need to establish sufficient L1 competence before L2 exposure begins if they are to avoid cognitive disadvantages and reap the benefits of bilingualism. Specifically, whereas context-embedded, basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) may be acquired in from one to three years, development of the typically context-reduced cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) buttressing the more cognitively demanding, abstract thought processes essential for educational success takes far longer, perhaps four to seven years. And, indeed, such is the case. Research findings show that when literacy and basic schooling are completed in two or three years in the native language, whether in the country of origin or in the new environment, children entering school in the USA between eight and twelve typically require five to seven years to achieve adequate English-language skills for successful progress (including scores on English reading measures), compared with seven to ten years to reach grade level if submerged in English from the get-go (Collier, 1989).

Cummins work would, therefore, predict greater success for late-exit BE programs, and again, that is broadly what the research has shown to be the case (August et al, 2008; Collier, 1989; Krashen & Biber, 1988; Ramirez,

Yuen, Ramey, & Pasta, 1991). Nevertheless, due to a combination of political opposition, sometimes fueled by anti-immigrant prejudice, and the steady defunding of public education in the USA over the past two decades, maintenance BE – and some would argue, BE of any kind in the USA – has had little chance to show what it can do. Results have been positive, despite the constraints, but BE has been badly damaged, along with the educational life-chances of countless children, by the rise of a model favored by political and social conservatives: so-called 'structured English immersion'.

9.2.3 Structured English Immersion

Depending on language policy in the State concerned and other local circumstances, structured English immersion (SEI; see, e.g., Haver, 2002) is a varying mix of full-time explicit, grammar-based ESL instruction, communicative ESL, and sheltered subject-matter teaching (see below) in an English-only linguistic environment, with no attempt to preserve the recently arrived immigrant children's native language. After anything from one to three years (in Arizona, often just one year), the children are mainstreamed as soon as they are deemed capable of "participating meaningfully" in regular classes surrounded by native English-speaking American students. The use of 'immersion' in SEI is misleading. French immersion in Canada describes programs designed to add a new (official) language for students who already speak the majority language natively. SEI is designed to promote the majority language at the expense of children's minority native language. The subject matter in immersion is regular curricular content (math, science, social studies, etc.); the subject matter in SEI is English. Immersion students graduate bilingual; SEI students graduate with varying levels of proficiency in English, usually accompanied by a deteriorating command of their L1. SEI, like submersion (see below), is a case of *subtractive bilingualism*. (For scathing critiques of SEI in Arizona, see chapters in Valdez & Faltis, 2012, especially Krashen, McSwan, & Rolstad, 2012, and Long & Adamson, 2012.)

Structured English immersion has been advocated by political opponents of bilingual education since the days of the Reagan White House, often on the basis of methodologically flawed analyses of research findings (see, e.g., Baker, 1998; Baker & DeKanter, 1981, 1983; Rossell & Baker, 1996). Excellent critiques of those publications, with re-analyses of the findings, including statistical meta-analyses (e.g., Willig, 1985, 1987) have generally shown advantages for bilingual programs (Francis, Leseaux, & August, 2006; Genesee et al, 2006; Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass, 2005; Slavin & Cheung, 2005). While the number of studies is small, the same positive

results for BE are found by research comparing monolingual and BE programs in Europe (Reljić, Ferring, & Martin, 2015). The facts notwithstanding ("fake news", presumably), the extremely conservative US Supreme Court – the judges on which are intensely political appointments –declared in 2009 in Horne v. Flores that SEI is more effective than bilingual education. Following well-funded voter initiatives restricting use of bilingual education in Arizona, California and Massachusetts, SEI is now mandatory in all three, and its use is expanding elsewhere – an attractive, cheaper option for the political right in a period of increasing anti-immigrant bias and shrinking resources for public education.

9.2.4. Submersion

Submersion, or "sink or swim," makes no use of students' L1 or any attempt to preserve it. Students are assigned to mainstream English-only classes right away. Little or no ESL instruction is provided – a few hours of "pull-out" ESL is the best students can hope for – with limited-English-speaking students simply thrown in at the deep end. Their task is challenging: to learn new subject matter through a language many do not speak very well or, in some cases, speak at all. It should be little wonder that many of them sink.

9.2.5 Content-based language teaching

Content-based language teaching (CBLT) is sometimes used as an umbrella term to refer to most of the eight program types described here (Snow, Met, & Genesee, 1989). However, it also has a narrower, more specific meaning. In what has come to be considered "traditional" CBLT (Crandall, 1993; Brinton, Wesche, & Snow, 2003; Mohan, 1986), ESL is taught using texts from science, social studies, etc., sometimes modified for English language learners, sometimes not, in place of the typically content-free lessons found in commercial ESL textbooks. Few CBLT instructors are trained subject matter teachers. In many cases, the only difference between CBLT and traditional ESL teaching is the use of the subject matter texts. Occasionally, however, e.g., the Vancouver School Board Project (Early, Mohan, & Hooper, 1989; Mohan, 1986), a sophisticated classroom methodology has been developed, with 'activity', akin to 'pedagogic task' in Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT; Long, 2015), the unit of analysis in lessons that should be of interest for many types of programs beyond CBLT itself. TBLT using subject-matter content is another option (Long & Adamson, 2012).

9.2.6 Dual, or two-way, immersion

In dual, or two-way, immersion programs (Lindholm-Leary, 2001), a type of bilingual education, classes typically comprise a mix of one third to two thirds English-speaking, and one third to two thirds minority-language-speaking speaking, children. Elementary school students initially experience anything from 50% - 90% of the school day in their native (minority) language, the gradually increasing remainder of the time in English (Christian, 1994). They are often taught by two certified teachers for half the day each, one a native speaker of English, the other of the minority language. By grade 4, 50% of instruction is conducted in each language. The goal is fluency in both, but given the lack of methodologically rigorous evaluation studies to date, how often that is achieved is open to question. An obvious problem is the difficulty inherent in attempting to make input in either language appropriate for both groups of students at a time, and therefore usable for L1 or L2 development, given that each group of children may start schooling as beginners in the other group's language. Whether students are surrounded by the L1 or L2 outside the classroom and at home can greatly influence outcomes. There were over 300 two-way immersion programs in the USA in 2005 (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2006a), and numbers are rising as BE programs are defunded or even outlawed, and two-way programs seen as a cheaper way of (at least appearing to be) catering to the needs of both L1 and L2 English-speaking children.

9.2.7 Sheltered subject-matter teaching

Sheltered subject-matter teaching (SST) (Dupuy, 2000; Echevarria & Graves,1998; Faltis, 1993; Krashen, 1991; Short, Fidelman, & Louguit, 2012) involves content-based courses, e.g., in math or social studies, in which the language of instruction, the L2 (usually English), is modified and a variety of procedures (schema-building, slower speech rate, visual support, etc.) employed to make it comprehensible for students, all of whom are non-native speakers. An advantage is that the same lessons are viable, in principle, for children from a variety of L1 backgrounds. SST is usually found in secondary schools, when students have already achieved "intermediate" L2 proficiency, or at university, e.g., in an introduction to psychology course at the University of Ottowa taught by the regular psychology instructors in either English or French modified for students whose mother tongue is not the language of instruction (Hauptman, Wesche, & Ready, 2006). The aims, both typically met, and both paralleling those of immersion education, are to develop proficiency in the L2 while

students achieve an equivalent command of grade-level or college curricular content to that of students taking the same course(s) in their L1.

9.2.8 Foreign language immersion

Foreign language (FL) immersion programs (e.g., Chinese in the USA or Indonesian in Australia) vary as to whether use of the FL is partial or total. In total FL immersion, a typical arrangement is for everything, including initial literacy, to be taught through the FL in grades K - 2, with English use (in the USA) increasing to between 20% and 50% in grades 3 - 6. In partial FL immersion, FL and English use is roughly 50% each from the outset, with literacy in either language first or in both languages simultaneously (Lenker & Rhodes, 2007). Some FL immersion programs continue through middle school and into high school. There were about 300 such programs in the USA in 2005 (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2006b). A major problem is the frequent lack of articulation between schools and grade levels, resulting in elementary immersion graduates being unable to continue with the same FL at middle school, or middle school graduates at high school. The exceptions are cases like Hawai'i and Louisiana, where heritage languages (Hawaiian and French) are involved, with FL immersion programs in those languages offered at all grade levels in some schools. In these exceptional cases, there is only one language in the community. Where there are many community languages, choosing which one to offer throughout the middle and high school has been a significant hurdle.

FL immersion programs have existed in the USA for over 40 years. They differ from the original Canadian immersion programs chiefly in that the L2 through which content courses are taught is a true FL in the USA, not a second language, whereas French is one of two official languages in Canada and, unlike the situation in the USA, fairly widely available outside the classroom in many areas, especially Quebec, and/or via mass media. In US FL immersion programs, some or all subject matter teaching, mostly at the elementary and middle-school level, is delivered through Spanish, French, Hawaiian, German, Japanese, Mandarin, Arabic, and a small number of native-American and other languages, and with the exception of heritage languages, the FL is new for all children, not the native language of some of them, as in two-way immersion programs. That said, some FL programs convert to two-way immersion programs when a school district needs to deal with an influx of children whose home language is the FL concerned – an example of the overlap sometimes found in these eight ostensibly distinct models. Finding sufficient qualified subject-matter teachers with native, or at least adequate, command of the FL can also prove a problem, especially

in the case of less commonly taught languages, like Arabic or Mandarin, sometimes resulting in a retreat from FL immersion to more traditional FL course offerings.

9.2.9 Features that lead to successful immersion program outcomes

Six of the eight North American program types – all but (1) immersion and (8) foreign language immersion – are responses at the school district, state or federal level to the educational needs of minority-language speakers with limited command of English, the societal language and language of most mainstream education in the USA and Canada. Despite varying importance attached to language learning in individual cases at the local level (Met, 1998), their primary purpose is not to maintain children's native language or to add a foreign language, but to transition students to English-medium content instruction as soon as possible. Four programs are monolingual throughout, using English only: (3) SEI, (4) submersion, (5) CBLT, and (with the exception of French in some Canadian programs) (7) sheltered subject matter teaching. Two involve the children's home language, but, with few exceptions, only in the early stages, followed by English only: (2) BE and (6) dual language/two-way immersion. Four involve some or all subject-matter instruction in English from the get-go: (4) submersion, (5) CBLT, (6) dual language/two-way immersion, and (7) sheltered subject matter instruction; two do so as soon as is feasible: (2) BE and (3) SEI. Regrettably, in the USA, English dominance, with English monolingualism in the long run, is considered an acceptable outcome in the USA in six out of eight cases.

Based on the thumbnail sketches above and the results of North Amercian program evaluations, it is possible to begin to identify features of programs more commonly associated with success and failure, and thereby, to make initial predictions as to the likely outcomes of CLIL and EMI programs in Europe and elsewhere. Some North American models use the students' native language at least part of the time, with success in both L1 and L2 positively related to the duration of L1 use. Most focus on a second language, i.e., a language of wider communication in the surrounding society, usually English, but a few involve content instruction through a foreign language. Most teachers in successful programs are either native speakers or proficient non-native speakers of the language of instruction, and trained both as subject matter and language teachers. Students in the successful programs are usually volunteers, with strong parental support, not draftees, and the programs enjoy high status. They typically result in

additive bilingualism with no adverse effects on achievement in content subjects, whereas some programs, notably (2, early exit), (3), (4), (5) and (with considerable variation at the level of individual programs, 6), typically result in English eventually supplanting students' native language – subtractive bilingualism.

9.3 CLIL and EMI in Europe and beyond

The perceived need for foreign languages by politicians, educational policy makers. and most sectors of the general population in the USA is notoriously low. In part due to funding cuts for public education in general, and the prioritization of English and math by federal "No child left behind" legislation (sometimes referred to as "No child left bilingual"), the percentage of elementary schools offering a foreign language declined from 31% to 25% between 1997 and 2008, and that of middle schools from 75% to 58% (Rhodes & Pufahl, 2009). Advanced study of a few languages at the college level, e.g., Chinese, Korean, Arabic and ASL, has increased in recent years, but the total numbers of students are tiny, and overall foreign language enrollments between 2009 and 2013 declined by 6.7%, with only 7% of students taking a language course of any kind (Goldberg, Looney, & Lusin, 2015). The situation in Europe and elsewhere is very different, with foreign language learning, especially, but not only, of English, viewed as important at most levels of society.

Like French immersion in Canada and FL immersion in the USA, and in contrast to the six English-dominant North American programs among the eight described above, the original goal of the first CLIL and tertiary-level English medium instruction (EMI) programs in Europe, and now in Asia and the Middle East, was not subject matter learning, but the addition of a second (third, fourth, etc.) language, usually English, but sometimes French, German or another European language. Students' native language was not at risk, provided it was one spoken widely in the surrounding society, although L1 development and maintenance might not be as secure in the case of children of ethnolinguistic minorities or refugees.

Early CLIL programs were often driven by parental, and then political, pressure on individual schools or whole education systems at the state, regional or national level. (For historical background and overviews of CLIL, see Cenoz, Genesee and Gorter 2014; Coyle 2008; Coyle, Hood and Marsh 2010; Dalton-Puffer 2011; Muñoz and Navés 2007. For history and overviews of EMI, see Macaro, 2018; Macaro et al, 2018.) The received view was that command of a foreign language (FL) obtained via CLIL provided a significant advantage for educational and employment

opportunities, and that the necessary levels of proficiency were better achieved via three or four hours a week of content-based instruction through that language than by an equivalent amount of traditional, code-focused FL teaching. The belief was often inspired by the success of the Canadian immersion programs, the levels of L2 proficiency achieved after conventional FL courses in Europe typically falling far short of those of graduating Canadian high school immersion students, whose content learning also suffered no adverse effects. At the same time, however, recognition of the many differences between Canada and Europe and between the Canadian and European programs, starting with the massively greater number of hours the former required (as many as ten years of consistent schooling through French) prompted creation of the new term 'CLIL'. To reiterate, the main motivation initially was not subject-matter learning, but FL learning (or there would have been no need for CLIL or EMI), an additional language through content – two for the price of one – not, as in six of the eight North American programs, content through a new language. Needless to say, however, it is vital that CLIL and EMI students' subject matter learning does not suffer in the process.

CLIL and EMI programs, like immersion and the other seven North American models, vary both within and across countries. There are differences in starting age (elementary, secondary or tertiary education), the proportion of instruction delivered through the FL (from one subject, three or four hours a week, to much of the curriculum), the surrounding sociolinguistic setting (mostly monolingual, as in France, Germany, Turkey or Saudi Arabia, or mostly bilingual, as in Belgium, Catalonia or the Basque Region), selection of students (open to any interested families, or only to children screened in on the basis of existing FL abilities), and type and quality of teachers (content and/or language specialists, with various levels of FL proficiency and training for CLIL or EMI). Of the situation in Spain, Ruiz de Zarobe and Lasagabaster (2010) wrote, "There are no set formulae and methods for CLIL" (p. vii), and "there are as many models as [the 17 autonomous] regions and no single blueprint exists to take root across the country" (p. ix).

The one common factor is that CLIL always involves teaching subject matter through the medium of a foreign (or occasionally, a minority) language, most often English, e.g., social studies or math through English in a Finnish or Spanish secondary school, economics, politics or art history through English or French at a Spanish or a German university, science and technology through English in an Italian or a Saudi-Arabian university, and so on. However, as pointed out by Cenoz, Genessee and Gorter (2014, p. 255), subject matter instruction through an L2 characterizes Canadian

immersion and several other models, as well; and the validity of claimed distinctions between current incarnations of CLIL and various forms of content-based instruction (CBI), including immersion (e.g., Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2010) are contested.

Figure 9.1. Comparison of French immersion in Canada and CLIL and EMI programs in many countries (modified from Long et al, 2018)

French immersion in Canada	**CLIL and EMI programs in many countries**
	Teachers
Native or near-native speakers of the L2	Non-natives, some with limited L2 ability
Trained content and immersion teachers	Content teachers, with no or variable CLIL/EMI training
	Students
Greater capacity for incidental learning	Somewhat lesser capacity for EMI and for CLIL if it occurs later
Homogeneous L2 proficiency	Often varied L2 proficiency
	L2 exposure
Several years, part or full-time	Three or four hours per week
Native or native-like teacher input	Sometimes restricted and deviant teacher input
Some L2 access outside the classroom	Variable, often minimal, L2 access outside
	Specialized pedagogic materials
Often available for immersion, as are materials written for native speakers	Often unavailable for CLIL or EMI, which often must use abridged versions, as a result
	Articulation
Consistently available year to year, with articulation across grades and schools	CLIL may only be available for one semester or year, with little articulation across grades or schools

Figure 9.1 indicates how CLIL and EMI programs in various countries worlwide differ from French Canadian immersion programs usually do differ. As can be seen, most of the differences, unfortunately, have relatively unfavorable implications for CLIL and EMI:

1. Teachers in immersion programs are usually native speakers or very proficient non-native speakers of the L2. This is crucial, given that high proficiency in the L2 is the goal of immersion programs. While CLIL and EMI teachers' command of the L2 in some countries is excellent, in others it can be poor.
2. Immersion teachers are trained content teachers, and usually trained immersion teachers, as well. Most CLIL and EMI teachers are content teachers, but in some countries, many have little or no training or experience as language teachers, depending very much on a program's location (e.g., for the situation for CLIL in Spain, see chapters in Part II: Teacher Training, in Lasagabaster & Ruiz de Zarobe, 2010).
3. Immersion, especially early immersion, relies considerably on students' capacity for incidental learning – the capacity young children have to pick up a language without an intention to do so, while focused on something else, such as play or, in the immersion classroom, on lesson content. Older children and adults can still learn that way, but the capacity for incidental language learning declines with increasing age (Janacsek et al 2012; Nemeth et al, 2013). In particular, instance learning, i.e., the ability to pick up arbitrary form-function and form-meaning associations (e.g., vocabulary items and collocations) without conscious attention or intention to do so, is weaker (Hoyer & Lincourt, 1998). Immersion students are at a psycholinguistic advantage over most CLIL students if, as is typically the case, immersion programs begin earlier than CLIL programs.
4. Incidental learning, moreover, requires time and large quantities of rich input. Years spent in immersion programs, even if part-time, late immersion programs, provide children with massively more target language exposure than what can sometimes be as few as three or four hours of CLIL a week (and perhaps, due to articulation problems, only for one or two years).
5. Because nearly all immersion students start as zero beginners, immersion classrooms tend to be relatively homogeneous in terms of students' L2 French proficiency, making it possible for teachers to adopt or adapt materials and adjust their own classroom language use in ways that are appropriate for communicating

lesson content to all students simultaneously, while in the process providing input that is adjusted in ways that also make it usable by all of them for language learning. L2 proficiency among CLIL students, in contrast, often varies considerably.

6. The limited L2 exposure available in most CLIL situations is even more problematic if classroom input is phonologically heavily accented and/or ungrammatical, as is the case when a teacher's own command of the L2 is poor.
7. Immersion students are more likely to have access to the L2 outside the classroom, especially where the L2 is a heritage language or an official language in the country concerned. Access for CLIL students is more variable, and sometimes non-existent, although it can be significant in some countries when the L2 is English.
8. Materials devised especially for immersion teaching are often available for subjects taught at lower proficiency levels. Later, due to the high levels of L2 abilities immersion students achieve, materials originally written for native speakers of the L2 are viable options. Fewer materials produced especially for CLIL exist as yet, and those intended for native speakers of English or other CLIL languages are usually too linguistically complex. The proficiency goal for Spanish CLIL students in the Basque region, for example, is only B2 on the CEFR scale by the end of secondary education (only B1 for graduates from secondary EFL programs).
9. CLIL for school-age children often suffers from an articulation problem. Due to an insufficient supply of content teachers with adequate command of the same L2, CLIL math, for example, may be an option for one semester or in one grade, but not the next, or at one school, but not the next.

9.4 Content learning through CLIL

The answers to some fundamental questions about CLIL were unknown when the first programs were first established in several European countries, and they remain unanswered today. Is FL achievement via CLIL really superior to that produced by traditional courses taught by trained language teachers? And, just as important, if not more so, how does CLIL students' mastery of history or biology compare with what is learned in the next-door classroom by age peers taking the same subjects through their native language? Evaluations of CLIL did not begin until the mid-2000s, many years *after* programs had been implemented on a large scale. (Imagine the outcry were a new prescription drug released for public use before any

controlled studies of its effectiveness or possible harmful side-effects.) Reflecting CLIL's original motivation, the focus of the early evaluations (e.g., Lorenzo et al, 2010) was initially FL achievement. Studies often suffered from major threats to internal validity of the kind that affect many evaluations of educational programs in situ. This was especially the case with selection (Bruton, 2011; better students were sometimes chosen for admission to CLIL programs, meaning that learning outcomes were confounded with pre-existing differences), history (students might spend more time on task in some CLIL programs, or receive extra tutoring in English outside), and testing (non-equivalence of pre- and post-tests could produce the appearance of improvement simply because of a practice effect or because the post-test was easier). (See Long, 1984, for a discussion of six standard threats to validity in comparative evaluations of L2 programs.)

Despite several reasons to anticipate negative outcomes in that area, several more years passed before CLIL's impact on subject matter learning was added to the scope of controlled studies. Two differences between CLIL and Canadian immersion, in particular: the scarcity of suitable pedagogic materials for CLIL, and the articulation problem, could be expected to cause problems. Further grounds for caution should have been the findings of at least three studies completed well before the advent of CLIL.

9.5 Three "pre-CLIL" empirical studies

First, as part of an ethnographic dissertation study, Mackay (1986, 1993) had described what happened when native English speakers attempted to teach content lessons in English to Inuktitut-speaking children in the Canadian Arctic. Of particular concern, they tended to repair frequent embarrassing breakdowns in communication due to the language barrier by use of what Mackay termed 'hygienic' measures to clean up trouble – measures such as switching to a simpler question about a topic or dropping a topic altogether, i.e., by diluting the curriculum. Most CLIL teachers, of course, have the additional problem, unlike the teachers he observed, that they are not using their native language when such problems arise, making spontaneous repairs that much harder and the temptation to take content short-cuts that much greater.

Second, Long and Ross (1993, 2009) showed how *linguistic simplification* of a short reading passage about catfish resulted in loss of information in the original version, written for native speakers. *Elaboration* of the same native speaker version, conversely, increased its comprehensibility while retaining all the original information. Studies comparing simplified elaborated,

and native speaker baseline versions of the same spoken and written texts have found elaborated versions to achieve almost the same level of improved comprehensibility as simplified versions, but without the non-nativelike L2 usage and loss of lower frequency, but domain-appropriate, lexical items and collocations that simplification tends to cause – items to which students need to be exposed if they are ever to be learned (Yano, Long, & Ross, 1994). (For examples, see Chapter 8; and for a review of research findings, see Long, 2015, pp. 250-259.)

Finally, in a laboratory study, Lynch (1987) found that in their efforts to maintain comprehensibility, NSs tasked with describing the same picture-guided stories to individual ESL speakers at three proficiency levels omitted progressively more information as their interlocutors' English abilities decreased.

While not direct studies of CLIL, the findings of these three earlier studies together imply that the speech modifications of CLIL teachers, who are often NNSs themselves, to CLIL students, whose L2 proficiency is often quite low, might well result in loss of a significant amount of information over a school year, leaving the students' command of the subject matter weaker than that of peers taking the same course through their native language. Subsequent research findings by Al-Thaowaini (2018), Long et al (2018), and Dallinger et al (2016) have confirmed and extended the results of the earlier studies.

9.6 Three "post-CLIL" empirical studies

First, we may note the study by Al-Thowaini (2018), which confirms the risk of curriculum dilution in CLIL classrooms. Ten NSs and 10 advanced NNSs of English were each paired with three listeners, one from each of three groups of 20 NSs, 20 high proficiency NNSs, and 20 low proficiency NNSs . After warm-up sessions, the 10 NSs and 10 NNSs narrated the same three picture-guided stories. After each story, the listener's understanding was measured by the number of information bits (28 in each story) included in their written retellings.

Al-Thowaini found that both NSs and advanced NNSs made statistically significantly more speech modifications to both high and low proficiency NNS listeners than to NS listeners. They spoke with lower syntactic complexity, lesser lexical diversity and lesser lexical sophistication. As measured by the number of the 28 information bits omitted from each story, the NSs also engaged in significantly more content dilution when speaking

to both high and low proficiency NNS than to NSs. Both the high and low proficiency non-native listeners' comprehension scores were significantly lower than those of the NS listeners.

Next, the findings of an experiment reported by Long, Al-Thowaini, Al-Thowaini, Lee, & Vafaee (2018) give pause for thought. Using undergraduate and graduate students at US universities, the experient put 15 NSs and 30 speakers of Arabic for whom English was their L2 into nine different groups, each composed of a teacher and four students. In three baseline English groups, a NS surrogate teacher taught 4 students, played by NS undergraduates. In three CLIL groups, an Arabic L1 surrogate CLIL teacher gave the lesson in English to 4 Arabic L1 undergraduates playing the role of students. And in three baseline Arabic groups, an Arabic L1 surrogate teacher gave the lesson in Arabic to 4 Arabic L1 undergraduates playing the role of students.

All nine surrogate teachers were given the same set of notes, the first six in English, the last three in Arabic translation, together with slides containing pictures of the main points. The notes described an amateur anthropologist's alleged discovery of the Kiriboe, a hitherto unknown indigenous hunter-gatherer tribe in the Amazonian jungle. The information about the tribe (diet, language, living arrangements, matriarchal social organization, weapons, rituals, etc.) was plausible, but fictitious (so could not be known before the study). The anthropologist's story contained several details that suggested his discovery might be suspect. The teachers delivered a 15-minute lesson to the groups. Immediately after the lessons, students completed two post-tests: one on the lesson content, and the other on low frequency lexical items from the teaching materials.

Results showed that the three English and three Arabic baseline groups scored statistically significantly higher than the three CLIL groups on the post-test of vocabulary knowledge. In terms of subject-matter learning, the English and Arabic baseline groups both outperformed the CLIL groups, statistically significantly so in the case of the English baseline groups. Although the results cannot be generalized to all CLIL or EMI programs, the poorer content learning by the CLIL group was notable and was consistent with the findings of the other studies reviewed here. A limitation of this and the other four studies summarized so far is that it did not involve genuine CLIL or EMI classrooms. Only Mackay's research took place in natural classroom settings at all, and the price of experimental control in the other four included very brief duration and various other forms of

artificiality. These limitations make a sixth, methodologically rigorous study by Dallinger, Jonkmann, Hollm, & Fiege (2016) all the more important.

Dallinger et al (2016) were the first to examine the effect of CLIL on students' English and history competences with a pre-test, post-test design. The study consisted of a year-long comparison of 1806 CLIL and non-CLIL eighth graders in 37 German secondary schools. There were careful controls for selection, students' proficiency levels, history teacher characteristics, and other variables. Time on task was also noted: CLIL students received three hours of history lessons per week, instead of two. All students' prior history knowledge was measured in German at the start of the school year, using a cloze test and a multiple-choice test. Pre- and post- general English skills were assessed using equivalent versions of a 159-item c-test, and listening abilities were assessed using equivalent versions of a standardized test with high internal reliability. At the end of grade 8, all non-CLIL and one third of the CLIL students took tests of history taught in grade 8 in German, and the remaining CLIL students took either the cloze or the multiple-choice test in English.

Findings showed that listening skills improved significantly more in the CLIL group, but that there were no statistically significant differences between the achievement of CLIL and non-CLIL groups in general English abilities or in knowledge of history. The last finding does not reflect well on CLIL, the authors pointed out, when it is recalled that the CLIL students had received 50% more history instruction than the non-CLIL students (three hours per week, instead of two) Dallinger et al concluded that

> "if future studies do not find any CLIL-advantages in other content subject-related areas or English skills, then the implementation of CLIL-programmes would have to be questioned" (2016, p. 30).

The Dallinger et al results are important. However, as Kristin Kersten (personal communication, July 20, 2017) has pointed out, it would be necessary to compare CLIL programs with equal amounts of subject matter instruction before the conclusion could be accepted. She also notes that research over a longer period is called for; it might be overly optimistic to expect positive effects after only one year of exposure in a CLIL program with relatively low L2 intensity. Kersten also notes that findings from one program evaluation cannot necessarily be generalized to others. CLIL programs in Germany, as elsewhere, vary in the intensity (hours per week) and duration of subject matter instruction through the L2, as well as in such matters as the use of the L1/ambient language in CLIL lessons, instructional

quality, teachers' L2 proficiency, student age, and teaching approaches and procedures.

With those important caveats in mind, the Dallinger et al study is arguably the single most relevant to date when considering the effect of CLIL on students' subject matter learning. The researchers dealt with large numbers of real teachers and real students in real CLIL classrooms. They deployed reliable measures and statistical expertise to disentangle the effects of selection and other potential confounds from genuine learning outcomes produced by CLIL and by traditional content instruction through German, the native language. The research was of sufficient scale and duration for the findings to merit serious attention.

9.7 Three research questions

Work is urgently needed to answer three major CLIL and EMI research questions. all already answered in the Canandian immersion studies. First, when threats to internal validity are preempted or controlled for, how does foreign language learning in CLIL and EMI compare with what is achieved by properly trained FL instructors in traditional EFL or other FL classrooms (preferably not using traditional EFL or FL methodology)? Second, how does subject matter learning by school-age children in CLIL programs or by university students in EMI settings compare with results obtained from the same courses taught through the students' (and usually, the teachers') native language? When both teachers' and students' L2 proficiency is limited, there is clear potential for linguistic simplification, curricular dilution, and eventually, poorer content mastery. Third, how are process variables in CLIL and EMI classrooms related to learning outcomes? Process-product studies will be important when evaluating both language and subject matter learning. Which kinds of teacher speech modifications, for example, contribute to subject matter learning outcomes, and which can be improved by in-service teacher training?

The few product-oriented studies to date have been marked by an absence of an observational component to confirm that CLIL lessons (as opposed, for example, to traditional text-based EFL lessons using subject matter materials) were, in fact, what was being delivered and evaluated; yet the absence of such data on classroom processes renders interpretations of findings speculative. L2 classroom researchers have long established the importance of detailed descriptions of classroom processes and language use before moving on to evaluation studies (see Long, 1980, 1984, 2015b, pp. 347-350; Shintani, 2013). Important dimensions of classroom discourse

in the case of CLIL might include such basic matters as the proportions of a lesson delivered through the students' L2 and/or L1, and the extent to which it is genuinely focused on subject matter, as opposed to code features. Failure to monitor what really went on would be to repeat the mistake of the comparative methods studies of the 1960s and 1970s. Are the achievements of CLIL and EMI in both domains, language learning and subject matter learning, comparable to what is achieved through separate courses in language and content? Is either CLIL or EMI really a case of two for the price of one?

Summary

Due to dissatisfaction with traditional foreign language courses, various alternatives have been tried out in the USA and in other parts of the world. These can be referred to as immersion, CLIL and EMI courses, and we briefly looked at nine different program types that have been used in primary, secondary and teriary education in various countries. The one common factor in CLIL is that it always involves teaching subject matter through the medium of a foreign (or occasionally, a minority) language, most often English, but the validity of claimed distinctions between current incarnations of CLIL and other forms of content-based instruction (CBI), including immersion, are contested. We saw that the differences between CLIL and Canandian French immersion programs have relatively unfavorable implications for CLIL and EMI. The three "pre-CLIL/EMI" studies, Mackay (1986, 1993), Long and Ross (1993), and Lynch (1987), and the three "post-CLIL/EMI" studies, Al-Thowaini (2018), Long et al (2018), and Dallinger et al (2016), discussed here found that subject-matter learning suffers when delivered by and for NNSs of the language of instruction. Given the importance of subject matter learning for students of all ages, these findings must at the very least raise serious questions about CLIL and EMI and motivate further research, ideally a combination of experimental and classroom work, in that order, with paired studies examining the same variables and using the same measures (Long, 2015a). The aim here is not to argue for or against CLIL or EMI, now involving hundreds of thousands of students in many countries, but to point out that research is needed on the degree to which either is achieving their major objectives, FL development and content learning.

Discussion questions

1. What are the main characteristics of immersion courses in EFL / ELT?

2. What content-based options for language learning and teaching are described in this chapter?

3. What are the main differences among them?

4. Do you have any experience of immersion courses or of content-based courses?

5. What is the difference between CLIL and EMI courses?

6. What was your initial reaction to the idea of CLIL and EMI courses?

7. What is "the one common factor" referred to in the text about CLIL?

8. Figure 9.1. compares French immersion in Canada with CLIL and EMI programs and is followed by a list of the main weaknesses detected in the CLIL programs. Can you summarize them?

9. What are the main findings of the CLIL studies that are discussed?

10. Three important research questions need to be answered by further studies. What are they? What do you think studies would find if they investigated these questions?

Suggested Readings

Cenoz, J., Genesee, F., & Gorter, D. (2014). Critical analysis of CLIL: Taking stock and looking forward. *Applied Linguistics* 35, 3, 243-262.

Cummins, J. (2009). Bilingual and immersion programs. In Long, M. H., & Doughty, C. J. (Eds.). *The handbook of second language teaching* (pp. 161-181). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Long, M. H., & Adamson, D. (2012). SLA research and Arizona's Structured English Immersion policies. In Valdez, G., and Faltis, C. (eds.), *Implementing educational language policy in Arizona*: *An examination of legal, historical and current practices in SEI* (pp. 39-55). Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.

Macaro, E., Curle, S., Pun, J., An, J., & Dearden, J. (2018). A systematic review of English medium instruction in higher education. Language Teaching 51, 1, 36-76.

CHAPTER 10

HOW TEACHERS ARE TRAINED TODAY, AND HOW IT COULD BE DONE BETTER

10.1 Introduction

What knowledge does a good teacher of English as a second or foreign language need? Various types of knowledge come to mind, but there is one in particular that concerns us, namely knowledge about how people learn languages. In their document setting out standards required for teachers of English to adult learners, the TESOL International Association (TESOL, 2002) makes specific reference to knowledge about second language learning. The document requires all teachers "to understand and apply theories and research in language acquisition and development" (p. 31). Specifically, they are required

> "to understand how different theories of language acquisition (for L1 and L2) have shaped views of how language is learned, ranging from nativist to cognitive and social interactionist perspectives" (p.31),

and to be familiar with

> "key research on factors that influence the acquisition of English, such as the amount and quality of prior formal education in an English-dominant country, the age of arrival and length of residence in an English-dominant environment, developmental stages and sequences, the effects of instruction and feedback, the role of L1 transfer, L2 input, and communicative interaction" (p. 32).

They are also required to be able

> "to take pertinent issues in second language acquisition (SLA) into account when planning for instruction and apply these SLA findings in the classroom" (p. 32).

Much as we agree with the view expressed here, current second language teacher education (SLTE) largely ignores it.

The term "the elephant in the room" is used to refer to something which is obvious to everyone in a certain domain, but which is deliberately ignored. Regarding SLTE, the elephant in the room is the set of robust research findings in the field of second language learning which we described and discussed in Section 1 and elsewhere in this book. Unfortunately, the majority of those who are currently responsible for SLTE – course designers, including those for many post-graduate degree courses; administrators and examiners; authors of "How to teach English" books; and the teacher trainers / educators who actually deliver the SLTE courses – show a marked reluctance to acknowledge the importance of these findings and their implications for ELT in the SLTE courses they are responsible for. In some cases, the root cause is ignorance of the SLA research findings, which were not part of their own training. In other cases, their reluctance stems from their support for coursebook-driven ELT; after all, why draw attention to arguments and evidence which demonstrate that coursebooks implement a syllabus based on false assumptions about language learning?! By ignoring the elephant in the room, most SLTE programs today fail to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to carry out well-founded, effective ELT. Instead, SLTE focuses on ensuring continuity in the supply of teachers who do what they are told to do by their employers, namely, use a coursebook to get students from one CEFR level to the next.

We begin our review of SLTE by looking at its history and at different suggestions about its content and delivery. Then we examine some current examples of SLTE, dividing them into pre-service and continuous teacher development courses. Finally, we suggest how SLTE could be improved.

10.2 Second Language Teacher Education

The British Council estimates that there are more than twelve million English teachers active in the world today, adding that "this masks a huge global shortage" (British Council, 2015, p.9). The shortage has led the British Council to refer to "an almost insatiable demand for qualified English language instructors across the globe" (p. 9). Preparing teachers for the job of teaching English as an L2 is variously referred to as "teacher training", "teacher development", "continuous teacher development" and "second language teacher education". Henceforth we will refer to all of these as SLTE. A distinction is typically made between pre-service courses aimed at those wanting to start a teaching career, and in-service courses, aimed at those already teaching. In the pre-service courses area, in the USA,

for example, a Bachelor of Arts or Science degree is a pre-requisite for doing a specialized course, such as a Masters in TESOL or applied linguistics, or a TEFL certificate. In Europe, on the other hand, a university degree is not a pre-requisite. The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), part of Cambridge English, offers the most popular certificate course: CELTA (Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), while Trinity College, London, offers the rival Cert TESOL. Many European universities also offer Masters in TEFL or applied linguistics courses. In other parts of the world, national Ministries of Education stipulate the entry requirements for English teachers who wish to work in state-run schools and universities, often designing a curriculum for the pre-service course.

We may date the beginning of modern SLTE to the early 1960s, when demand for English language teaching began its dramatic worldwide expansion, and when the 'Situational Language Teaching' approach became widely used (see Chapter 7). The first ELT training courses in the UK were those offered by International House (IH) in London in 1962. They were highly intensive four-week courses which provided would-be teachers with a practical "hands-on" training in the classroom skills required to implement the IH version of the Situational method. Both authors of this book were participants in versions of this course in the late 1960s, and can testify to its intensity and to the almost missionary zeal of the teacher trainers, all of whom expected commitment to the IH method. At the same time, in the USA and in Europe, the first university departments of applied linguistics were established, and post-graduate programs in theories of second language learning and approaches to teaching foreign languages started to be offered.

The contrast between the short practical courses like the one at IH mentioned above and the more academic courses like MAs in TESOL, led to a 'practice versus theory' debate about the relative importance of classroom teaching skills and an understanding of language and second language learning. Richards (2008) suggests that the distinction often made between 'teacher training' and 'teacher development' can be seen in terms of the distinction between these two aspects of SLTE, "the former being identified with entry-level teaching skills linked to a specific teaching context, and the latter to the longer-term development of the individual teacher over time" (p. 158). Richards suggests that the two types of course are associated with two types of knowledge: while the short, practical teacher training courses concentrate on "knowledge how" to actually teach, the longer, more theoretical courses deal with "knowledge about", i.e.,

knowledge of "grammar, discourse analysis, phonology, learning curriculum development, and methodology" (p. 159). There is some truth in this, particularly when we examine the UK approach to SLTE, but it is both remarkable and indicative of the malaise of SLTE globally that Richards' summary of the two types of knowledge which make up the content of SLTE fails even to mention knowledge about how people learn languages. Richards' dichotomy reflects the all too prevalent view that SLTE basically involves knowledge about the subject matter (the English language) and knowledge about 'practical' teaching techniques.

10.3 Wallace's Models of Teacher Education

Wallace (1991) begins with the 'Craft' model: teaching is a craft, best learnt in the same way as any other skill-based behaviour by following in the steps of an expert who has already mastered the craft. Student-teachers learn by listening to, observing, and trying to copy the expert.

The second model is the 'Applied Science' model: teaching is knowledge-based, and classroom practice should be informed by scientific knowledge. Student-teachers are taught by experts – preferably university academics – about various theories of language, language learning and language teaching, and are then expected to apply the theory to their own classroom situation.

The third model is the 'Reflective Practitioner 'model, and this is the one Wallace favors. It is based on making a distinction between two types of knowledge, 'received knowledge' – research-based facts that are passed on to us – and 'experiential knowledge' – the knowledge (often subconscious) which comes from experience, and then stressing the importance of the second kind of knowledge, since this is the vital factor in developing 'teacher competence'. Wallace cites Schön (1983), who calls experiential knowledge 'knowing in action', and explains that

> "every competent practitioner can recognize phenomena...for which he cannot give a reasonably accurate or complete description. In his day-to-day practice, he makes innumerable judgements of quality "for which he cannot state adequate criteria, and he displays skills for which he cannot state the rules and procedures. Even when he makes conscious use of research-based theories and techniques, he is dependent on tacit recognitions" (Schön, 1983, p. 49).

The model envisages three stages in teacher education. The 'pre-training stage' refers to the student teacher's existing conceptual schemata or mental constructs before embarking on any SLTE courses – everybody has, after all, some pre-training knowledge about teaching. The second 'professional development' stage is where the student-teacher learns to teach through a combination of practice and reflection. When student-teachers get the opportunity to practice in a classroom environment, and to observe others teaching, they slowly "learn the ropes", and the process of reflection starts: they reflect on their own performance and how it measures up to what they were told. They also compare it to how others, including experienced teachers, deal with the same situations. This reflection guides their development as they evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching and recall past experiences. The third and final stage is increasing professional competence. The Reflective Model represents a cyclical process applicable to all stages of a teacher's career.

10.4. Beyond Wallace's Three Models View: The Socio-cultural Perspective on SLTE

It seems sensible to suggest that Wallace's three models are not mutually exclusive and that SLTE should take all three into account. However, while the limitations of the craft and applied science models are evident enough, Wallace's preferred reflective practice model needs closer attention, particularly because of more recent developments of it, which take a radical socio-cultural perspective, where the constructs of 'teacher cognition', 'teacher thinking' and 'teacher-learning' are ubiquitous. An early and influential contribution to the socio-cultural view is Freeman and Johnson's (1998) article, which argues that SLTE should focus on understanding how language teachers learn to teach and how their professional lives evolve, by focusing on their cognitive worlds and personal teaching practices. Studies by Bailey et. al., (1996), Freeman (1993), Gutiérrez (1996), Johnson (1994), Numrich (1996) (cited in Freeman and Johnson, 1998), all support the view that teachers' previous learning experiences exert a powerful influence on how they learn from SLTE programs, to the extent that they can often completely subvert the content of the SLTE courses. In support of this contention, with regard to pre-service language teacher education programs, studies by Johnson (1994) and Richards et al (1996) showed that what pre-service English language teachers were taught in their training had little bearing on what they actually did subsequently in their classrooms.

More recent work by Johnson (2009), Freeman (2016), Borg (2015b), Norton (2013), Richards (2012) and Barkhuizen (2017) develops the argument that SLTE must reject the traditional "transmission of knowledge" approach to teacher education, because it pays insufficient attention to what the participants in the courses, the student teachers, bring to the course, and sees them, mistakenly, as "empty vessels" into which the knowledge needed to be good teachers is poured. Such an approach, the argument goes, must be replaced with one which helps teachers to reflect on and articulate their own personal theories, knowledge, and beliefs. Rather than telling teachers what to think and what to do, SLTE should be concerned with 'teacher learning' and 'practitioner knowledge'; it should recognize the importance of teacher cognition in understanding the classroom decisions teachers take, and it should help them to understand and articulate their own beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge about subject matter and pedagogical practices.

Woods' (1996) influential book on teacher cognition is the first to make teachers' 'beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge' an acronym – BAKs. The three components of a teacher's BAKs together are said to make up teacher cognition, and it is the argument of those taking a socio-cultural perspective that helping teachers get a clear understanding of their BAKs should be a leading priority of SLTE. Teachers' BAKs crucially affect how they translate information on teaching into classroom practice; they explain the mismatch between what teachers are told to do and what they actually do, and also between what they say they do and what they actually do in the classroom. Thus, the socio-cultural perspective on SLTE concludes that awareness of teachers' BAKS must be the starting point in reflections and play a key role in teacher education programmes.

In his review of research on "what language teachers think, know, believe, and do", Borg (2003, p.88) says:

> "The general picture to emerge here then is that teachers' prior language learning experiences establish cognitions about learning and language learning which form the basis of their initial conceptualisations of L2 teaching during teacher education, and which may continue to be influential throughout their professional lives" (p. 88).

Borg argues that teachers' beliefs are not likely to be changed by being told (from above) that new beliefs should be adopted, and furthermore, changes in beliefs do not necessarily imply a change in teacher behaviour, Contextual factors (social, cultural, institutional, instructional and physical settings) are also important.

Richards (2008, p. 162) puts the case as follows:

> "Teacher-learning is not viewed as translating knowledge and theories into practice but as constructing new knowledge and theory through participating in specific social contexts and engaging in particular types of activities and processes. This latter type of knowledge, sometimes called "practitioner knowledge", is the source of teachers' practices and understandings."

He suggests that SLTE should be based on the "theorization of practice……, making visible the nature of practitioner knowledge". Learning, says Richards, emerges through social interaction within a community of practice, and participants in SLTE courses should be seen as a community of learners engaged in "the collaborative construction of meanings" (p. 163).

While paying attention to student-teachers' BAKs may well be recommended, and while the research into teacher cognition and decision making has produced some interesting findings, there is surely a problem in putting so much emphasis on teacher cognition. But first, those readers who are unaccustomed to the peculiar style of socio-cultural postmodernist discourse might well have trouble working out what it all means, and what the point of it is. What, for example, is Richards getting at when he urges us to see student-teachers as a community of learners engaged in the collaborative construction of meanings? How do people collaborate in constructing meanings? What do these constructed meanings look like? What 'postmodern frame' is Freeman referring to? What does he mean by "the storied character of teachers' knowledge"? What point is he making?

Perhaps Freeman's claim that "different people will know the same things differently" is the most revealing, because it uncovers the relativist epistemology of the socio-cultural approach which informs their work. Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that deals with knowledge and asks questions like "What is knowledge?"; "How is knowledge acquired?"; and "What are the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge?". Those adopting a scientific approach to research adopt a realist epistemology. This assumes that an external world exists independently of our perceptions of it, and that it is possible to study different phenomena in this world, to make meaningful statements about them, and to improve our knowledge of them. The main way in which phenomena are studied is by testing hypotheses (tentative explanations of the phenomena) using logic and an appeal to empirical evidence. So, for example, we notice that all our L2 learners seem to learn certain parts of the target language in a common

order, regardless of their L1. We decide to do a study of the phenomenon of what we suspect might be staged development among L2 learners, and we find that the participants in the study do indeed go through a series of "transitional stages" towards the L2 target language (see Chapter 2). Now, if we accept a realist epistemology, we assume that the external world will remain stable enough for different observers who carry out the same study in similar conditions with similar participants to observe the same things. Thus, replication studies, if done carefully, can test the robustness of our study's findings, by providing evidence that either supports or challenges the results of the first study.

Those adopting a sociocultural perspective reject this realist epistemology, which they refer to as the "positivist" epistemology of scientists, whose research methods, epistemological assumptions, and authority they roundly reject. Early on in her book extolling the virtues of a sociocultural perspective on SLTE, Johnson (2009, p. 7) explains the need for a "shift" in teacher education towards an "interpretative epistemological perspective", which involves "overcoming" the "positivist epistemological perspective". Johnson urges us to adopt the view that there is no one fixed, immutable reality, but rather, a multiplicity of realities, all of which are social constructs. Since the construction of reality is a social process, it follows that there are simply different ways of looking at, seeing, and talking about things, each with its own perspective, each with its own set of explicit or implicit rules which members of the social group construct for themselves. From this new perspective, it follows that the 'knowledge base' which Johnson, Richards, Freeman and others refer to has no common, objective base at all: what one teacher 'knows' at the end of a teacher education course about interlanguage development or criterion performance tests, for example, will differ from what another teacher will 'know'. Every teacher has their own 'knowledge bases' and sees the same 'knowledge' differently.

We reject the relativist view expounded by Freeman, Johnson, Richards and others as unclear and unhelpful. We certainly do not dispute the need to appreciate what pre-service teachers' prior experience and set of beliefs bring to any learning task, or the need to take into account the many contextual factors which affect the implementation of any particular SLTE program in any particular context. Neither do we dispute that different student teachers will learn different things from the same program, and that every teacher's practical classroom work will be crucially affected by the local context in which it takes place. But none of this warrants the view that there is no such thing as objective knowledge, or that there can be no rational assessment of rival theories of language learning and language teaching, or

that SLTE should focus only on reflecting on teachers' subjective feelings, beliefs and experiences. For us, teachers' subjective feelings, beliefs and experiences – their BAKs – refer to their experiences in the real world, and to theories and views which have real effects on teaching outcomes. We ask: What is the actual content of teachers' BAKs? How do we evaluate that content?

Imagine a seminar on language learning. The question of 'learning styles' comes up, a student teacher says it makes a lot of sense, and the teacher goes to some lengths to explain that there is not one shred of evidence to support the 'neuro-linguistic programming' (NLP) view that all language learners have a predominant learning style (visual, auditory, or kinaesthetic). The teacher tells the student teachers about when the NLP theory first appeared, its popularity, its demise, and encourages the student teachers to talk about their own beliefs and experiences of NLP, how they were taught, how their bosses and colleagues and students might react to NLP, and so on. In the end, there is general agreement that NLP is baloney and that ELT should not be influenced by its so-called principles. Now, according to the epistemological perspective adopted by Richards, Freeman, Johnson and others, the fact that there is no scientific evidence to support NLP counts for little, so what sense does it make for the teacher trainer to focus on getting the student-teachers to articulate their beliefs about NLP? What is the point of everybody becoming more aware and able to articulate what they think about NLP? It would only have a point if their reflections led them to change their beliefs, but why should they? On what authority can we say that neuro-linguistic programming is mistaken, or not worthy of belief? In general, how do Johnson, Freeman, Richards and others decide on the content of any SLTE course, on recommendations, on what they want the participants to learn? Trapped in the Humpty Dumpty relativist world, how do they escape the culture of navel-gazing?

In education, as elsewhere, we need to improve our understanding of things in order to get things done and to make progress. Assuming a realist epistemology and recognizing the usefulness of the scientific method has led to enormous progress, and seems like a more promising way of going about designing and assessing SLTE than shifting towards the 'interpretative epistemological perspective' adopted by Johnson and others. Let us accept that many of the SLTE courses currently being implemented do not meet the needs of its participants, and that Tarone and Allwright (2005, p. 12) are right when they say "differences between the academic course content in language teacher preparation programs and the real conditions that novice language teachers are faced with in the language classroom appear to set up

a gap that cannot be bridged by beginning teacher learners". The conclusion to be drawn is surely that the SLTE courses must change in such a way that the gap is bridged. We must critically evaluate courses, recognize their shortcomings, and listen carefully to suggestions that ensure that teachers are better prepared to meet the challenges of their jobs. Engaging teachers in reflective practices, uncovering their assumptions and beliefs, improving collaboration and feedback channels, introducing more and better-organized teaching practice and peer observation, all these are welcome suggestions. But they do not persuade us that SLTE should make teacher reflection on learning to teach the main focus of SLTE.

Our view rests on a realist epistemology which assumes that there is such a thing as objective knowledge, "reliable knowledge", as Popper (1972) calls it. We see a teacher's competence as made up of a range of knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitudes and values which can be discussed and evaluated by appeal to empirical evidence and rational thinking. Our view is that SLTE should begin with the critical examination of theories which attempt to explain the phenomena of second language acquisition and in particular of instructed second language acquisition. These theories can be evaluated in terms of their coherence, cohesion, logical consistency and clarity, and their empirical content. From the basis of an understanding of the reliable findings about (instructed) second language acquisition which emerge, we may then examine various approaches to ELT in terms of their methodological principles, pedagogic procedures, syllabus, materials and assessment procedures. As to how such content is best delivered in SLTE courses, we will address these issues below.

We turn now to an examination of current SLTE courses and programs, which we divide into pre-service English teaching education and subsequent, on-going teacher development.

10.5 Pre-service language teacher education (PLTE)

10.5.1 CELTA

The Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA) is one of the two most popular initial teacher qualifications currently offered by UK-based examination bodies. The other is the Trinity College London Certificate in TESOL (Cert TESOL), available through approximately 100 centers in the UK and overseas (Brandt, 2008). Given its longer history and greater reach, we will focus on the CELTA, which is provided by Cambridge English Language Assessment through authorized

Cambridge English Teaching Qualification centers around the world, including British Council centers, ELS language centers, and International House schools. The CELTA website (Cambridge Assessment English, 2019) states that "tens of thousands" take the course every year at more than 2,800 centers in 130 countries around the world, and that all centers are regularly inspected by Cambridge Assessment English to make sure that they meet the high standards set. The CELTA course can be taken either full-time or part-time, at one of the authorized centers or online. A full-time course typically involves about 120 hours of work (homework apart) and lasts between four and five weeks.

The CELTA Syllabus consists of five modules:

Topic 1 – Learners and teachers, and the teaching and learning context
Topic 2 – Language analysis and awareness
Topic 3 – Language skills: reading, listening, speaking and writing
Topic 4 – Planning and resources for different teaching contexts
Topic 5 – Developing teaching skills and professionalism.

There are two assessment components:

Teaching Practice: participants teach for a total of six hours, working with classes at two levels of ability. Assessment is based on overall performance at the end of the six hours.

Written Assignments**:** Four written assignments count towards assessment: one focusing on adult learning; one on the language system of English; one on language skills; and one on classroom teaching (Cambridge Assessment English, 2019).

While Cambridge Assessment English are responsible for designing the course, it is implemented locally, and the teacher trainers have some flexibility in decisions about the scheduling and intensity of the courses and precisely how the five topics are addressed. Courses consist of reading recommended texts, classes, tutorials, supervised teaching practice, group discussions and feedback, and last an average of 120 hours. Assessment is a combination of marked written assignments, and continuous assessment of participation in tutorials, classes and teaching practice. There are no formal exams. Teaching practice is a vital part of the course, with trainees being required to teach students at two different levels. Trainees are assigned to small groups and encouraged to collaborate in order to prepare their lessons.

CELTA is the most widely recognized English teaching qualification in the world. It is the qualification most often requested by employers: three out of four English language teaching jobs require a CELTA qualification (Cambridge Assessment English, 2019). It is recognized by the British Council and by a large number of employers and governments worldwide, and it is endorsed by almost all of the most widely published teacher trainers and educators in the UK, with the notable exception of Scott Thornbury (see below). CELTA's widespread recognition and endorsement is not surprising; its curriculum reflects the interests of corporate ELT, i.e, the commercial publishers, examination boards, teacher education bodies and course providers who persuade the public that proficiency in English as an L2 is best accomplished by doing a succession of courses from A1 to C3, using their syllabuses, their materials and their exams, taught by teachers who have done their SLTE courses.

We may note immediately that the CELTA course pays almost no attention to how people learn languages and thus fails to provide teachers with the standards required by the TESOL association as stated at the beginning of this chapter. The only mention of learning a second language is in the first written assignment, focus on the learner, but in fact, even here, there is no requirement for trainees to investigate the process of second language learning, or to discuss teaching implications. The course simply assumes that ELT consists of teachers working through a synthetic syllabus (see Chapter 7, Section 7.2.) presenting and then practicing pre-determined items of English and developing the four skills. Inauthentic spoken and written texts, mostly taken from coursebooks, are used as vehicles for skills and language work. Most course time is devoted to how to present and practice grammatical forms or to carry out isolated skills-focused activities. ELT is seen as consisting of a systematic, item by item study of the language, followed by relatively controlled practice. Mere lip service is paid to CLT; the methodology informing the CELTA course has, in fact, changed little from the Situational Approach used in the very first courses offered by International House nearly forty years ago.

While there is no requirement in the official CELTA course outline that coursebooks of the type described in Chapter 7 be adopted, these coursebooks are widely used in the tutorials, class discussions and teaching practice. No mention is made in CELTA course descriptions of the distinction between synthetic and analytic syllabuses, or of the need to engage in any critical evaluation of the methodological principles which might inform pedagogical procedures. Some other general weaknesses of the course are that it attempts to cover far too much in the time given; that

the course, and in particular Topic 2, Language analysis and awareness. is designed on the false assumption that everybody doing the course is a native English speaker; and that the teaching practice fails to give trainees any real opportunities to learn how to teach (see below). The CELTA course's view of language and language teaching leads to its making isolated practice of the four language skills a major part of the syllabus and a crucial influence on materials design. As Kumaravadivelu (1994, p. 31) argues, the principle of skills practice in ELT is adopted "more for logistical than for logical reasons", since skill separation makes little sense and is in fact, "a remnant of the audiolingual era with little empirical or theoretical justification". Krashen (2008) takes a similar view, saying that 'skill-building' is logical only if you accept that communicative competence is a process of first learning about the target language by consciously learning grammar and vocabulary, and then practicing it, using the rules and new words you learn in speaking and writing practice activities "again and again until they become 'automatic'" (p. 177).

Krashen (2008) describes the 'Skill-Building Hypothesis' as "a delayed-gratification hypothesis" which states that "we must first study rules and learn vocabulary, and then some day, after lots of hard work, we can actually use the language" (p. 178). This 'skill-building hypothesis' goes unchallenged by those responsible for designing the CELTA course; after all, the same hypothesis informs coursebook writers, who ensure that grammar and vocabulary are first presented and then followed by short texts and skills practice activities. As we have shown in Chapter 7, communicative use of a second language involves the interrelated and mutually reinforcing use of skills, and teaching is therefore likely to be far more efficacious when students are given the chance to learn and use language holistically. No matter how much teachers are advised by CELTA tutors to use 'skill-building' activities to help their students 'automatiize' what they learn in the presentation stage of the lesson, research shows that learners will, nevertheless, use language skills in different combinations and not learn the L2 to automatized native speaker levels one structure at a time. Kumaravadivelu concludes that "all available empirical, theoretical, and pedagogical information points to the need to integrate language skills for effective language teaching" (p. 35).

Turning now to the teaching practice part of the course, in her study of CELTA, Brandt (2008) reports a number of problems. Drawing on outcomes of research into the experiences of participants on CELTA courses offered internationally by a UK-based provider, Brandt first draws attention to the large number of trainees who felt that their limited teaching

time put great pressure on them to teach according to the different tutors' expectations and preferences. Teaching practice on the CELTA is evaluated by the tutors, and success involves being seen to adequately use key techniques, such as transformation drills, marker sentences, counselling responses, concept questions, elicitation, and Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) routines, to name just a few. But, as Brandt points out, the problem is that different tutors have different, often contradictory, views about teaching techniques – some love drills while others frown on them – and it is thus vital to trainees' success or failure to discover and keep in tune with the particular preferences of whichever tutor is observing them.

Other issues highlighted by Brandt were that trainees felt they were not free to experiment and make mistakes without being judged; that they were given few opportunities to reflect on their performance; and that they perceived the purpose of their short teaching practice sessions (lasting from 40 to 60 minutes) as being to show what they could do, rather than to help the students to learn. This feeling among trainees that the teaching practice was something of a sham, that they behaved more like performing monkeys than genuine teachers, was echoed by responses from tutors who complained about experiencing "a dual, conflicting, role: that of guide (to the practising, developing teacher) and that of assessor (of the trainee's performance)" (Brandt, 2008, p. 256).

Brandt concludes that the CELTA course amounts to learning a set of techniques so that the trainees' use of these techniques might then be judged. Such a framework fails to recognize the diversity and opportunities of each language learning classroom, and also fails to take into account the distinct contexts in which the course is offered around the world. The course encourages a 'one-size-fits-all' approach, restricting trainees' opportunities to adequately prepare for the challenges they will face in their local environment, and promoting a view of teachers as "contextually-isolated technicians" (Brandt, 2006, p. 262). Furthermore, as suggested above, the teaching practice tends to treat language learners as 'tools' and 'guinea pigs', expecting them to jump through a set of hoops for the teachers' convenience, and the lessons given by the trainees are thus a means of assessment, rather than opportunities for genuine practice.

Finally, here is the view of Scott Thornbury, co-author of best-selling books for student teachers and tutors of CELTA (Thornbury and Watkins, 2007a; Thornbury Watkins, 2007b). In his blog *The A to Z of ELT*, in a reply to comments on his post *P is for Pre-training*, Thornbury (2017) confirms that the "vast majority" of CELTA courses are "coursebook centerd (i.e.,

teaching practice is based on coursebook lessons, and example materials are taken from coursebooks)". Further characteristics of the CELTA courses pointed out by Thornbury are as follows:

1. The general assumption made by tutors is that a grammar-based, structural syllabus (i.e., the syllabus laid out in the coursebook) will be used.
2. Tutors encourage the use of a "direct method methodology" which proscribes the use of the L1.
3. IRF exchanges and display questions are the predominant style of teacher talk.
4. The demonstration classes given by the teacher trainers are characterized by a superficial treatment of texts, a high activity turnover and the prioritising of 'fun'.
5. The courses are 'hermetically-sealed', "i.e., there is little or no reference to, or integration of, local context".

In short, the CELTA course has severe limitations in its preparation of teachers. Today, it is likely to produce teachers who lack any proper understanding of how people learn languages, and who adopt a coursebook-driven approach to ELT, largely unaware of the evidence-based arguments against it.

10.5.2 Masters in TESOL

An option for those who want to learn how to teach English as an L2 is to do a Masters in TESOL, or a post-graduate Certificate or Diploma. These post-graduate courses vary enormously in their content and manner of delivery, an increasing number of distance learning and blended learning options now being available. Common components of the course are: language learning, language teaching, the structure of English, discourse analysis, language assessment, language in society, syllabus and materials design. Masters degrees culminate in a big project, which takes the form of one or more of: an internship or practicum, assembling a portfolio of work, a thesis (an extended written work, usually including a small-scale research study). The assessment can be through on-going assessment, marked assignments, or exams, or a combination of these. Students attend lectures, seminars, workshops, and one-to-one tutorials, and, in many cases observe classes and do some teaching practice.

These courses would seem to fall naturally into Wallace's "applied science" model, but without examining the content of a course, and the way it is

delivered, we cannot know to what extent they promote the kind of reflexion that Wallace, or Freeman, for example advocate, or how much theory and practice is involved. Nevertheless, all the courses pay at least some attention to second language learning, and in order to assess any of them, we would need to review precisely how they tackle this issue, and how they evaluate the implications of what we know about adult second language learning for syllabus and materials design, pedagogy and assessment.

10.5.3 Pre-service ELT courses for non-native English speaker teachers

More than 90% of those currently teaching English as a foreign language are non-native English speakers (British Council, 2015). Most non-native English speaker teachers (often referred to as NNESTs) work "in their own countries, where the government's Ministry of Education produces a curriculum and stipulates the entry level qualifications required to work as an English teacher. We will therefore take a brief look at pre-service language teacher education courses carried out by NNESTs around the world, with special reference to China.

The traditional approach to ELT in China is characterized by Hu (2003, p. 93) as

> "a curious combination of the grammar-translation method and audiolingualism, which is characterised by systematic and detailed study of grammar, extensive use of cross-linguistic comparison and translation, memorisation of structural patterns and vocabulary, painstaking effort to form good verbal habits, an emphasis on written language, and a preference for literary classics".

Hu adds that this approach has strong support from the Chinese culture of learning, and that it is very popular with both Chinese teachers and students.

In 2001, recognizing the failure of the traditional approach to equip students with the competence needed to use English for communicative purposes (Zhan, 2008), the Chinese Ministry of Education issued a new national English Language Curriculum Standards document, which was revised in 2011. The curriculum's objective was to encourage a more communicatively orientated approach to ELT in primary, secondary and tertiary education. It stated that communicative competence is the chief goal for English teaching and learning in China, and laid out goals for the four skills, linguistic knowledge (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and communicative functions), and for "learning strategies and cultural awareness" (Zhang

2012, p. 75). Zhang (2012) also notes that the revised 2011 curriculum encourages the adoption of task-based language teaching,

To support curriculum and syllabus developments, a new policy on textbook production was adopted in the late 1980s, and this led to collaboration between local education departments and publishers with overseas publishers and textbook writers in producing up-to-date learning materials (Hu, 2004). Hu (2004) gives the example of the most widely used textbook series in China *Junior/Senior English for China,* which involved collaboration between the People's Education Press, the Longman publishing company and the United Nations Development Program. Another example is the Oxford English series used by schools in Shanghai, produced jointly by the Chinese Communist Party and Oxford University Press (see OUP China, 2019).

In 2003, The Chinese Ministry of Education launched a nationwide Bachelor of Arts (BA) program in TEFL, and this became the recognized Pre-Service English Teacher Education program for those wishing to teach English as a Foreign language in primary, secondary and tertiary education in China. In September 2003, 74% of universities across China received their first cohort of student teachers for the BA TEFL English (Ping, 2015). In the four-year BA program, courses include General English, Advanced General English, English Grammar, English Listening, English Speaking, English writing, Translation, Extensive Reading, British Culture and Society, British and American Literature, Psychology, Basic Principles of Education, English Teaching Methodology, Testing (including TEMs design or teaching for TEM tests), and Concise Linguistics. A three-month practicum in local schools is part of the final year.

During the four years, participants are required to sit various English language proficiency tests, called "Tests for English Majors" (TEMs). The TEM Band 4 is taken at the end of the second academic year, and the TEM Band 8 is taken during the end of the last academic year.

The Chinese BA TEFL course is delivered in a typically conservative, academic fashion (Zhang, 2012; Chen and Goh, 2011; Zhan, 2008; Ping, 2015). Students attend lectures and classes on the various subjects in the curriculum; the teacher is a member of the university faculty; the amount of discussion and interaction with the teacher and among the students varies according to the teacher; students are expected to read the recommended texts for each subject, write assignments, including a final "thesis paper; and

pass a number of tests and exams; and finally, they are required to put the knowledge into supervised practice during the three-month practicum.

Two major issues arise from this description of China's BA TEFL course. First, the difficulties student teachers had in expressing themselves clearly and fluently in English, and secondly, the 'mismatch' between the objectives of the course and the ways student teachers subsequently did their jobs in their local contexts. Zhan (2008) points out that student teachers doing the pre-service courses often had difficulty in expressing themselves clearly and fluently in English, with the result that those running the courses were obliged to spend as much time on teaching English speaking ability as they did on teaching how to teach English. She also concludes that the course's promotion of CLT failed to change the type of teaching the student teachers subsequently carried out. After the participants in her study had finished the course, little of the communicative approach seemed to have rubbed off, and teaching was text-based, with "the tyranny of the prescribed textbook" still in evidence (Zhan, 2008, p. 62).

Studies by (Hu (2003) and Yan, (2012) confirm both of Zhan's concerns, and give support to the general view that, despite being told of the value of CLT in helping students use English for communicative purposes, and despite stating in their answers to researchers' questions that they firmly believed in the value of spending classroom time on communicative activities, when the teachers' classes were observed, it became obvious that their lessons were teacher-fronted, and that the vast majority of the time was spent using a coursebook to instil knowledge about English grammar and vocabulary.

Similar results have been found in studies carried out in other countries. Regarding the language problem, a 1994 study by Reves & Medgyes (cited in Braine, 2005) asked 216 native speaker and non-native speaker English teachers from 10 countries (Brazil, former Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Israel, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, Sweden, former Yugoslavia, and Zimbabwe) about their experiences as teachers. The overwhelming majority of participants were non-native speakers of English, and in their responses, 84% of the non-native speaker subjects said that they had various difficulties using English and that their teaching was adversely affected by these difficulties. Difficulties with vocabulary and fluency were most frequently mentioned, followed by speaking, pronunciation, and listening comprehension.

As to the second issue, the 'mismatch' between the objectives of the course and the ways student teachers subsequently did their jobs in their local contexts, attempts to implement curriculum reform that moves towards a more CLT approach to ELT have been studied in various parts of the world, including Lewis and McCook's (2003) study in Vietnam; Hos and Kekec's (2014) study in Turkey; Nunan's (2003) study of pre-service courses in South.East.Asia and the Pacific region; Orafia and Borg's (2009) study in Libya; and Fadilah's (2018) study in Indonesia. In all cases, important resistance to change was found, such that once the student-teachers finished their pre service courses and began to work as teachers in local classrooms, they gave few opportunities to their students to engage in any extended communicative activities, preferring instead to concentrate on explicit instruction, guided by coursebooks, where students' opportunities for speaking practice came mainly from reading from the coursebook or responding to display questions.

When we examine the problem of non-native English speaker teachers whose command of English obstructs their ability to confidently implement a CLT curriculum, it is important to begin by saying that the discrimination experienced by well-qualified, non-native English speaker teachers working outside their country of origin is now almost universally condemned. In the private sector, even ten years ago, providers of ELT courses around the world routinely insisted on a "native speakers only" hiring policy, often hiding behind the excuse that the public demanded it. It is now, finally, generally acknowledged that, given a sufficient command of English, non-native English speaker teachers have many advantages over native English speaker teachers in local contexts (Braine, 2013). This does not mean that discrimination against non-native speaker teachers has been successfully overcome - it has not, and the fight continues.

In the many cases where non-native English speaker teachers do, as a matter of fact, lack the necessary confidence and communicative competence in English to be effective, this is a problem that stems, partly at least, from failures in the way that the student-teachers were taught English. This brings us back to the sociocultural perspective of SLTE, and on to the second issue of the mismatch between the aims and outcomes of SLTE courses.

Recall that Freeman (2016) argues that teachers' prior experience of language learning will inform their beliefs about language teaching and learning, and that these beliefs, which they bring with them to their pre-service English teaching courses, will filter what they are told during the course about how to teach. Thus, a "transmission of expertise" approach

which fails to give priority to teacher beliefs, knowledge and experience is likely to lead to a mismatch between what preservice teachers are told and the way they subsequently behave in class. There is no doubt that student teachers interpret what they are told in their own way, and that this interpretation will be influenced by their past experiences of, and beliefs about, teaching. Equally uncontroversial, but far more important in our view, is the claim that what and how teachers teach will depend on the context they find themselves in. In China, for example, traditions run deep, aspects of a CLT approach are viewed with suspicion by teachers and students alike (Yan, 2012), and perhaps most significantly, the exams produce a huge washback effect on what teachers actually do (Hu, 2003). Nevertheless, there are other, quite objective reasons for mismatches between the aims and outcomes of these courses.

If we return to the attempts made in China to reform ELT, studies including Ping (2015), Wang (2007), Braine (2013), Hu (2003), Yan (2012), Zhan (2008) and Li and Baldau (2011), all provide evidence to support the claim that the student teachers who took the BA TEFL course in China believed that the adoption and implementation of the new curriculum would lead to significant and necessary improvements. The fact that the teachers did not subsequently implement the new curriculum is explained by the hard realities of their teaching context, where a range of factors impeded their clearly stated desire to implement change. Yan comments that, while teachers enthusiastically endorsed the new curriculum, they were unable to put it into practice, due to many factors, including a lack of school support and professional expertise, student resistance, and "the examination culture that preyed on the whole education system and society" (Yan 2012, p. 21).

Note, in particular, the reference to the examination culture. Without exception, all the studies cited stress the importance of the washback effect of high-stakes exams on ELT in China, notably the university entrance exam. Li and Baldauif (2011) end their report by explaining teachers' resistance to the new curriculum as largely the result of the testing system, where students are accepted by universities according to their entrance examination marks. The authors state bluntly that unless this policy of testing is changed, "EFL teachers' attitudes, ideas, and teaching methods are only likely to be changed around the edges" (2011, p. 802).

Thus, in order to explain the mismatch between the stated objectives of SLTE courses in China and elsewhere and their lack of uptake, we may appeal to a variety of factors, many of which are objective and measurable: a shortage of up-to-date resources, teachers' limited communicative

competence in English, large class size, limited class time devoted to English, limited exposure to English outside the classroom, and the pressure of exams, for example. Cultural factors play their part too, of course, but there is, in our opinion, little to be said for the suggestion that Chinese teachers are so imbued with a Zen cultural heritage that they find it impossible to abandon centuries old teaching practices. Appealing to cultural stereotypes in this way is surely offensive and ignores the real experiences of Chinese teachers, many of whom sincerely desire change. Likewise, in other parts of the world where a mismatch between pre-service English teaching courses and outcomes have been found, explanations which stress differences in cultures and in teachers' subjective 'knowledge bases' fail to give enough attention to the restraints imposed by objective factors mentioned above, and also to the economic and political realities of living in a neoliberal capitalist world.

The state-run, pre-service English teaching courses offered in China and elsewhere are based on interpretations of ideas about CLT which stem not so much from the ideas which emerged in the 1970s, discussed in Chapter 7, but rather from more recent ideas, promoted by those working for the commercial ELT companies already identified, all of whom work to maximize profits, and all of whom are therefore keen to package ELT into a number of marketable products. The CELTA course is a good example: it is an easily marketable, highly profitable product in itself, and it involves the use of other, related, well-packaged, marketable products, including coursebooks and exams. It is only to be expected that SLTE courses designed by Cambridge English should have the features noted in the CELTA course, and it is equally predictable that the British Council, with its own chain of English language schools and close ties with Cambridge English, should endorse CELTA. Likewise, when overseas ministries of education turn to Cambridge English and other such providers for help in introducing a communicative approach to ELT, it is to be expected that these providers recommend using their own products, coursebooks and tests among them. We could hardly expect them to encourage the implementation of CLT as envisaged by its pioneers, whose guiding principles were to treat language holistically, do away with the Situational Approach, and replace it with a focus on students "doing" English by engaging in relevant, meaningful communicative activities. Furthermore, we cannot expect the Chinese Ministry of Education (or the Turkish, or Vietnamese, or Brazilian, etc., etc., ministries) to appreciate the differences between "the real thing" and what the British Council, Cambridge University Press, and others say it is.

The mismatch between pre-service courses aiming at implementing CLT and the outcomes is therefore the result of personal, contextual and political factors. An investigation of teachers' BAKs reveals that while some teachers hold on tenaciously to traditional methods, others lament that despite being convinced of the virtues of alternative approaches to ELT, they feel trapped by their teaching context – especially the stipulated coursebook – which prevents them from implementing serious changes to their teaching. Further consideration of economic and political factors shows that powerful interests in the global ELT industry work hard to resist change. The upshot is that most student teachers around the world finish their training without having a thorough understanding of how people learn languages or of the roles of implicit and explicit language learning and teaching. When they start teaching, they use a coursebook, and they spend most of the time talking about the language instead of engaging students in tasks involving relevant, meaningful communication in the language.

10.6 Continuous professional development

Native speaker English language teachers who do a CELTA course and then work abroad in private or public institutions usually find themselves in very different situations from those of non-native speaker teachers who do a university course like the Chinese BA TESOL, and then start work in a state school. The CELTA-trained native speaker teachers working overseas will often lack good declarative knowledge of all aspects of the English language, will have very little teaching experience, and will not be able to automatically count on help from experienced local colleagues. There will also be cultural differences to contend with. On the other hand, many of the university trained non-native English speaker teachers who take up jobs in their own country will still not feel confident that they have the communicative competence in English that they need, and will often fall back on 'traditional' teaching even when they are told to deliver a new more 'communicative' curriculum. The nature of teachers' initial training and of their subsequent teaching context obviously have a big effect on the kind of continuing help and support they need to ensure their development as teachers.

Unfortunately, most teachers, whatever their history and present context, are unlikely to get that help and support, because their employers will probably require them to use coursebooks and to encourage the kind of "continuous professional development" (CPD) that goes with them. This CPD is often entrusted to teacher trainers who share common features. They

design teacher training courses and act as examiners, they write “How to teach English” books and article, they travel around the world giving conference plenaries, workshops and short courses, and they write coursebooks. Jenny Johnson, a teacher trainer working for the British Council, reports on research she did via an email questionnaire to experienced teachers about their CPD (Johnson, 2018). Most of the respondents said that the area of CPD they most valued was learning from “experienced and expert practitioners in the field of ELT”, by attending conference sessions or workshops they give, or by reading articles and books written by them, or by participating in online events or blogs which they organize. The influence of these "experienced and expert practitioners" on CPD is crucial to an understanding of why ELT is what it is today.

Jack Richards fits the description of these ELT experts well. He has written widely on language learning and language teaching. He has given a great many conference plenaries and workshops. He enjoys a huge following on social media. And, as we have seen, he writes coursebooks. As we also saw above, he is a keen supporter of the work of Lantolf (2000) and Borg (2015b), who take a sociocultural / teacher cognition view of SLTE, and, not surprisingly, he is an equally keen supporter of coursebook-driven ELT. So, what does Richards say about CPD? In an article about teacher competencies, Richards (2013) says that CPD should be based on a comprehensive understanding of the competences and expertise required by language teachers. He asks: “What essential skills, knowledge, values, attitudes and goals do language teachers need, and how can these be acquired?” (p. 4). Answering his question, Richards lists ten “core dimensions of skill and expertise in language teaching”: language proficiency, content knowledge, teaching skills, contextual knowledge, language teacher identity, learner-focussed teaching, specialized cognitive skills, theorizing from practice, joining a community of practice, and professionalism (p.4). The most notable thing about this list of competencies is that knowledge of how people learn an L2 receives no mention.

Equally silent on the topic of second language learning is Jim Scrivener, whose *Learning Teaching* (2011) is one of the most successful ELT manuals of the last forty years. Scrivener has a long and distinguished career in ELT; he has been involved in designing teacher training courses, has given a great many conference presentations, and is still engaged in CPD. He is also the author of the Teachers’ Books and “Portfolios” for the *Straightforward* series of coursebooks. Scrivener sees coursebooks as the backbone of ELT, and in his opinion, as expressed in his *Demand High* blog, co-written with Adrian Underhill (Scrivener, 2017), coursebooks have

never been better: they continue to improve, they are practical, and they deserve their prominent place in ELT. For Scrivener and Underhill, SLTE should focus on making more demands on teachers in the way they use coursebooks.

Penny Ur is another greatly respected ELT "expert". She has published more than thirty books – coursebooks, workbooks, grammar practice books, skills practice books and "How to Teach English" books – and given literally hundreds of conference presentations and workshops over the past forty years. In 2013, Queen Elizabeth II of the UK presented Penny Ur with an OBE (Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) for services to English Language Teaching. The latest edition of Ur's (2012a) *A Course in Language Teaching* includes a new sub-section where precisely half a page is devoted to theories of SLA. Meanwhile, a great deal of the remaining 300 pages are devoted to encouraging teachers to use coursebooks and to exploring ways of doing so. Nowhere in this, or in any other of her books, articles or presentations, does Ur attempt to deal seriously with the findings of SLA research discussed in Section 1; instead, she insists that these findings have very limited relevance to teachers' jobs. For example, Ur claims that Pienemann's teachability hypothesis (see Chapter 3) has only very doubtful implications for teaching (Ur, 2017a) and that studies in SLA are "selected for reasons that have nothing to do with their usefulness to the practitioner" (Ur, 2017b).

Famous for his theatrical conference appearances over the past forty years and for his passionate involvement in SLTE, Jeremy Harmer, often referred to as "The Maestro" by teachers and fellow teacher trainers, is, perhaps the quintessential example of the teacher trainer. While Ur's *A Course in Language Teaching* gives research findings in SLA little more than a passing mention, Jeremy Harmer's (2016) *The Practice of English Language Teaching,* now in its fifth edition, devotes a 17-page chapter to how people learn languages. However, to put this into context, the chapter on seating arrangements in classrooms has more pages, and over the gruelling course of its more than 500 pages, Harmer's magnum opus pays scant regard to SLA research or to its implications for classroom practice. The chapter on language learning is incomplete, badly informed and badly judged. Continuing developments of a cognitive-interactionist theory of SLA and new studies in interlanguage development are ignored, and the work of many of the scholars cited, including, Krashen, Pienemann, Long and Schmidt, is misrepresented. One of the clear messages that informs the book is that coursebooks are an essential and highly beneficial part of ELT.

Apart from *The Practice of English Language Teaching,* Harmer has also published ten coursebook series.

A more recent arrival to prominence in the field of CPD is Hugh Dellar, who, until the Covid19 pandemic clipped his wings, spent much of his time flying around the world at a frenetic pace, giving conference presentations, workshops, seminars, and short courses on various aspects of ELT aimed at helping teachers to grow professionally. Whenever Dellar addresses teachers, he emphasises the debt he owes to Michael Lewis, whose book *The Lexical Approach* (Lewis, 1993) informs Dellar's own view of ELT. Lewis' approach (described by Thornbury (2006) in another inspired victual metaphor as "all chunks and no pineapple") had some merits, but Dellar has managed to dispense with most of them in his own version, which he and co-author Andrew Walkley develop in their book *Teaching Lexically: Principles and Practice* (Dellar and Walkley, 2016). Here are their principles of how people learn languages:

> "Essentially, to learn any given item of language, people need to carry out the following stages:
> Understand the meaning of the item.
> Hear/see an example of the item in context.
> Approximate the sounds of the item.
> Pay attention to the item and notice its features.
> Do something with the item – use it in some way.
> Repeat these steps over time, when encountering the item again in other contexts" (p. 7).

No definition of an "item of language" is given, but since the authors believe that the English language is best seen as a vast collection of words and their collocates, we presume that their principles of language learning amount to the claim that learning an L2 is a matter of learning words, their collocates and some arbitrarily selected examples of the tens of thousands of lexical chunks used by native speakers, by repeating stages one to five listed above an unspecified number of times.

In an attempt to provide some support for their view, Dellar and Walkley appeal to two seemingly contradictory theoretical constructs: Hoey's (2005) construct of priming, and Schmidt's (1990, 2001, 2010) construct of noticing. Hoey states categorically that Krashen's (1985) distinction between acquisition and learning is correct: explicit learning only functions as a monitor, and priming is the unconscious process through which all language acquisition happens. Schmidt, on the other hand, states that noticing is conscious. Yet, despite their claim that language learning is the

result of unconscious priming, the vital fourth stage of Dellar and Walkley's six stage process of language learning calls for learners to "pay attention and notice" language items. Furthermore, in their discussion of stage 4, Dellar and Walkley fail to recognize not just that Schmidt's (1990) original version of the Noticing Hypothesis contradicts Hoey's priming theory, but that it was later quite significantly modified (Schmidt, 2001, 2010). While it is, in fact, possible to reconcile the two constructs, Dellar and Walkley do not even recognize the problem, and we suggest that treating second language learning as the result of a six step process where an unstated number of discrete "language items" are learnt as the result of an unexplained interaction between two seemingly contradictory constructs borders on the ludicrous. It only remains to note that Dellar and Walkley are the authors of the *Outcomes* series of coursebooks, and also of the *Roadmaps* B1 and B2 coursebooks.

Our conclusion from this brief account of a few of the more travelled figures involved in CPD is that, here again, the elephant in the room is ignored. Little to no serious attention is given to how people learn a second language by any of the teacher trainers discussed above, whose attitudes towards informing teachers about this vital part of a teacher's knowledge reflect the general trend in CPD. Rather than pay attention to research findings and their implications for ELT, most CPD around the world today aims at increased efficiency in the use of coursebooks, where teachers deliver the same types of courses, using the same types of syllabuses, as they have been doing for the past forty years. Teachers are given little encouragement to become familiar with the literature discussed in Section 1 of this book; instead, their "continuous development" focuses on doing the same thing in enhanced ways.

10.7 How SLTE could be done better

We have argued throughout Section 2 that current ELT is inefficacious because it is based on false assumptions about L2 learning – assumptions that inform the CEFR levels of proficiency (see Chapter 11), the syllabuses and coursebooks used by most teachers, and SLTE itself. In Chapter 8 we described the type of TBLT that we believe would lead to better results, It follows that, in our opinion, improving both pre-service language teacher education and subsequent continuous professional development depends on basing them on our knowledge of how people learn an L2, and paying more attention to TBLT.

Dealing first with pre-service language teacher education, we do not think that a university degree should be a pre-requisite, but neither do we think that a 120-hour course like CELTA or the Trinity College Certificate, is adequate preparation. We recommend that the minimum length of a pre-service course should be 500 hours, and we think that the best option is a one-year, post-secondary vocational education and training (PSV) course. An interesting discussion of PSV courses (not SLTE, specifically) run in Australia, Norway, Scotland, Italy and Spain can be found in the OECD publication edited by Jaana Puukka (OECD, 2012). Such courses are increasingly being offered by special university departments and by private institutions, and seem, in principle at least, to be the most appropriate for pre-service SLTE.

The course should consist of two parts. Not exactly “theory and practice”, more like essential background knowledge and practice. The two parts should run concurrently. Part One should begin with a unit devoted to a review of SLA research, and we recommend - of course! - that Section 1 of this book serve as a guide to the contents of this unit. We hope that our Section 1 makes a convincing case for the argument that teaching a second language efficaciously depends on a good understanding of how second languages are learnt, because of the special relationship that exists between declarative and procedural knowledge. The second unit should deal with descriptions of English, grammar, phonology and pronunciation, perhaps paying particular attention to the role of lexical chunks. Thirdly, syllabus design should be discussed, paying special attention to the differences between synthetic and analytic syllabus types. This unit should emphasise the superiority of analytic syllabuses, give special attention to needs analysis and the importance of identifying target tasks as discussed in Chapter 8. Next, there should be a unit on methodological principles and pedagogic procedures, also discussed in Chapter 8. A key component here should be a detailed discussion of the multiple ways in which teachers can give explicit instruction on various formal aspects of the language ('focus on form' as we refer to it) while concentrating on helping students participate in tasks where the focus remains on meaningful use of the L2. Finally, there should be a unit on assessment. The course could also offer a choice of options, such as young learners, materials development, and working in special environments.

The teaching practice component should involve the student teachers in a mixture of observing classroom-based and online classes taught by experienced teachers and actually teaching themselves. How the teaching practice is carried out is obviously crucial. All the limitations of the CELTA

course, discussed above, must be avoided. We recommend that the student teachers, rather like students in TBLT courses, are led through a sequence of increasingly demanding tasks, starting with working in tandem with an experienced teacher on small parts of a session, culminating in planning and giving a complete class on their own. By far the most important, and most demanding part of this training will be dealing with the moment-by-moment decisions as a lesson unfolds. We fully recognize that by asking teachers to do without a coursebook and to rely instead on lesson plans and materials that are based on pedagogic tasks, as described in Chapter 8, we expect much more of teachers when it comes to providing help with the language. It is important to note that we do not expect teachers to design the tasks or the materials that go with them, but, nevertheless, expecting them to decide when and how to intervene most effectively, is, as they say "a big ask". In a one-year course of the type we recommend, student teachers will need to be re-assured that they will improve with practice, but training in the basic techniques of recasts, etc., is surely a good foundation.

A major issue is pre-service language teaching courses aimed at non-native English speakers, such as those offered in China and elsewhere, discussed above. As we explained, the first obstacle to improvement is the difficulties student teachers have in expressing themselves clearly and fluently in English, and the second is the 'mismatch' between the objectives of the course and the ways that the student teachers subsequently do their jobs in their local contexts. The student teachers' language difficulties are largely the result of the way they themselves were taught, yet it is precisely this experience which, according to those who advocate a socio-cultural approach to SLTE, explains their unshakeable, or at least, very difficult to change "belief" that grammar-based teaching is the best way to do their job. We have argued that real, objective, contextual factors provide a fuller explanation, and that non-native speaker teachers in China, Korea, Finland, Brazil or wherever, are open to new ideas because anybody's beliefs and attitudes, *pace* socio-cultural arguments, can be changed by appeal to rational argument and evidence.

Our argument is that both the content and manner of delivery of pre-service language teaching courses needs to change radically. We appreciate the resistance there is to such change (indeed, we have attempted to explain this resistance), but it is not a case of "all or nothing". If we can agree that there are severe limitations to current practice, if we can agree that coursebook-driven ELT is inefficacious, then we can move towards the model sketched above.

As for on-going professional development, this is primarily the duty of the employer. Wherever teachers work, they should have the support of their employer, whose duty it is to foster on-going development. One of us was lucky enough to work for more than twenty years in a school where the staff room fizzed with the exchange of views and where collaboration among teachers was the norm. In that school, we helped each other to prepare classes and we regularly made planned visits to each other's classrooms. There were regular meetings among staff, peer observation of classes (voluntary and hugely popular), workshops by in-house teachers and by invited speakers, and financial grants to attend local, national and international conferences and to do post-graduate studies. That, surely, is a good example of organic on-going professional development. And why should it be regarded as exceptional, even "unthinkable" in so many teachers' lives? The expense is minimal (less than 1% of the school's expenses in the case cited) - the employer's attitude towards developing the right culture among staff is what counts. Of course, the employer, if savvy enough, can employ a good director of studies to do the work. One example, among many, is Sandy Millin (personal communication) who, as director of studies at various schools, has consistently fostered a culture of inquisitive, collaborative in-house professional development. Millin demonstrates what can be done, given the right attitude, even in the belly of the beast.

The policy adopted by so many employers of inviting a cabal of well-promoted, native speaker 'experts'- most of them authors of coursebooks and best-selling "How to teach" books - to jet around the planet giving talks and workshops to experienced teachers is already under serious attack. First, their credentials are suspect: quite simply, they lack a thorough understanding of the matters they claim to know about. Second, why involve the cost and environmental damage involved in using these people when so many better alternatives exist? Teachers can now find a wealth of online resources to help them develop. Much more importantly, in our opinion, is the option of working locally, both inside an institution and among local institutions in any particular city or area, and growing networks at the local, regional, national and international level. A network of local teacher educators can offer a coherent program of in-house development activities (reading groups, peer teaching and peer observation, collaborative action research, and workshops), local and regional workshops and seminars, and national conferences. Given our reservations about the work of the two biggest SLTE organizations, TESOL and IATEFL, whose teacher education special interest groups largely support a coursebook-driven ELT approach and sing from the same socio-cultural hymnbook, we recommend that teachers join independent local groups or cooperatives. The SLB cooperative in

Barcelona is an example. Twenty teachers currently form the coop They provide and share resources, equipment and training and fight for equal opportunity, fair pay and fair working conditions for all teachers. They organize regular teacher education sessions (held since March 2020 online, making expert use of Zoom); they are building a materials bank for teachers interested in designing pedagogic tasks; they sponsor members to attend conferences and workshops; and their website includes a Members Area where a wide range of up to date articles on instructed SLA and ELT practice are available for free download. We discuss the SLB coop further in Chapter 13.

Summary

The dominant view of SLTE in 2021 is that it should be informed by a socio-cultural approach which seeks to explore teachers' BAKs. The problem with this approach is that no clear picture emerges of the content of teachers' BAKs, and no clear way of evaluating them is provided. As a result, pre-service SLTE remains in the hands of big commercial operators, or the ministries of education of national governments, while ongoing SLTE is too often ignored by teachers' bosses, whose responsibility it is, and taken up by globe-trotting teacher educators, most of whom have a vested interest in promoting coursebook-driven ELT. Improvement in SLTE depends on an overhaul of pre-service courses, where the key issues of how people learn a second language, and the superior efficacy of analytic syllabuses are properly addressed, and on developing networks of local teachers who take responsibility for their own on-going professional development.

Discussion Questions

1. What knowledge do you think a good teacher of English as a second or foreign language needs?

2. How did the distinction between the theory and practice of ELT arise?

3. What are BAKs? What motivated the socio-cultural approach to SLTE?

4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the CELTA course? How would you change it?

5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of Masters programs in TESOL / TEFL?

6. What problems face non-native speaker trainee teachers?

7. Do you think SLTE is best designed and carried out by NS 'experts'?

8. What is your experience of SLTE? What pre-service and CPD courses have you done? How would you evaluate them?

9. What do you think should be the minimum academic qualifications of English as an L2 teachers? Do they need a degree?

10. How would you organize a CPD program for teachers in your local context?

Suggested Reading

Chen, Z. & Goh, C. (2011). Teaching oral English in higher education: Challenges to EFL teachers. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 16, 3, 333–345.

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Jordan, G. (2018). Teacher Trainers in ELT. In *What do you think you're doing?* Blog. Retrieved, February 6, 2021, from https://applingtesol.wordpress.com/

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SECTION 3.
EVALUATING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

Section 3 Introduction

So far, we have dealt with three parts of the hydra-headed ELT Industry: the public and private schools and institutions that deliver the courses, the publishers who produce the materials, and the publishers and teacher educators who deliver SLTE. In this section, we deal with the final part: the publishers and institutions that produce and administer evaluations of adult, non-native speakers' "level" or "proficiency" of English. This is one of the most powerful - and most profitable - parts of today's ELT industry; high stakes international proficiency tests like IELTS and TOEFL (see Chapter 11, Section 6) are taken by millions of people a year, often with life-changing consequences. National tests, such as the university entrance Sky exams in South Korea, which include a compulsory English exam (see Chapter 11, Section 6) have given rise to approx. 100,000 "hagwons" - schools dedicated to preparing students for this exam. While the legitimate purpose of language testing is to inform decisions that specific test users need to make about specific test taker's suitability for a particular role or purpose, high stakes English texts commonly allot people to reified "levels" associated with the CEFR and are then used quite inappropriately to make decisions about people's jobs prospects or even their application for entry to a foreign country. As we will see in Chapter 11, evaluating English language today is associated with the award of certificates which use vague and inaccurate proficiency levels to frequently make false predictions about the holder's ability to successfully perform certain functions in English. Chapter 11 traces the development of English testing to its current reliance on proficiency testing. It then examines some examples of high stakes tests and argues that they are motivated more by profit than by high standards of validity; that they are unfit for purpose; and that they cause detrimental washback effects. The chapter concludes with suggestions about how assessment could be done better.

CHAPTER 11

HOW ASSESSMENT IS DONE NOW AND HOW IT COULD BE DONE BETTER

11.1 Introduction

The main purpose of language testing is to provide interpretable results that inform decisions made by the test users about the test taker's suitability for a particular role. Three examples are university admission, job selection, and immigration control. Tests used for these purposes are often called high-stakes proficiency tests. Other types of tests inform decisions guiding language training, such as placement tests, diagnostic tests, and progress assessments. An important issue, regardless of the testing purpose, is that students doing courses in different types of programs are unhelpfully referred to as "beginner," "intermediate," and "advanced" learners. These are meaningless labels, as they are internally defined within language programs, and thus not transferrable from one testing context to another. One program's "intermediate" is another program's "advanced." For example, advanced language courses in a university language program typically aim for basic functional use, whereas advanced courses in language for specific purposes programs aim for language use in a particular occupational or academic domain. The only people who can interpret these labels are the people who work in the particular program concerned, and often even they cannot do so consistently. The CEFR proficiency scale claims to solve the problem of the discrepancies between different program's labels by assigning all learners to a level, from Pre A1 (A1 = "Starter") to C2 ("Mastery"); but, as we shall see, they do not. Our argument in this chapter is that the CEFR proficiency scale provides a poor base for high-stakes tests, which are, as a result, unfit for purpose. We further argue that these tests exert a negative washback effect on ELT practice. 'Washback' refers to the effect that the format of the test has on language curricula and teaching and learning behaviors. Finally, we suggest how testing and assessment could be done better and lead to positive washback.

11.2 Discrete-point language testing

The first scientific attempts to make language testing reliable and interpretable employed discrete-point testing. In these pioneering attempts, the same discrete-point test was administered to large samples of examinees, and researchers, including John Oller (1979), showed how to produce a .97 (almost perfect) Pearson coefficient of internal reliability, provided the numbers in the sample are large enough and the range of language ability across test takers varied enough. Discrete-point tests focused on isolated grammar points and tested receptive language ability only. Advantages included their many data points, both human (test takers) and grammar targets (discrete points). Like their counterpart synthetic grammatical syllabi, they were easy to construct (fill in blanks or multiple choice), and they were easy to score, for example one point per item; and they could report reliability, for example, as a correlation coefficient.

But they were not valid for the same reasons that a synthetic syllabus is not valid (see Chapter 6.1). Where validity is concerned, how was one to interpret test scores? What did it mean to get some number of points on a grammar test? What could the learners *do* if they had a particular total number of points on a test? How was a higher score better than a lower score when it came to performance? Was a student who scored 90 points really better than another student who scored 70? There was no way to tell. This is because discrete-points tests measure metalinguistic knowledge, which is knowledge *about* language. The difficulty is that, as we saw in Chapter 5, knowledge about language is not readily transformed into the ability to *use* language for real-world purposes.

11.3 Skills-based language testing

For a while, testers tried to measure language skills separately, beginning with the receptive skills, listening and reading. As with discrete-point testing, the productive skills, speaking and writing, were often ignored because they were difficult to test with large numbers of students, for example, international students throughout the world. The problem was that language typically is not used one skill at a time. For example, making a telephone call, service encounters, and participating in a graduate seminar all involve both listening and speaking and sometimes reading as well. (There are exceptions, of course, such as reading for pleasure, delivering a speech, or listening to the radio.) Writing is often taken to be a single-skill task; however, people rarely write without going back and forth reading

what they have just written and may read other sources to inform their own writing. Another problem is that generic labels like "listening," "speaking," "reading" and "writing" are just that, generic and unspecified. What does it mean to say that someone is good at reading? What kind of reading? Reading what kind of material? At what speed? The same can be said of the other skills. Is someone who can "listen to the radio" able to listen to the news and/or to a sports commentary equally well? If someone gets a high score in "speaking, "what does that mean? Can the person speak fluently or as politely or informally as appropriate? And what of writing ability? If one can write a good test essay, does that transfer to future writing demands such as emails, lecture notes, or formal memos? Once again, there was no way to tell, and there was no way to predict performance in real-world discourse domains (academic or occupational).

11.4 Proficiency testing

Picking up speed in the 1970s, with major backing from profit-making commercial testing companies, such as Cambridge Assessment, the Educational Testing Service (ETS), and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS); government entities, such as the British Council, the European Council, and the United States Government Interagency Language RoundTable (ILR); and academic organizations, such as the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages, there was a spate of data-free proficiency test development. "Proficiency" is an epiphenomenon. In other words, according to its proponents, overall proficiency is supposedly divisible into levels on a proficiency rating scale. To determine these levels, groups of people gathered together to write descriptions (proficiency level descriptors), sometimes asking teachers for their intuitions, and decided amongst themselves that there were say, three, four or, say six levels on a particular scale they had developed.

For example, the ACTFL (American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1985) proficiency test has the following levels: Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Superior and Distinguished. The first four levels are further sub-divided into low, mid and high sub-levels. A sample ACTFL rating could be "Advanced Mid." Meanwhile, the ILR proficiency scale has six levels of proficiency: No, Memorized, Elementary, Limited Working, General Professional, Advanced Professional and Functionally Native. These levels are further divided into basic and plus levels. For example, a rating at Level 2, "Limited Working Proficiency,' can be ILR 2 or ILR 2+. Finally, the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of

Reference (CEFR) for languages comprises three levels, each subdivided into two sub-levels: A1 and A2 (Basic User), B1 and B2 (Independent User), and C1 and C2 (Proficient User). Many of the proficiency tests target skills separately, for example speaking proficiency or reading proficiency, so they inherit all the problems discussed in Section 11.3.

Levels on proficiency scales are no more informative than scores on a discrete-point test, just less reliable because they are impressionistic. Proficiency levels *appear* to be more informative than discrete-point tests due to the skill-level descriptions and to the "can-do" statements that have been added to the levels over the decades (once again not empirically based); however, even a cursory examination shows they even these are based on impressionistic judgements. As Long, Gor & Jackson (2012, p. 103) pointed out, "the characterizations are sometimes so vague and general as to require considerable imagination on the reader's part." Take, for example, the description of CEFR level B1:

> "Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans." (Council of Europe, n.d.).

Long et al stress that descriptions such as 'Clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc.' and 'situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken,' "can obviously mean very different things to different people and in practice" (p. 104).

In addition, only zero and near-native proficiency levels are truly measurable. We know this from the results from countless empirical SLA that have tried to identify the advanced learner, which has required the ability to distinguish near-native speakers from true native speakers. Results of these studies consistently show such distinctions are possible provided measures are sufficiently sensitive (Hyltenstam, 2016). Any other distinctions along proficiency scales are largely impressionistic, which the language assessment field needs to get away from if it is to be taken seriously as evidence-based.

Beyond the proficiency scale descriptors, there are numerous problems in the tests that elicit language samples on which scores and ratings are based.

For example, proficiency tests typically employ speaking prompts and reading texts which purport to have been "leveled," i.e., judged to aim at the level concerned. This is nonsense. Apart from highly specialized material, all prompts and all texts can be responded to or read at some level; the amount of information conveyed or understood will simply vary as function of language ability. Moreover, language sample elicitation is affected by knowledge of topics and culture. And, in elicitation systems such as ACTFL's Oral Proficiency Interview, results are at least partially dependent on the test interlocutor's skill in adjusting to the test taker's perceived level. Moreover, proficiency scales offer little in the way of diagnostic information which could indicate to teachers and learners what they would need to do to improve their scores and ratings. Take, for example, this descriptor at the ACTFL Advanced Low level:

> "Advanced Low speech is typically marked by a certain grammatical roughness (e.g., inconsistent control of verb endings), but the overall performance of the Advanced-level [test] tasks is sustained, albeit minimally. The vocabulary of Advanced Low speakers often lacks specificity. Nevertheless, Advanced Low speakers are able to use communicative strategies such as rephrasing and circumlocution." (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, 2012, p. 6).

Precisely what is the learner supposed to do to improve?

Finally, it practically goes without saying that since they are not empirically based, there are no established correspondences among the major proficiency scales in use. And like discrete-point and skills-based testing, there is little evidence that proficiency ratings are predictive of success in any language use domain. Even if a test taker can succeed in the testing context, there is no way to tell whether this means the person will succeed outside that context, for example in using language for professional purposes.

11.5 The dark side of language testing

Given their obvious weaknesses, one might ask: How is it possible that so many of the tests we have critiqued continue to be used? The reason is that they form the fourth "head" of the hydra that makes up the current global ELT industry. Publishing companies; English as an L2 course providers in the public and private sector; and providers of Second Language Teacher Education are the three "heads" that have already been discussed, mostly in Chapter 7. In this chapter, we tackle the final interlocking component of the hydra, namely testing and assessment, where we re-encounter some familiar

names. Current English language testing is informed by the CEFR proficiency scale, already discussed above, which places learners of English as an L2 somewhere on a line from 'can-do-hardly-anything' to 'can-do-it-all'. Despite the fact that, as we have seen, the scale has no construct or content validity, it is nevertheless used in three types of test: first, placement tests, which assign students to a CEFR level, from A1 to C2, where an appropriate course of English, guided by an appropriate coursebook, awaits them; second, progress tests, which are used to decide if students are ready or not for their next course of English; and third, high-stakes-decision proficiency tests (a multi-billion-dollar commercial activity in its own right), which are used purportedly to determine students' current proficiency level, and which are discussed below.

The key place of testing in the ELT industry should already be clear (exam preparation materials are a lucrative part of publishing companies' business, and most courses of English provided by schools and institutes at all three educational levels start and finish with a test), but perhaps the best illustration of how language testing forms part of the "hydra" is the Pearson Global Scale of English (GSE), which allows for much more finely grained measurement than that attempted in the CEFR. In the Pearson scale, there are 2,000 can-do descriptors called "Learning Objectives"; over 450 "Grammar Objectives"; 39,000 "Vocabulary items"; and 80,000 "Collocations", all tagged to nine different levels of proficiency (Pearson, 2019). Pearson's GSE comprises four distinct parts, which together create what they proudly describe as "an overall English learning ecosystem" (Pearson, 2019, p.2.). The parts are:

1. The scale itself – a granular, precise scale of proficiency aligned to the CEFR.
2. GSE Learning Objectives – over 1,800 "can-do" statements that provide context for teachers and learners across reading, writing, speaking and listening.
3. Course Materials – digital and printed materials, most importantly, series of General English coursebooks.
4. Assessments – Placement, Progress and Pearson Test of English Academic tests.

Pearson say that while their GSE "reinforces" the CEFR as a tool for standards-based assessment, it goes much further, providing the definitive, all-inclusive package for learning English, including placement, progress and proficiency tests, syllabi and materials for each of the nine levels, and a complete range of teacher training and development materials. In this way

the language learning process is finally and definitively reified: the abstract concepts of "granular descriptors" are converted into real entities, and it is assumed that learners move unidimensionally along a line from 10 to 90, making steady, linear progress along a list of can-do statements laid out in an easy-to-difficult sequence, leading inexorably, triumphantly, to the ability to use the L2 successfully for whatever communicative purpose you care to mention. It is the marketing division's dream, and it shows just how far the commodification of ELT has already come. We will now examine the commercial aspects of language testing in some detail.

11.6 High Stakes Tests

11.6.1 The Cambridge Assessment Group

One of the most powerful test providers is the Cambridge Assessment Group, which has three major exam boards: Cambridge Assessment English, Cambridge Assessment International Education, and Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations (OCR). Cambridge Assessment English and Cambridge Assessment International Education are part of the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate (UCLES) along with the Research and Consultancy Division. All these companies are owned by the University of Cambridge and are registered as charities, exempt from taxes. The group are responsible for the Cambridge English Qualifications, including Cambridge B2 (formerly the First Certificate Exam) and Cambridge C1 (formerly the Cambridge Advanced Exam), and also, along with their partners, for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exams, used globally as a university entrance test (the Academic module), an entrance test to many professions and job opportunities, and as a test for those wishing to migrate to an English-speaking country (the General English module).

According to the report of the group (Cambridge Assessment, n.d.), in 2018, the Cambridge Assessment Group designed and delivered assessments to more than 8 million learners in over 170 countries; employed nearly 3,000 people in more than 40 locations around the world; and generated revenue of over £382 million. At the end of 2019, the Cambridge Assessment Group announced that a record-breaking 25,000 organizations accept Cambridge English exams as proof of English language ability. This includes "wide recognition in the higher education sector, along with business and government departments worldwide". Top US and Canadian institutions, all universities in Australia, New Zealand and in the UK, immigration authorities across the English-speaking world, and multinational companies

including Adidas, BP, Ernst & Young, Hewlett-Packard, Johnson & Johnson, and Microsoft. The Cambridge English exams can be taken at over 2,800 authorized exam centers, and there are 50,000 preparation centers worldwide where candidates can prepare for the exams. As we will discuss below, the impact of the Cambridge Assessment Group's tests on millions of individual lives can be life-changing, while the scale of their activities means that they have global political, social, economic, and ethical consequences, and suggests that an independent body is needed to regulate them.

11.6.2 The IELTS tests

The IELTS tests highlight many of the concerns we have about the ELT assessment industry. IELTS started life in 1980 as the ELTS (the English Proficiency Test Battery), designed and administered jointly by the British Council and the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate. In 1989, the Australia branch of IDP (International Development Program) joined the British Council and the Cambridge Assessment group, and together they launched the IELTS (Davies, 2007). The British Council (Future Learn, 2020) describe the IELTS as "the world's most popular English language test for higher education and global migration". More than 3 million people took the IELTS exam in 2016; the test is currently administered at approximately 1,100 venues in 140 countries at a rate of up to four times a month and is recognized by over 10,000 organizations (test-users) globally (W.S. Pearson, 2019). As indicated above, there are two versions of IELTS: Academic and General Training. The Listening and Speaking parts are the same for both tests, but the subject matter of the Reading and Writing sections differ. The total test time is 2 hours and 45 minutes. The test scores are converted to a "band" score from 1 to 9, where Band 2 and under is equivalent to the CEFR A1 and Band 9 is equivalent to CEFR C2.

We have already seen in this chapter that there are fundamental flaws in proficiency tests which aim to assign test takers to a particular point along a linear scale. W.S. Pearson (2019) makes a number of specific criticisms of the IELTS tests, which reflect further concerns. First, there is evidence of a bias towards the linguistic norms of inner-circle Englishes, particularly those of the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia, which confer unfair advantages to candidates from certain linguistic backgrounds closely associated with inner-circle norms, such as Commonwealth countries to British English or Mexico to American English. This bias is particularly apparent in the accents heard in the listening test. Second, the writing test

features notable idiosyncrasies. W. S. Pearson (2019) cites Moore and Morton's (2005) paper, which analyzes the criteria used in the IELTS Academic Writing Test and demonstrates that they promote a peculiar IELTS writing genre, more like the spontaneous 'public letter-to-the-editor' genre than the genre found in academic journals.

Next, the speaking test has also received much criticism. Some of the criticism is aimed at poor content. For example, Roshan (2013) highlights cultural bias, citing Khan (2006), who reports on his experiences as an IELTS examiner in Bangladesh. On the basis of data collected from 18 local examiners, Khan claims that the test manifests cultural biases inherent in topics, vocabulary, and the terminology and question patterns of the speaking test. Khan gives the example of the difficulty Bangladeshi IELTS candidates had in responding to cues about "holidays" and "souvenirs". Given that, at least in 2006, tourism within Bangladesh was extremely limited, due to a general lack of financial resources, these words did not exist in the candidates "linguistic and cultural repertoire". The criteria for rating candidates speaking ability have also come under fire. Roshan cites the Read and Nation (2006) study, where examiner inconsistency in rating lexical resources was particularly noticeable, although rating lexical resources is a distinct, and important component in the IELTS speaking test rating scales. There are also the effects of financial factors. To save on costs, the IELTS speaking test relies on a single examiner, despite general agreement among experts that at least two independent ratings for each individual speaking test sample are required in order to minimize inconsistency within the individual ratings (see, for example, Bachman, 2010). In a further attempt to increase efficiency, the IELTS interview has been cut from four to three parts and now has a time limit of 11 to 14 minutes. We have already discussed the inherent weaknesses in any test that uses proficiency scale descriptors to place samples of candidates' oral production on a band of 1 to 7. If we add to those weaknesses the fact that the oral samples comprise very short responses to three cues, that the cues are sometimes culturally biased, that the rating criteria are not evenly applied, and that the sample is rated by a sole examiner, we surely have good grounds to question the reliability, validity and fairness of the test scores.

Moving to concerns about the administration and management of the test, there is first the issue of discrimination based on economic inequality. W.S. Pearson notes that the test "exacts a notable economic burden on its test-takers, particularly those who do not achieve their required band scores first time around" (W.S. Pearson, 2019, p. 281). The test fees are high and vary

significantly - from the equivalent of approximately $150 in Egypt to double that in China, a difference explained more by Chinese students' desire to study abroad than by any international differences in administration or management costs. Further costs to test-takers include possible transport and accommodation costs, preparation materials, and exam preparation classes or courses. Such are the expenses involved in taking the IELTS tests that they evidently discriminate against those with lower economic means and make it impossible for some people to take the test multiple times in order to achieve the required score. W.S. Pearson (2019) also points out that the owners of IELTS produce and promote commercial IELTS preparation content, which takes the form of printed and on-line materials and teacher-led courses. These make further financial demands on the test-takers, and while some free online preparation materials are made available on the IELTS website, full access to the materials costs approximately $52, and is free only for candidates who do the test or a preparation course with the British Council. Likewise, details of the criteria used to assess the IELTS writing test are only freely available to British Council candidates; all other candidates are charged approximately $55 for this important information. Finally, it should be noted that it is common, for those who can afford it, to take the IELTS multiple times in an attempt to improve their scores, and that the score obtained in an IELTS test is only valid for two years.

We come now to the uses to which the IELTS tests are put. We have seen that IELTS Academic is used by tertiary education institutions and universities all over the world to regulate the acceptance of overseas students. Its suitability for this purpose is severely undermined by the essential flaws in its design, as discussed above. Even if these flaws were addressed, it is extremely unlikely that the test could ever be fit for purpose. Those who take the IELTS Academic are not a homogenous group: the English needs of a nursing assistant have little in common with those a post-doctoral student of organic chemistry, for example. Pilcher and Richards (2017) conducted interviews and focus groups with lecturers in the subject areas of Design, Nursing, Engineering, Business, Computing and Psychology, and researched the English required in each subject. They concluded that determining English preparedness should be undertaken within the subject context, and that "it is necessary to challenge the power invested in IELTS". What makes the situation even worse is that although those who run IELTS periodically point out to academic institutions that they must carefully consider factors such as age, educational background, and first language when interpreting a candidate's scores, it seems that the test scores are, in fact, used without taking any notice of such factors (Coleman et al. 2003; Hyatt 2013, cited in W.S. Pearson, 2019).

The simplicity and efficiency with which such test scores can be processed strengthens the perception that IELTS scores are 'an easy short cut … concerning admissions to English-medium HE [higher education] institutions' (Hall 2009: 327). Rather than attempt to carefully interpret the scores with the help of information provided by the IELTS partners, users of the IELTS tend towards the unquestioned acceptance of the predictive power of its scores: if an overseas student does not achieve the required score, their application for admission to the university is normally turned down. Even more questionable is the use of the test by employers to assess prospective employees' ability to function in the workplace, despite the fact that, in most cases, none of the test tasks closely corresponds with what an employee is expected to do in the job. Worst of all, band scores in the test are used by some national governments as benchmarks for migration: It is, we suggest, quite simply immoral to use a score on an IELTS test to deny a person's application for immigration.

In conclusion, those who seek to study at universities abroad or to work for a number of large multinational companies, or to migrate, are forced to engage with IELTS (or a comparable test such as TOEFL, see below) on the terms set by the test owners, conferring on the owners considerable global power and influence; and they suffer dire consequences if they fail to achieve the required mark in tests which, in a great many cases, are not fit for purpose.

11.6.3 English Testing Service (ETS)

Educational Testing Service (ETS) was founded in 1947 and claims to be "the world's largest private educational testing and measurement organization". Each year, they "administer more than 50 million tests in more than 180 countries at more than 9,000 locations" (ETS, n.d.). The tests include the TOEFL test ("the premier English test for Admissions worldwide"); the TOEIC test ("the Global Leader in English-language Assessment for the Workplace"); the GRE test ("The world's most widely used admission test for graduate and professional school"); HiSET ("A new opportunity to earn a high school equivalency credential"); and the PRAXIS test ("A trusted leader in educator licensure assessment"). In addition to teams of test developers, their website states that ETS employs a staff of some 250 expert statisticians, psychometricians and researchers, and publishes numerous technical reports and evaluations of its products.

ETS presents itself as "a private *nonprofit* organization devoted to educational measurement and research, primarily through testing" (emphasis added).

Profit or non-profit, the income generated by English language testing is not inconsiderable. The cost for someone to take the internet-administered TOEFL iBT (internet-based test) ranges from $200 to $250, depending on the country concerned. The GRE costs upwards of $200, depending on a variety of factors. Costs of the many other ETS tests vary, but leaving those aside, as well as all the company's other income-generating activities (and they are many and varied), annual income from the TOEFL and GRE alone (in rough round numbers) is 50 million multiplied by $200 per test = $10 billion a year. Many people would like to own a non-profit with that kind of annual turn-over. ETS also owns and administers the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test), taken each year at least once by just about every high school junior or senior in the USA.[1]

The ETS English tests have much in common with the IELTS tests. They test the four skills; the university admissions content differs slightly from the "workplace" content; and the tests are scored on a proficiency scale. In the case of the ETS tests, a maximum score of 30 can be scored on each test, and so a combined score of 95 in the TOEFL test, for example, would be "equivalent" to an overall Band 7 in the IELTS Academic test. All ETS tests are now designed to be taken on a computer. The speaking test is composed of four tasks, and in each one the test taker must respond to cues by speaking for 45 seconds or 60 seconds into a microphone. Responses are recorded and sent to ETS where they are graded by a combination of artificial intelligence (AI) scoring and human raters. In the writing test, two tasks are written on a computer keyboard in response to cues and then sent to ETS, where they too are scored by a combination of AI scoring and human raters (ETS, n.d.). The human raters work from home, and it is unclear what qualifications are required for the job.

Not surprisingly, the ETS tests have generated much the same kinds of criticism as those levelled at the IELTS tests (see, for example, Jenkins, 2006; Johnson, et al., 2005; Khan, 2009; Templer, 2004). The tests exhibit bias towards the linguistic norms of inner-circle Englishes, and there are serious questions concerning the test formats and the consistency and reliability of examiner judgements. In the previous section, where the weaknesses of the IATEFL tests were discussed, we mentioned the limitations of the IELTS speaking test. But at least the IELTS speaking test involves candidates being interviewed in person by a trained teacher. It is

[1] We should note that more and more US universities are dropping this as an admissions requirement, valuing scores on this text much less than course grades and experience.

worth stressing the fact that in the ETS tests, candidates respond to cues which come from a computer screen or earphones and respond into a computer microphone. The recorded oral sample (consisting of four, shorter-than-1-minute responses) is then rated partly by a computer and partly by individuals who work from home and who are not required to be qualified teachers of English as an L2.

As for the wider social and political issues, the same concerns as those discussed in relation to the IELTS test apply to the ETS tests. Regarding discrimination based on economic inequality, the TOEFL test is comparable in price to the IELTS test, and candidates are encouraged to take the test multiple times in attempts to get the highest possible score. The TOEFL test offers a special "MyBest™ scores", also referred to as "superscores" feature, which provides candidates with "a way to show your best overall performance by combining your highest section scores from all test dates within the last 2 years. This can help you to achieve your goals sooner, since it means you may be able to meet score requirements for your institution with fewer tests" (ETS, n.d.). Candidates can request a score review of their Writing and/or Speaking section; the cost is $80 per section. Both the "MyBest scores" and review features obviously discriminate against poorer candidates.

With regard to the uses to which the TOEFL test is put, the test is, as noted above, widely used as a gate-keeper to entry to US universities by overseas students, where, like the IELTS test in other countries, it practically ensures that 'native speakers' or students coming from countries located in the 'inner circle' have a considerable advantage. Finally, the uses to which the ETS tests are put in other areas, including job placement and migration, raise the same concerns as those discussed above in relation to the IELTS tests.

11.6.4 The Washback Effect of High Stakes English Proficiency tests

As noted above, 'washback' refers to the positive or negative influence that tests have on teaching and learning. So far in this section, we have described the high stakes proficiency tests produced and marketed by IELTS and ETS, and we have suggested that they are not fit for purpose in terms of their validity and reliability. We have also suggested that they have a political dimension - they are biased in favor of the linguistic norms of inner-circle Englishes, and, furthermore, the way they are administered unfairly discriminates against poorer members of society everywhere. It remains to

be said that high stakes English proficiency exams around the world have a considerable negative washback effect on ELT.

With regard to the exams and tests produced and administered by the Cambridge Assessment Group, the British Council, ETS, and Pearson, which were taken by more than ten million people in 2020 (ETS (n.d.), such exams encourage the mistaken approach to teaching discussed in Chapter 7, with an emphasis on grammar teaching and teacher-centered lessons, but with the additional problems of focusing on exam skills and test-taking techniques, which do little to promote the development of communicative competence in English. Furthermore, these exams are responsible for the production of a huge welter of exam preparation teaching materials by the major publishing companies, and the provision of exam preparation courses by thousands of private English language schools worldwide.

Even more negative are the effects that certain national high-stakes English exams have. Perhaps the most notorious example is the South Korean university entrance exam, SKY. Nearly twenty years ago, Seth (2002) argued that South Korea had become "the most exam-obsessed culture in the world" (2002: 5). The university entrance exams, Seth said then, represent more than just education; they illustrate the Korean concern with rank and status, and "the universal desire for and belief in the possibility of upward mobility". Test scores in these exams decide who goes to the best universities, and those who go to the best universities go on to get the best jobs. The exam system is thus a crucial factor in determining the future success and status of young Koreans. As a result, in schools in both the public and private sectors, a traditional "talking about the language" approach dominates, and the washback effect of the university entrance exam is overwhelming (Jeon, 2009; Park, 2009). Although the government introduced a listening part to the English exam, the belief that the CLT method is inappropriate persists, since there is still no oral component to the exam (Littlewood, 2007). Teachers find themselves (willingly or not) giving in to pressure from parents and students to teach for the exam, and thus to put little emphasis on oral communication (Jo, 2008).

Exam cramming schools — known as hagwons in Korean — are a mainstay of the South Korean education system and an indication of parents' determination to see their children succeed at all costs. There are approximately 100,000 hagwons in South Korea, all dedicated to preparing students for the university entrance exams, and it is estimated that South Korean parents spend over $15 billion on private education annually (Choi & Choi, 2016). Students typically stay after regular school hours until 10

p.m. or later, which means that the average South Korean student works up to 13 hours a day, while the average high school student sleeps only 5.5 hours a night to ensure there is sufficient time for studying (Beach, 2011). This "investment" in education is sometimes used to explain South Koreans' spectacular scores on the Program for International Student Assessment, now widely regarded as the standard by which overseas university students are compared to one another (National Council for Educational Statistics, (NCES) n.d.), But a system driven by overzealous parents and a leviathan private industry is unsustainable over the long run, especially given the physical and psychological costs that students are forced to bear (Choi and Choi, 2016).

In conclusion, high-stakes English proficiency tests are used as gate keepers, guarding the doors of entry to higher education, the professions and even countries of refuge for those fleeing persecution. They can be seen as forming the final, and perhaps most pernicious, part of an interlocking publishing, teaching, teacher-training, and testing hydra that make up the current ELT industry, an industry bent on the commodification of education, with disastrous consequences for millions.

11.7 How Assessment could be done much better

Criterion-referenced tests, such as those use in in TBLT, discussed in Chapter 8, offer a solution. An example of this kind of test, with which most people are familiar, is the test required to obtain a driver's license. Candidates pass or fail, depending on whether they meet the criteria. If they pass the vision test (by correctly identifying the letters on a screen), then the written test (by scoring at or above the predetermined threshold), and if they complete the practical part of the test to the satisfaction of the examiner by navigating a fixed route on real streets safely and without violating any traffic laws, then they pass; if not, they fail. Likewise, since a TBLT course aims to equip students with the abilities they need for successful completion of their target tasks, those target tasks constitute the focus of task-based performance tests. The focus is not on language as object, but on a student's ability to do real tasks, or simulations thereof. To use the example target task, "Following street directions", exemplified in Chapter 8, the test will not try to assess the students' ability to provide missing words in a set of street directions (Go up Filbert Street and _____ left) or indicate whether directions like 'Go along two blocks and *turning right' are grammatical or ungrammatical. Rather, students may be issued with a digital device containing a recording of real street directions and sent out to follow them

from a given starting point without being told the destination. The student will pass or fail, depending on whether he or she reaches the correct destination. If navigating real streets is logistically unfeasible, a simulation may be employed, with the student watching a video of a street scene on a computer while manipulating a cursor in response to directions received though headphones. Simpler still, students can be asked to look at a map while the teacher reads out directions to a particular destination and draw the route they hear on the map.

The criteria in criterion-referenced tests are normally determined by domain experts. If the test concerns students' ability to understand an undergraduate physics lecture, for example, then the physics professor, not the language teacher or test designer, will be the judge of what is considered successful task completion. Listening comprehension tests for EAP often take the form of watching a video recording of the lecture once, followed by a multiple-choice test focusing on 50 important information bits that the lecture contained. However, the physics professor might decide that to pass, candidates must demonstrate understanding of, say, nine out of ten points that he or she identifies as critically important, and 36 out of the remaining 40 less important points, for a minimum total of 45/50. As with all criterion-referenced tests, it is unnecessary to compare a student's score against those of other students taking the test; the score itself will immediately indicate "pass" or "fail.

In most such tests, the question of whether the student succeeds in doing what is required (booking a plane ticket, buying a particular item within the price range allowed, or any of the target taskss referred to above) is easily settled. But what about the language the student uses to do so? Should that be part of the assessment, too? The answer depends on the uses that will be made of the assessment: Who will use the results, for making which decisions or taking what actions? Some programs may choose to penalize students who completed the task, e.g., procured the tickets/seats/reservations they wanted, but employed some speech or writing that was ungrammatical and/or sociolinguistically inappropriate, and/or pragmatically or culturally inappropriate. This is, in the end, a judgment call, better made case by case with the student's future language use domain in mind. For example, grammatical and pragmatic errors may be unimportant in most service encounters involving buying and selling, but as shown by the Marriot and Yamada (1991) study of Australian duty-free shop service encounters (discussed in Long, 2015, pp. 191-195), they can sometimes be very important. Similarly, while sociolinguistic and pragmatic errors might be

overlooked in most cases, they could potentially be serious when committed by a hotel receptionist, a tour guide, or a diplomat.

There is a further question: Do task-based abilities transfer? Can we assume that if we test a task, students who can complete that task successfully will be able to complete other tasks of the same type? The transferability of task-based abilities, is, along with the question of the optimum sequencing of pedagogic tasks, the major unresolved issue in TBLT. Skepticism about predicting performance on tasks C and D by assessing performance on task A has led to the suggestion that we should test command of the constructs and abilities underlying task performance, with some attention to linguistic abilities. Unfortunately, this suggestion only pushes the question back to that of identifying underlying constructs and abilities. How can such constructs and abilities be identified? For example, what constructs and abilities underly understanding an undergraduate physics lecture, making an airline reservation or following a cooking recipe? Is it safe to assume that following a cooking recipe and following street directions share the same or similar underlying constructs and abilities? Whatever method is used to tackle the problem, a great deal of challengeable inferencing is involved.

Different tasks require different abilities and proficiency of different kinds and in different domains. Since no algorithm for identifying the relevant underlying language constructs and abilities in each case exists, there is no safe way to test for them, and so judgments are inevitably impressionistic. Nevertheless, task-based, criterion-referenced performance testing, is feasible, viable (if based on a task-based needs analysis), and provides hard, usable information about what a person can do using the language. In addition, such testing is likely to have a far more positive washback effect on teaching and learning than discrete-point, construct-based, skills or abilities testing.

In brief, the job of testing is to provide test users with reliable information about the test taker's ability to do a job, or study at a university, or take a vocational training course. Tests need to be designed with regard to specific academic or occupational discourse domains, and they need to refer to the tasks that the test taker will have to perform. The question is simple: Can they do the tasks or not?

Summary

Discrete-point tests of linguistic knowledge reveal little or nothing about the ability to perform real-world tasks. Skills-based testing artificially decouples listening, speaking, reading and writing, which more often than not are employed simultaneously. Proficiency testing today is a vague, global construct, an epiphenomenon, whose measurement is often disturbingly subjective. Furthermore, the high-stakes proficiency tests today are driven by commercial interests, more concerned with the bottom line of a profit and loss account than with true educational values. We suggest that criterion-referenced tests offer a viable alternative to the current proficiency tests described above. We must constantly remind ourselves that testing serves to provide information to test users and that we must therefore give prime consideration to the uses to which the information is put.

Discussion questions

1. What are the limitations of labels such as "elementary," "limited," "intermediate," and "advanced"?

2. Think of a time when you "learned" a foreign language from a textbook. Were you subsequently able to use that language for a real-world purpose?

3. What are the problems of thinking of language use as skills and of skills-based testing?

4. Why, despite appearances, are skill-level descriptors and can-do statements just as opaque as discrete-point scores?

5. What are the problems in eliciting valid samples of learner language for proficiency tests?

6. What are the main features of the IELTS and ETS tests? What are the main uses to which they are put?

7. In what ways is it suggested that high stake English proficiency exams are unfair? Do you agree?

8. What is the "washback effect" of exams? What is your reaction to the account of the situation in South Korea?

9. What are the proposed advantages of task-based, criterion-referenced performance tests? How can the problem of the transferability of task-based abilities be tackled?

10. How would you test your own proficiency in a foreign language?

Suggested readings

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SECTION 4.
POLITICAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC ISSUES, AND SIGNS OF STRUGGLE

Section 4 Introduction

In Sections 2 and 3 of this book, we have looked at problems that flow from the commodification of ELT, in terms of the providers of ELT courses, the syllabuses and materials used, the second language teacher education programs, and assessment. We have also suggested how all these things could be done better. In the final Section 4, in Chapter 12, we examine ELT from a more directly political viewpoint, in order to identify the real benefeciaries of the present ELT industry, and in Chapter 13, we briefly describe how we see radical ELT before discussing a few projects and individuals who indicate what we see as the way forward.

First, we try to estimate the size of this industry, in terms of the millions of people involved and the billions of dollars involved. We then suggest that knowledge of the English language is a rich source of "soft power"and, thus, of interest to most national governments. We go on to identity the biggest beneficiaries. Although it would seem quite reasonable for teachers to assume that the primary beneficiaries of their work are their students and themselves, they would, in fact, be wrong to do so. The political and economic interests that benefit most from the work of teachers and their students, the biggest beneficiaries, that is, are nation states, national and local economies, educational institutions, teacher educators, ELT coursebook authors and publishers, and testing organizations.

In the final chapter, we explain our own radical political position and then discuss the work of some colleagues who are, we think, making progress towards the kind of ELT practice we advocate in Sections 2 and 3. Central to our view is the need to work in local environments, building strong cooperation among teachers, and forming a network of links and associations that allow us to combine our resources so that we can work more closely and effectively together in our struggle for a brighter, fairer, more egalitarian future for ELT.

CHAPTER 12

UNMASKING ELT: WHO ARE THE REAL BENEFICIARIES?

12.1 Introduction

We have argued that the current global ELT industry is driven more by commercial interests than by educational principles. Those responsible for providing courses of English, course materials, teacher training programs and English proficiency tests dedicate themselves to the production, packaging and distribution of a wide range of inefficacious products and services which ignore robust research findings in second language acquisition and defraud learners. The commodification of ELT begins with treating language as an object, which is cut up into "items" of various types and then packaged into courses. These courses are delivered via a coursebook, replete with additional, auxiliary products such as online materials, workbooks, and a teacher's book. Learners are assigned to a course that corresponds to their current "level of proficiency" (guided by the reified levels described by the CEFR) and are then expected to progress step by step, course by course, towards the goal of becoming "proficient users". Second language teacher education courses are provided to ensure that teachers learn the rudiments of delivering misguided syllabuses. Tests of the sort described in Chapter 11 complete the picture of this widespread, worldwide travesty of education in English as a second language.

A good example of this approach in action is provided by the British Council. The British Council has its own schools all over the world which offer courses of English as an L2 to people of all ages, at all levels, from beginner to advanced. Coursebook-driven instruction is delivered by teachers who, as a minimum, have successfully completed the CELTA course (see Chapter 10), and students' progress is assessed using tests produced by Cambridge Assessment (see Chapter 11). The British Council also delivers a wide range of SLTE products, most notably CELTA and DELTA courses (see Chapter 10) in over 100 countries. Finally, the British Council is a powerful player in testing: it is part owner, along with IELTS

Australia and Cambridge Assessment, of the IELTS (see Chapter 11), and delivers IELTS tests (along with the Cambridge suite of English tests which cover all levels of the CEFR) in over 100 countries. The British Council is, we suggest, a model of the interlocking hydra of ELT which we have described and criticized in previous chapters, although it has so far stopped short of providing coursebooks. In this regard, Pearson's activities (Pearson, n.d.), discussed briefly in Chapter 11, might eventually cover all bases more completely. While the British Council is careful to promote itself as a government office, a Foreign and Commonwealth Office agency, and a charity, this actually provides useful branding and cover for its lucrative commercial operations that generate over $1 billion every year, tax-free, from IELTS testing, English teaching, education marketing and education related contracts (British Council, 2019).

The activities of the British Council also serve to show how blurred the distinction between the private and public parts of the ELT industry has become. The British Council has a long history of working with national governments to promote the teaching of English in public primary and secondary and schools and in universities, as well as in the private sector. Their work with ministries and education sector bodies in more than a hundred countries worldwide is described on their website (British Council n.d.) and includes expert advice about curriculum design, pedagogic procedures, teacher education, and assessment. Thus, the type of approach to ELT that is adopted in British Council run centers and in the hundreds of "accredited centers" around the world that they work with, is often imitated in the public schools and universities of the hundred plus countries that the British Council works with. Such an approach, described in Chapters 7 and 10, includes using a scale of proficiency (often modelled on the CEFR) to organize a succession of year-long English courses, using coursebooks which implement a grammar-based synthetic syllabus as a framework for each course, and using proficiency tests of the sort described in Chapter 11 to measure progress and final attainment.

The British Council is not the only organization which encourages national governments to adopt this approach in their public schools and universities. Cambridge Assessment (Cambridge English, n.d.), ETS (ETS, n.d.), Pearson (2019), New Oriental (n.d.), and McGraw Hill (McGraw Hill, 2020) are just a few of the other major players in the global ELT industry that influence key aspects of the provision of ELT in the public domain. Today, the education departments of most national governments (exceptions include the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Myanmar) outsource a great deal of the work that goes into designing and running

English programs in primary and secondary public schools and universities. The value, in economic terms, of goods and services provided by commercial companies to the English departments of public schools and universities continues to expand, in line with neoliberalist policies which favor free markets and minimal government intervention in the economy. For these reasons, we suggest that it is important to bring to light the ELT global industry's involvement with public education.

While it is difficult to arrive at any reliable figure for the global value of the goods and services offered by the ELT industry, the financial analysts GSV, in their Education Sector Factbook of 2012 (GSV 2012) estimated it at approximately US $200 billion; Pearson (Pearson, 2016) suggested US $193 billion, and Textor (2019) suggested that in China alone, the value of the ELT market will be US $70 billion by 2022. At the moment, over twelve million teachers form the front line of this massive ELT industry (British Council, 2015), and behind them, as we have seen, are publishing companies, training organizations, examination boards, government departments, non-profit making institutions like the British Council, and teachers' organizations like IATEFL and TESOL. Notwithstanding all the talk of the power of learning to transform lives, preparing a new generation to participate in the global community, delivering personalized learning "through the integration of powerful instructional resources, assessments, and student data that inform instruction, effective school and educator improvement services, and technology platforms" (British Council, 2015, p. 3), the dominant approach to English language teaching is one that is driven by commercial interests, to the detriment of learners everywhere.

Why is the demand for ELT goods and services so high? Because English is, as the British Council (British Council, 2015, p.2) make clear, no longer an optional "foreign" language, but rather "the operating system of the world's global conversation". In a 2012 survey by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU, 2012), nearly 70 percent of executives said their workforce will need to master English to realize corporate expansion plans, and a quarter said that more than 50 percent of their total workforce will need English ability. Education First, a company with around 44,000 staff and 500 offices and schools located in more than 50 countries emphasizes the importance of learning English by pointing out that people in countries with very high English proficiency make eight times as much money as those in countries with very poor English proficiency (Education First, n.d.).

Sun (2016, p. 7) quotes from a speech made in 2011 by China's assistant Minister of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Le Yucheng. He said:

> "Here are two interesting statistics. One is that 400 million Chinese people have been lifted out of poverty over the past 30 years. The other is that 400 million Chinese have learned English over the past 30 years. At the first, it might seem that the two figures are unrelated. But I believe there are close links between the two. Without learning from the West, we could not have raised so many people out of poverty, at least not so fast."

China and India are the most obvious examples of countries where the demand for English has shot up in the last 20 years, but they tend to hide the spectacular growth in demand, up to 40 percent a year, in Indonesia, Pakistan, Brazil, Mexico Nigeria, Ethiopia and Sudan, where increased urbanization is the main driver. In all these countries learning English is seen as one of the fastest ways of escaping poverty. In India, for example, hourly wages are a third higher for men (sic) who speak fluent English and 13 percent higher for men who speak a little English, relative to men who do not speak English (British Council, 2015). Isphording's (2013) study of the Spanish ELT market reported the same effect in Europe. He concluded that ability to use English consistently leads to significantly higher salaries in all sectors, due to the importance generally given by Spanish employers to the role of English as a *lingua franca* in international trade and in Internet and communication technologies. To quote the British Council report again: "For the investor, the academic, the civil servant, the teacher, the performer, the politician, the call center worker, the diplomat, the activist, the schoolchild, English opens the door to opportunities inconceivable without it" (British Council, 2015, p.6).

Reasonably enough, most EFL and ESL teachers assume that the primary beneficiaries of their work will be their students and (because they assume it will pay the bills) themselves. We will return later to the miserable income that the majority of ESL and EFL teachers get. Meanwhile, where beneficiaries are concerned, the fact is, there are many hidden and not-so-hidden political and economic interests that benefit far more from their work than teachers or their students ever will. The biggest beneficiaries are (1) nation states, (2) national and local economies, (3) universities and private language schools, (4) teacher educators, (5) ELT textbook authors and publishers, and (6) testing organizations. Let us look briefly at each of these, starting with the biggest ELT beneficiary of them all, nation states.

12.2 Nation states

Most language teaching involves the language of powerful nations being taught to speakers of less powerful ones. English is a powerful language. It

has been the major colonial language (not the only one, of course) over the past 400 years, and as a result, remains either the majority first language or the lingua franca of vast expanses of the nominally post-colonial world to this day: the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, large parts of Africa, much of south-east Asia and the Indian sub-continent, the West Indies, and a number of Pacific island nations, among others. It has been the principal language of the two most economically dominant nation states of the past 300 years (the world economic pecking-order has been changing considerably of late) – first the UK, and then for the past 150 years, the USA – and not coincidentally, of the most powerful militaries required to procure and maintain those colonies and economic dominance. As a result of this history of savage imperial conquests, there are now roughly 400 million native speakers of English in the world, and over four times that number, 1.75 billion, for whom English is a second or auxiliary language. Already huge, the second group is growing fast, with more than two billion speakers projected by 2025.

The ability to determine which shall be a country's national language, or in the case of many multilingual societies, its *lingua franca*, is a vital source of power for nation states and for elites within them. This is the single biggest reason why ELT is so important. When one country invades or annexes another, it is common for command of the invader's language to be required, officially or unofficially, of any members of the subjugated population seeking access to political power, employment, and key social services, especially education, or even for immigrant visas or citizenship. After their imperial conquests, such was the case, for example, with Spanish and Portuguese in Latin-America, Russian in the countries of the old Soviet Union, and English in Canada, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, East Africa, India, Hawai'i, and elsewhere. There have been many other examples. The newly imposed language sometimes not only displaces indigenous languages, but drives them, and often their speakers, close to extinction, as happened, for example, with Hawaiian, and many native-American and Australian aboriginal languages.[1]

It is not just aggressor nations that behave this way. Dominant groups *within* national borders tend to grow nervous when linguistic minorities attempt to defend or resuscitate their own language. Speaking Basque or Catalan, not

[1] For detailed, insightful analyses of the history and current practice of 'linguicism' and 'linguistic imperialism', and of the politics and policy goals of language teaching, see Phillipson (1988, 1992, and elsewhere), Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas (2009), and Skuttnab-Kangas, Phillipson, & Rannut (1995).

Spanish, in public was made illegal under the fascist Franco dictatorship, and teaching either an imprisonable offence. Tensions arising from the resurgence of Catalan and Basque in Catalonia and the Basque Country today and of French in Quebec are just three of numerous examples worldwide of the continuing resistance, often linked with secessionist movements, to the historical imposition of a dominant language. A fourth is the USA, where concern about the rise in numbers of speakers of Spanish and other languages (laced with racist attitudes towards immigrants) has led to the emergence of such right-wing organizations as English-only, Pro English, English First, and U.S. English.[2]

Power is not just reflected in language dominance. Prestige *varieties* of a language, often associated with a speaker's ethnicity, social class or regional origin, can function in the same way. Economic and political elites usually speak a so-called "standard" variety, e.g., "standard English".[3] Speaking what elites designate a "non-standard" variety, on the other hand, can render people vulnerable to discrimination in education, employment, the (aptly named) criminal justice system, and elsewhere.[4] For example, speaking Hawai'i Creole English (Sato, 1991), African-American Vernacular English (Long, 1999), and (Australian) Aboriginal English (Eades, 1995), has resulted, respectively, in denial of job opportunities, unequal treatment in education, and wrongful convictions for murder.[5]

Governments are well aware of the importance of spreading their national language as a simple but effective method of disseminating their political, economic, religious and cultural values. Even Dan Quayle, the hapless Vice President of the USA from 1989-1993 under Bush the Elder, understood the

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[2] See Geoffrey Pullum's essay, *'Here come the linguistic fascists' (Pullum, 1987).*

[3] This is despite the fact that there is arguably no such thing as standard spoken, as opposed to written, English. Also, what is considered "standard" English varies considerably from one country to the next -- say, in England, India, Australia and the USA -- showing that there is nothing intrinsically superior about any particular variety, despite what those who speak it would have you believe.

[4] Non-standard varieties are often confounded with race. However, discrimination against speakers of minority languages and non-standard dialects carried out by people of the *same* race, e.g., upper-class Caucasian against working-class and/or regional dialect-speaking Caucasian children or adults in Germany, the USA and the UK, shows that the issue is fundamentally one of power and language, not race.

[5] For many more examples, and for issues arising from the negative treatment of speakers of minority languages and non-standard varieties of languages, especially in education, see Sato, (1985, 1989), Siegel (2006), Skutnabb-Kangas (2000), Skutnabb-Kangas & Cummins (1998), Tollefson (1995), and Watson-Gegeo (1992).

nefarious value of the spread of English. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, when Quayle urged thousands of young Americans to join the Peace Corps and go and teach English to the unsuspecting newly liberated citizens of Eastern Europe, it was not because of a sudden interest in foreign language learning on his part. Pennycook (1995) captured the real issue succinctly: 'English in the world/The world in English'.

The many benefits of English and ELT to the British nation state, as opposed to teachers or students, were recognized in *The English Effect*. Published in 2015 by the British Council, which acts effectively as the cultural arm of the British diplomatic service, the document is surprisingly frank:

> "English . . . is spoken by a quarter of the world's population, enabling a true single market in knowledge and ideas . . . For the UK today, it provides a strong competitive advantage in culture, diplomacy, commerce, media, academia and IT, and in the use and practice of soft power. . . The global power of English has helped the UK to grow and maintain its position as a cultural superpower . . . And just as culture can create the space where individuals can express, explore and re-imagine difficult issues, so English as the common language aids dialogue, understanding, trust and the brokering of business deals*"* (British Council, 2015, p. 4).

It is by no means only the British who understand these connections, of course. Several other powerful (or, like the UK, previously powerful) countries maintain well-funded government or quasi-governmental agencies, each with branches around the world, tasked with propagating their "cultural" interests. Germany has the Goethe Institute, the USA has chains of binational centers, France has the Alliance Française and the Institute Française d'Amérique Latine (IFAL), Spain has the Instituto Cervantes, and China the Confucius Institute. The largest, most successful, and most devastating of all, however, is the tax-payer-supported British Council. In the world of language teaching, English is the monster language, and the British Council is T-Rex.

In many countries, along with the British Council itself come British Council-assisted language schools, such as those of the Anglo-Mexican Cultural Institute, established in Mexico in 1943, renamed the Anglo-Mexican Foundation in 2003, and for its first decade funded by the Council. Such institutions, and the Council itself, award educational scholarships, organize exchange programs, stage cultural events of various kinds (art exhibitions, musicians, visiting theater troupes, films, lecture tours, conferences, etc.), and sometimes host a small library of English books and magazines. But by far their most important and lucrative activity is teaching

and testing the national language, which goes hand in hand with promoting UK universities to potential international students, the use of particular British coursebooks, and language exams (notably the IELTS exams, of course, since the British Council is, as we saw in Chapter 11, a partner), and providing visiting technical "experts" and in some countries (a practice adopted by the US State Department), full-time Regional English Language Officers to assist with training local EFL teachers. After all, the global demand for English must be met, which is where teachers come in: **"**The UK needs to be able to respond to this global demand by continuing to attract young people into teaching English and by investing in sharing English with the world" (British Council, 2013, p. 3). Such altruistic "sharing" of English with the rest of the world is heart-warming.

12.3 National and local economies

"The global power of English", as the British Council calls it, has played a key role in helping the UK "to grow and maintain its position as a cultural superpower" (British Council, 2015, p.14). A report by English UK (2015) states that student spending on tuition, accommodations, and other living expenses, as well as the knock-on effects of spending by ELT centers and their employees and suppliers, amounted to US $3.48 billion in 2014. The sector supports roughly 26,650 jobs throughout the UK and returns US $281 million to the government in taxes. The report points out that the full-time employment attributed to ELT centers (14,300 jobs in 2014) is larger than that of Coca-Cola or Vodafone in the UK. And this is just the tip of the iceberg, beneath which lie the real giants: the publishing companies, the training companies, and the examination boards, as we have seen. In the section on "Economic Benefits" in the British Council's (2015) *The English Effect*, Tony Milns, CEO of English UK, estimates that "the English language contributes at least 3 billion pounds to the UK economy"**.**

Of course, the UK is not the only country where the ELT industry looms large; the USA remains the biggest player in the ELT market, followed by the UK, then Canada and then Australia. In all these countries, as in the UK, part of the business is generated by international English language students, but again, this does not include the business generated by publishers, examiners, training companies, etc. In the rest of the world, it is the country's own citizens who are the main consumers; in over 180 countries, primary, secondary and tertiary education, both state and private, devote considerable resources to English language teaching.

12.4 Universities and private language schools

12.4.1 University ESL programs in English-

The vast majority of universities in English-speaking countries have income-producing ESL programs, in most cases closely tied to their efforts to attract full fee-paying international students into their regular academic degree programs. In the US, they often go by such names as the English Language Institute or the American Language Institute. Most offer credit-bearing ELT courses for international students who either have already been admitted to undergraduate or graduate programs on campus or are hoping to be admitted, but whose English has been tested and determined still to need improvement. Such courses typically continue throughout the students' first year, while they are also taking introductory content courses in their chosen areas of study. The ESL programs are funded by part of the substantial tuition fees international students pay the university for their other studies. Many US universities use the same institutes, or else have separate on-campus programs, to offer courses for other fee-paying students not yet admitted, who are enrolled for non-credit English language training, only. Teachers in both types of programs tend to be a mix of a small number of untenured, full-time staff on fixed-term contracts (typically 1-3 years), others on short-term, part-time contracts, and students from TESOL/applied linguistics graduate programs on campus granted teaching assistantships that waive their tuition costs and provide a small stipend (perhaps $1000 - $1500 a month, for nine months) in exchange for 20 hours of work a week, most of it classroom ESL instruction.

Meanwhile, in the UK, there are no such things as teaching assistantships in universities, so ELT for the same on-campus international student populations is provided by a mixture of English as an L2 teachers hired by the university, and, far more usual, courses that are outsourced to private, commercially run ELT outfits that either supply teachers to the universities or arrange courses for the international students on their own premises. Most teachers who do this work have university degrees and a teaching qualification, but their jobs are becoming increasingly precarious, as we will see below.

12.4.2 Private English Language Schools

Parallel to these more academically oriented programs are a vast number of courses offered globally by private language schools. This is big business for the owners and surrounding local economy, and a major source of

employment for teachers in the ELT industry world-wide. As we have already said, reliable data on many aspects of the ELT industry is hard to find, and this is particularly the case when discussing the largely unregulated sector of private English language schools. Upon investigation into the following sources: the GSV report (GSV, 2012), the British Council report (2015), ELT World Wiki (n.d.), UCU (n.d.), Stainton (2019), Textor (2019), Walsh (2019), Wall Street English (n.d.), Adebola, et.al. (2020), ESL Base (n.d.), IATEFL (n.d.), New Oriental (n.d.), International House (n.d.), TESOL (n.d.), and EFL / ESL blogs and reports in the mass media, a sad picture of teachers' pay and working conditions emerges. How many teachers are we talking about? As seen above, the British Council (2015) estimates that 12 million teachers are involved in all sectors of ELT. As we are not sure that that is a reliable figure, and as, furthermore, it is impossible to give an accurate figure for the proportion of them who work in the private sector, we suggest the conservative figure of at least 3 million.

Private English language schools can be found in large cities and small towns around the globe. We can begin with international chains of private language schools such as Berlitz, Wall Street, International House, British Council, Bell International (UK and Malta), Berlitz, English First, GEOS, Inlingua, and International House. There are then national chains, examples being Peppy Kids Club (Japan), AEON and Amity (Japan), ECC (Korea), and the New Oriental chain in China, which claims on its website (New Oriental, n.d.) to be "the largest provider of private educational services in China, expanding and consolidating its arrangements with Educational Testing Service, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge Assessment, Pearson Education and the McGraw-Hill companies". After these come the tens of thousands of small private English language schools around the world. One of us lives in a small village (population, 8,000) near Girona in Spain. In this village, there is a thriving private English language school; in Girona, twenty kms. away, there are ten such schools; in Barcelona, seventy kms away, there are more than thirty, and in Madrid, more than fifty.

From the data we have gathered, we can claim with some confidence that most teachers working in the private ELT sector are poorly paid, have no permanent contract, no holiday pay, no right to sickness pay, no pension rights, little say in what or how they teach, and few opportunities for teacher development training opportunities. In her discussion of TEFL salaries, Stainton (2019) notes that while in most high-income countries, salaries are well below the average, in low-income countries, such as Thailand and Vietnam, for example, EFL teachers earn more than the average. Ten years ago, an article in the Daily Telegraph UK newspaper (2011) with the

headline “The slavery of teaching English in the UK”, and the sub-headline “The job is tedious, the salary appalling and the prospects nil. No one with a scrap of ambition would choose to teach English as a foreign language”, caused a stir among the ELT community by giving details of the poor pay and precarious working conditions of EFL teachers in Western Europe. Since then, thanks in part to the growth of ELT blogs, Facebook groups, Twitter feeds, podcasts, etc., thousands of teachers have expressed views very similar to those of the Daily Telegraph journalist. There are, no doubt, many private English schools that treat their teachers well, but details of their activities are difficult to find. Information about the big, well known chains of English language schools is easier to find, but difficult to verify, so we cannot make any specific charges. However, it is a matter of fact that in 2002, the Wall Street Institute had more than one hundred branches in Spain, many of them franchises. That year, 88 of the branches closed, many of them overnight, leaving thousands of students out of pocket and hundreds of teachers unpaid and out of a job. Wall Street Institute was later re-branded Wall Street English; the business changed hands a few times, and it now has a big presence in China. More recently, both Wall Street English and International House were in the news for closing various of their affiliate schools in 2020, without giving any adequate warning or compensation to the teachers who lost their jobs.

12.4.3 Precarity

No matter where they work, it is likely that the majority of English as an L2 teachers suffer from the effects of precarity. In the words of the International Labor Rights Forum website (ILRF, n.d.):

> "Precarious workers are those who fill permanent job needs but are denied permanent employee rights. Globally, these workers are subject to unstable employment, lower wages and more dangerous working conditions. They rarely receive social benefits and are often denied the right to join a union. Even when they have the right to unionize, workers are scared to organize if they know they are easily replaceable. Women, minorities and migrant workers are much more likely to fill these kinds of jobs. Permanent employment across a number of sectors has shifted to precarious jobs through outsourcing, use of employment agencies, and inappropriate classification of workers as “short-term” or “independent contractors.”

Walsh (2019, p. 459) quotes Pembroke’s (2018, p. 4) summary: “precarious work leads to precarious lives where people are trapped in uncertainty, floating and on stand-by, with all aspects of their lives, their personal ambitions and hopes for family formation, on hold”. Precarity results from

deregulated labor markets offering various types of insecure work, often characterized by low pay, a zero-hours contract, uncertainty as to the duration or extent of employment, minimum social protection, and absence of pension provision. Another common feature of precarity is that workers have a "portfolio" of jobs; in the case of teachers, this often involves working for one or more schools or universities part time, doing private and / or in-company classes, and also occasionally doing translation work, dubbing, writing materials, and so on. Many teachers also work as taxi drivers, waiters, dog walkers, etc. to compensate for their poor salaries.

Wickham's seminal (2015) survey of over 800 English teachers in France is one of few reliable studies we can count on. It found that only 11.5% of English teachers had full-time permanent contracts; the rest had either one-year contracts or zero-hours contracts, while the "independent workers" had no contract at all. Two thirds of participants in Wickham's survey expressed concern about precarity (especially job and income insecurity and pressure by employers to accept zero-hours contracts), and 30 % lived on or below the official minimum wage. Adebola et. al. (2020), in their study of "Precarious employment in the Chilean English Language Teaching Industry", cite the work of Simbürger and Neary (2016) (who coined the word "taxi professors" to describe academics in Chile who work on an hourly basis for different universities and rush from one location of work to the next) and the work of Berríos (2015) (whose study showed that between 2005 and 2011, the number of academic staff in Chile working on an hourly basis rose from 67% to 75%), before reporting on their own study's findings. Their study found that, of the 223 English teachers from different regions of Chile who participated in the survey, 56.8% held temporary contracts and that the degree of precariousness was higher among English teachers working in temporary contracts, including casual and substitute ones. Walsh (2019) cites the study by Robinson and Gauri (2011), who describe some of the effects of the liberalization of the Indian economy, including the use of more and more poorly paid, temporary contract teachers who fill staff shortages, especially in rural areas. A study among academic workers in Ireland (Courtois & O'Keefe, 2015) and one in Australia (Percy & Beaumont, 2008) have also indicated the increasing trend towards precarity, and a review by Breshears (2019, p. 26) on "The Precarious Work of English Language Teaching in Canada" concludes that "precarious employment in the form of part-time and temporary work, low wages, unpaid work hours, and multiple job holding is pervasive in the sector" and that "such conditions have persisted for decades".

We will return to the important issue of precarity in the ELT industry in Chapter 13. Meanwhile, we should note that the two biggest international organizations for teachers as an L2, namely IATEFL and TESOL, have so far done little to actively fight precarity in the ELT industry. IATEFL itself has around 4,000 members, but if we count all those teachers who belong to IATEFL Associate organizations, this number more than doubles. Despite IATEFL's pledge "to link, develop and support English Language Teaching professionals worldwide" (IATEFL, n.d.), the pay and conditions of members is outside their remit, and they have very rarely spoken out against poor training and certification and the widespread exploitation of teachers around the world. In 2015, Paul Walsh and Nicola Prentice, both members of IATEFL, tried to set up a "Teachers as Workers" Special Interest Group to promote the establishment of a living wage and decent working conditions for all English language teachers and to the end to discrimination in ELT. Despite a great deal of support from members, the board of trustees decided that the aims of the intended TaW SIG were "political" and therefore contrary to the IATEFL charter. As for TESOL, they claim to have around 14,000 members (TESOL, n.d.), they hold an annual four day "Advocacy and Policy Summit"; and they have an Advocacy Action Center at their website. Last year's Advocacy and Policy summit included a workshop on the rights of immigrant children in public schools, but we could find nothing relevant to a fight against precarity of teachers in TESOL.

12.5 ELT teacher educators

A lot of money and many careers are made through providing training for English language teachers. Second language teacher education has been discussed in Chapter 10, so here we will concentrate on the extent to which teacher educators are beneficiaries in the ELT industry.

"Teacher educators" refer to a broad range of people, but they are all employed for the purpose of preparing and improving English language teachers, some by private language schools, some by the British Council and other quasi-governmental institutions, and some by colleges and universities. We may start with the well-known ELT "experts" and "gurus" who write "How to do ELT" texts of all descriptions (a few of the more prominent members of this group were discussed in Chapter 10) and, increasingly these days, promote their books and themselves on the social media. Often sponsored by their publishers or such institutions as the British Council, USAID, Fulbright, and the US State Department, flocks of these

itinerant ELT "experts" and "gurus" travel the world promoting their collective oeuvre and their own particular approach to ELT by giving plenary sessions at conferences organized by the TESOL and IATEFL teachers' organizations, their associates, and other national organizations, and also by delivering single lectures, workshops and short courses for local teachers lasting anything from a day to a week. Until Covid 19 clipped their wings, it was common to read, in the social media platforms of these well-known gurus, accounts of their grueling schedules, as they raced around the planet, doing the conference circuit and fitting in as many workshops and short courses as they could. The quality of such training varied considerably, and, just before the Covid 19 pandemic struck, there had been mounting criticism from environmentalists and other parts of the radical ELT movement of the practice of sending UK-based gurus such as Jeremy Harmer, Hugh Dellar, or Rachel Roberts to the other side of the planet in order for locals in Chile, Siberia, or India to hear highly questionable opinions about testing, syllabus design or materials production. "Why not get local experts to do the job?" was the question asked. Under the frothy top layer of well-known teacher educators in the private sector, there is a large body of their more modest colleagues working on relatively short, full-time or part-time, face-to-face, online or blended courses, such as CELTA or DELTA courses (see Chapter 10) offered at hundreds of private language schools in the UK and overseas.

ELT teacher education at the college and university level is different in many ways, not least in its duration and high cost. The expense is mostly due to the fact that the staff are lecturers or tenure-line faculty members on relatively good salaries, and also because universities have large overheads to deal with. Unfortunately, a depressing number of mid-career academics with no longer marketable degrees and declining student enrollments in linguistics or literature find they can attract enough English language teachers for post-graduate programs in a field in which they may have little or no background themselves. Prospective students would do well to read up on the faculty and courses in any programs they are considering.

There are well over 200 certificate, diploma and masters programs in TESOL, Applied Linguistics, Second Language Education, etc., at colleges and universities in the USA and Canada, and over 40 doctoral programs. Some offer credible training, a few of them very good training; others should be sued for fraud. All of them have relatively stable, and often permanent, full-time positions, and their institutions soak up large amounts of money from the students or their sponsors (parents, home governments, Fulbright and other scholarship programs, etc.), especially from the many

overseas students among them. Some provide work opportunities for students, e.g., as teaching assistants, especially at the doctoral level, but most teachers and would-be teachers pay full freight, which currently in the USA can mean anything from $30,000 to $50,000 per year for tuition alone (plus, depending on location, another $10,000 to $30,000 for food, accommodation, etc.) for a full-time, one-year or two-year masters program, and the same large amount spread out over two to four years for a student doing the same program part-time. That is equivalent to the annual income for many blue-collar families, and suggests a social class tilt in the kinds of people preparing for a career in ELT.

In the UK, there are also a large number of certificate, diploma and masters programs in TESOL, Applied Linguistics, etc., at colleges and universities and many doctoral programs too. The academic staff responsible for teaching these programs are made up of a small minority with stable, permanent jobs and an increasingly large majority with zero-hours contracts, no social security or pension rights, all of whom are expected to have PhDs and none of whom can expect to earn more than $40 an hour. In a series of articles in the Guardian newspaper in 2016 (Guardian, 2016), it was revealed that university teaching is now dominated by "zero-hours contracts, temp agencies and other forms of precarious work", which led trade unionists to accuse vice-chancellors of "importing the Sports Direct model" into British universities. It also prompted the National Union of Students to warn that low-paid and overstressed tutors may not be providing quality education to undergraduates paying tuition fees of up to $11,000 a year. UK universities are thus developing a two-tier academic workforce, with those at the bottom living hand to mouth, while those at the top receive 6-figure salaries. In 2018, six universities in England paid their vice-chancellors $400,000 or more in salary, bonuses and benefits, while nearly half of all vice chancellors received more than $300,000 (Office for Students, 2019). As in the US, the quality of the TESOL and Applied linguistics programs varies tremendously, and tuition fees also vary; a masters program costs between $10,000 and $27,000, but is usually considerably more for oversees students.

All things considered, those engaged in training English language teachers are far better off and work under much better conditions than the teachers or future teachers they train, but there is huge disparity between the pay and conditions of the few at the top in the private sector and the rest.

12.6 Coursebook authors and publishers

Whether or not you agree with our view that coursebooks have a crippling effect on what goes on in ELT classrooms (see Chapters 7 and 8), the economics of coursebook sales makes authors and publishers additional players who benefit massively more from the work of English language teachers than do the teachers themselves or their students.

The economics is not hard to understand. Let us imagine a coursebook that costs a student (or a school system) $10. (Most cost considerably more.) The author(s) will typically receive a royalty of 10%, or $1, for each copy sold, and the publisher $9.[6] The publisher has costs -- in-house staff salaries, market research, design, editing, printing, advertising, distribution, and more -- amounting to roughly 40%. But some of those costs are one-time-only, and generally become less, and the profit margin greater, the more copies sold, and the more several parts of the publishing process are outsourced, a practice that has become increasingly frequent of late. Copies sold varies enormously, from a minimum of a few thousand if the in-house people have done their job when commissioning the book in the first place, to millions, or even tens of millions over time, in the case of books adopted by local school systems or even whole national education systems. Then, the numbers can be truly staggering. The website of one of the most successful ELT coursebook authors, David Nunan, lists no fewer than five of his EFL coursebook series: *Atlas*, *Go for it*, *Listen in*, *Speak out*, and *Expressions*, each with separate books for two or three proficiency levels (plus the usual teacher's books, audio-recordings, video-recordings, online materials, workbooks, etc.). His EFL series, *Go for it* (Cenage Heinle and Heinle), the website states proudly, is "the largest selling textbook series (sic) in the world with total sales exceeding 2.5 billion books".[7]

Let's do the math. If a coursebook sells one million copies worldwide in a year at $10 a copy, and many do, the author stands to make a million dollars (more with an escalation clause), and the publisher nine million, less costs.

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[6] Contracts vary. Many contain so-called 'escalation clauses' under which 10% is paid to the author on the first (say) 10,000 copies, rising to 12.5% or even 15% on the next X,000. In addition, publishers vary in the terms they offer; authors with a proven sales record can obtain better terms than newcomers, and so on.

[7] Nunan's Wikipedia page says over 3.5 billion. The book's principal market is the PRC, where royalties are paltry by comparison with, say, Europe, South Korea or Japan. However, he told one of us in 2013 that total sales of *Go for it* had in fact by then reached over four billion copies (again, that's 'billion' with a 'b').

If a book lasts, say, five years on the market before being usurped by another with better advertising and distribution behind it, that is five million dollars less tax in the author's bank account, and after expenses, about forty million to the publisher. Remember, successful authors publish more than one book, and often whole coursebook *series*. After a while, some of the most successful among them have been known to employ graduate students as nominal co-authors or simply to ghost-write whole books for them for a set fee, following a template provided by the publisher. The luminary name on the cover is sometimes their only contribution. We know several successful ELT textbook authors personally, and some others from a distance or by reputation; each is a multi-millionaire. Several own expensive homes in two or three countries and spend much of their time travelling the globe first class, sponsored by their publishers, mostly to do demonstration lessons or deliver thinly veiled sales pitches for their books as "invited speakers" at ELT conferences. The rest of the time, it is back to the hard work of thinking up ideas for the next series while sipping martinis at a beach-front home, in a luxury penthouse, or at the rural country estate.

Some well-known authors are not the sharpest tools in the box, but became commercially successful through being in the right place at the right time and/or because they had a powerful publisher behind them willing to promote a coursebook series hard, sometimes literally buying their way into a market.[8] Surprisingly, one or two of the most famous among them had minimal classroom teaching experience before embarking on their careers as authors. The majority, however, are smart and hard-working. They simply made different choices from the rest of us early in their careers, and have done very nicely out of ELT ever since, thank you very much. A few, e.g., Jack Richards, David Nunan and Michael Swan, have also published a number of useful articles and books on applied linguistics and/or primers on pedagogy for classroom teachers. While we often disagree with what they have to say, and they with us, and although we disapprove of the use of coursebooks in general, we have to recognize that for good or bad, such

[8] It is not uncommon for large bribes to be paid to get a textbook or whole series designated an official text for a school system or national education system. Given the potential financial return, that should come as no surprise. Sales reps for two major companies in a large EFL market some years ago each told one of us that handing over sizeable amounts of cash, and in one case, a new luxury car, to members of the boards responsible for official textbook adoptions in the country concerned was just part of doing business – on a much smaller scale, no different from procuring a multi-billion dollar contract for military aircraft or arms sales in some parts of the world.

individuals have a far greater impact on the ways languages are taught than those of us who stick primarily to academic matters, conduct empirical research and publish articles in refereed journals,[9] many of them probably read by few teachers or teacher educators at all. What is certain, however, is that coursebook authors and publishers benefit far more from the sweat and blood of English language teachers than the teachers themselves or their students.

We should note that coursebook publishers have, in the past few years, made it increasingly difficult for their authors to become fabulously rich. The new production process involves teams of writers, under the strict direction of an editor working for the publishing company, writing bits and pieces of the contents of one of the books that makes up the series, and receiving either a one-off fee, or a much smaller cut of the profits.

12.7 Testing organizations

Chapter 11 is devoted to a survey of the state of play (and state of pay) in language testing, and of the terrible toll on ELT taken by so-called "proficiency scales", a paradigm case of 'The Emperor has no clothes'.

The annual revenues of testing organizations today (most of which proclaim themselves to be non-profit) are vast and growing rapidly. If a new test is created, lines quickly form around the globe of innocents who think they ought to take it. Aware of the easy money to be made, new testing start-ups appear all the time, some run by people with little training or background in language testing, and new tests are ten a penny. Some have respectable research on reliability behind them, and a few claim validity evidence too. But validity for what? Where, for example, are the predictive validity studies comparing scores on tests claimed to show how well applicants will do in English-medium universities and their subsequent performance at those universities once admitted?[10]

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[9] Some supposedly refereed academic journals are owned by the same textbook publishers, which can have interesting knock-on effects concerning such matters as the choice of editors and make-up of editorial boards, and as a result, what gets published in those journals and what does not.

[10] The same issue bedevils foreign language testing in many countries. In the USA, for example, where are the studies showing that US government employees (diplomats, military personnel, intelligence operatives, etc.) who reach level X, Y or Z on one or other of the general "proficiency scales" have the English (or other language) required to do the job to which they are subsequently assigned, which

Some new tests, in fact, have vanishingly little research of any kind behind them, yet are marketed as able to tell universities or employers all they ever need to know about someone's command of English. Duolingo, for example, a successful, mostly free, language teaching start-up, available to the public since 2012, is now attempting to break into the market for university English language testing with its new Duolingo English Test. The selling-points are that it only takes 20 minutes to complete (compared with several hours for the TOEFL or IELTS), can be taken anywhere in the world on a student's cell-phone, which adds convenience while saving time and avoiding the expense of travel to licensed testing centers (and saves Duolingo the need to rent spaces where their test can be taken), costs only $49 (significantly less than major existing tests), and provides results within two or three hours (compared with much longer for the bigger tests)[11]!

In general, as we argued in Chapter 11, there is depressingly little connection between the standardized tests and the real-world language uses learners are preparing for and that employers and academic institutions need to know about. Most are tests of "grammar" or of "general" English "proficiency", not of students' ability to perform the tasks they will actually need to *do* through the L2, the same problem that reduces the relevance of most language teaching. Knowing how well a student has performed on a test of their knowledge of English grammar, for example, is far less useful than knowing whether they can extract the relevant information from a university lecture in their intended field of study. Tests of "general English proficiency" are attractive to the companies that own them because (just like coursebooks teaching "general English") they can be marketed everywhere, producing far greater income than would tests developed for groups of learners, however large, with specific purposes for learning English in mind.

Competition among tests and testing companies is intense, not least between the TOEFL and IELTS. The organizations behind the two exams attempt,

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often requires functional command of the L2 in highly specialized discourse domains? The answer is, there are no such studies. What value, then, is there in students or employers knowing someone has reached level 2+, Advanced lower intermediate, B2, or Pale orange minus, on one of the high-priced tests? (The value to the testing organizations and proficiency scale industry is clear, of course.)

[11] For a brief article extolling the virtues of the Duolingo English Test, go to https://thepienews.com/news/duolingo-english-test-gaining-ground-in-us-admissions/The basic Duolingo test requires no speaking or listening, which is surprising, given its purpose. The only evaluation study to date was a small one, unpublished, funded by Duolingo. The test has been reviewed very critically in an article in one of the major refereed testing journals (Wagner & Kunnan, 2015).

each with some success, to move in on their rival's traditional testing market. The competition will assuredly grow fiercer now that, as of 2009, a third global ELT giant, Pearson, launched its own challenge in the academic sector with its new test, the PTE Academic.

As in every industry, from hi-tech to tourism, size matters, so mergers, consolidation and acquisitions are frequent. The English testing business is no different. Pearson acquired Versant; ETS bought Questar;[12] Berlitz (the giant international language school chain) gobbled up SLT (Second Language Testing); Cambridge Language Assessment (CALA) incorporated the Royal Society of Arts and merged with Michigan to form CAMLA in 2010, and so on.

Demand for English language tests is growing, firstly because more and more students are going overseas to study. The number of international students in the USA, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand has increased dramatically in the last decade (OECD, 2019), and more and more universities in non-English-speaking countries are adapting to the new market potential by offering courses and whole degree programs in English as a way of attracting international students and the much higher tuition revenue they bring with them, often using TOEFL, IELTS, etc., to screen admissions. Secondly, the English tests are being used by the governments of English-speaking countries to implement policies on immigration, bringing home the political dimension of current ELT practice.

Summary

The ELT industry is vast, immensely profitable, and still growing fast. At least six players benefit far more from the efforts of English language teachers than do the teachers themselves or their students: (1) nation states, (2) national and local economies, (3) universities and private language schools, (4) teacher educators, (5) ELT textbook authors and publishers, and (6) testing organizations. Regrettably, the teachers not only benefit far less, but as we have attempted to show, are often badly exploited and suffer from precarity. And as we have also attempted to show, due to the unsatisfactory structure of the ELT industry's ownership and control, through no fault of

[12] ETS proudly announced its acquisition of Questar on its web-site thus: "ETS Acquires Questar Assessment Inc. Questar® Assessment Inc., a leading K–12 assessment solutions provider focused on building a bridge between learning and accountability, is now a wholly owned, separate, *for-profit* subsidiary of ETS" (emphasis added).

the teachers themselves, their students often pay dearly with their time and money for results that in other industries would lead to massive fines, government inquiries, and forced closures.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the four parts of the ELT industry described in this book? In what ways is it suggested that they form an "interlocking hydra"?

2. How do the activities of the British Council illustrate the links between the different parts of the ELT industry?

3. In what ways are certain nation states considered to be beneficiaries of the ELT industry?

4. What are some similarities and differences between ELT in universities and in private English schools?

5. What does "precarity" refer to? What evidence is there that many teachers in ELT suffer from this condition?

6. What are your own experiences of teaching English?

7. What picture is painted in this chapter of teacher educators? Do you think it is a fair picture?

8. How have some coursebook writers become multi-millionaires? What is your opinion of such high earnings? How has modern publishing practice made it unlikely for future coursebook writers to become so rich?

9. What criticisms are made in this chapter of the testing part of the ELT industry?

10. How do you think the ELT industry compares to other industries, such as the IT or energy industries?

Suggested Reading

British Council (2015) *The English Effect Report*. Retrieved, March 15, 2021 from https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/english-effect-report-v2.pdf

Pennycook, A. (1995). English in the world/The world in English. In Tollefson, J. F. (ed.), *Power and inequality in language education* (pp. 34-58). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Phillipson, R. & Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2009). The politics and policies of language and language teaching. In Long, M. H., & Doughty, C. J. (eds.), *Handbook of language teaching* (pp. 26-41). Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

Pullum, G. K. *(1987). Here come the linguistic fascists. Natural Language and Linguistic Theory, 5, 4, 603-609.*

Tollefson, J. W. (ed.) (1995). *Power and inequality in language education*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

CHAPTER 13

SIGNS OF STRUGGLE: TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE ORGANIZATION OF ELT

13.1 Introduction

Throughout this book we have used the term "the ELT Industry" to refer to the interlocking areas of ELT publishing, teaching, teacher education, and testing. We refer to this four-headed hydra as an "industry" to stress the fact that its concern for selling commodities now informs its activities far more than following efficacious educational principles. The conversion of the things around us and our activities into commodities-for-sale is the defining feature of capitalist economies, and in today's neoliberal world, nothing escapes: leisure, health, policing, waste disposal, public spaces, forests, rivers, genetic codes, information, and air itself have all succumbed to the commodification process, and education is, of course, no exception. Education has been turned into a range of commodities to be bought and sold like any others, and in the case of the ELT industry, English, the most powerful language in the world, gets the full treatment.

In Chapter 11, we referred to the "English frenzy" in South Korea. The central thesis of Park's (2009) study of the power of English in his country is that English has "risen in status from a symbol of power to an inherent part of an idealized identity". Perhaps the South Korean English learner is just a little further down the road of postmodern cultural development than the rest of the world's English language consumers. As we have seen, the language a person speaks can often affect how marketable that person is, and, thus, for many, not just those living in South Korea, investing in learning English becomes an act of entrepreneurship, an investment in what Rose (1989) calls their "enterprising self". Coursebooks endorse such a view by glamourizing wealth, encouraging an interest in the lifestyles of the rich and famous, and generally promoting the transformative powers of English to realize students' social aspirations.

The coercive impact of neoliberalism for second/foreign language education is the subject of an article by Bernstein et. al (2015). They argue that neoliberalism frames language as a commodified skill and individuals as human capital developed through the acquisition of skills. Language skills lead to social mobility and economic development, and language becomes essential in order to compete in the global economy. At the same time, language teachers become "expendable and replaceable Knowledge Workers", their role no longer as salaried professionals who help learners grow psychologically, socially, and intellectually, but rather contract workers who equip learners with language skills. Finally, the authors suggest that the global spread of English ends up privileging elites, leading to further social stratification and linguistic as well as cultural homogenization. They conclude:

> "Ultimately, the question of whether and to what extent the global spread of English is democratic or hegemonic, whether and where it liberates or oppresses, and how much and under what circumstances it empowers or threatens has different answers depending on who is being asked" (Bernstein et.al, 2015, p.17).

In Chapter 7, we described how ELT is packaged into a series of courses corresponding to presumed ascending levels of proficiency, each course loaded into a coursebook and its accessories, where the goal is mastery of a series of 'can-do' statements. These 'can do' statements, as we explained earlier, are very different from the target tasks and pedagogic tasks which form the TBLT syllabus. Pedagogic tasks are designed to slowly develop students' ability to perform target tasks, which themselves are identified by the needs analysis procedures discussed in Chapter 8, and very carefully described. In contrast, the 'can do' statements that inform General English coursebooks are adapted from those used in the CEFR (see Chapters 7 and 11). They are often extremely vague, and, furthermore, are the result of collecting and sorting the subjective impressions of teachers. The 'can-do' statements belie the fact that what students actually learn is mostly knowledge about the language, not the ability to use the language in real time for relevant purposes. The emphasis on explicit grammar and vocabulary teaching in ELT is the result of treating language as an object, a convenient way of making it a tradeable commodity. If you want to sell courses of English, what better way to do it than cutting up the language into "items" – or "grammar McNuggets", as Thornbury (2010) so memorably labelled them – and then presenting and practicing them in a linear sequence, with the help of a coursebook. Likewise in testing: Proficiency tests of the sort discussed in Chapter 11 are largely concerned with

metalinguistic knowledge, because such knowledge is easier to test. Multiple choice, fill-the-gap, tick-the-box, and all the other types of questions that can be easily scored, are ideal items for tests which can be easily packaged and sold, and which complement coursebooks very well. Finally, pre-service courses like CELTA, discussed in Chapter 10, where trainees are taught knowledge of the language and the rudimentary pedagogic skills needed to work through a synthetic, skills-based syllabus provided by a coursebook, fit snugly into the overall ELT framework.

Digital technology is speeding the development of "vertical integration" of materials, teaching and testing. From placement tests, through online, multi-media courses and progress tests, to final proficiency tests, all aspects of the commodified process of learning English will soon be offered online. And unless there is some real paradigm shift in our approach to ELT, nothing important will change. The same mistaken, inefficacious process will simply morph to its new platform. The English language will continue to be treated as an object, chopped into the same bite-sized bits, which are presented and practiced in the same linear sequence, with the same emphasis on the explicit teaching of knowledge about the language, using the same impoverished texts extolling the same neoliberalist values to the same aspiring consumers. The same progress tests will assure learners of their successful accumulation of the same bits of the language, and the same "proficiency tests" will still be used for the same inappropriate purposes. And thus, students can expect the same results – taught this way, they will not acquire sufficient functional ability in English, despite what the tests may indicate.

Teacher education and teacher competency qualifications will quickly adapt. For instance, the Covid 19 pandemic resulted in a seismic shift towards online ELT, requiring teachers to "re-tool", and prompting a new wave of training opportunities and new teacher qualifications. In his blog, Phillip Kerr (Kerr, n.d.) points out that Cambridge English recently launched their 'Digital Framework for Teachers' describing six areas of competency organized into four levels of proficiency, and Aqueduto (the Association for Quality Education and Training Online) has now set itself up as an accreditation body for online or blended teacher training courses. Kerr goes on to predict that the increased power and reach of digital technology is likely to result in the further worsening of teacher trainers' pay and conditions. He gives the example of the rise of online training courses which use teachers in low-cost countries such as the Philippines, a practice that is developing fast and is illustrative of a broad global trend.

In this final chapter, we look at attempts to break the hold of "the hydra" on ELT. We examine the background to radical dissent, a few of those voicing that dissent, and then some groups of activists who are making tentative steps towards an alternative organization of ELT.

13.2 Background

Long (2015, p. 63) begins a chapter on the philosophical underpinnings of Task-Based Language Teaching with these words:

> "Education of all kinds, not just TBLT as described in this book, serves either to preserve or challenge the status quo, and so is a political act, whether teachers and learners realize it or not. To take a simple example, a language-teaching textbook storyline and accompanying visuals that feature members of only one gender and/or ethnic group in important roles because that is the way things are organized in the surrounding society will tend, whether intentionally or not, to validate and perpetuate that form of social organization. Conversely, a textbook that features a diverse set of characters in leading roles can help open people's eyes to alternatives and the potential in all people".

Given the size of the current ELT industry – a global, multi-billion-dollar industry, involving hundreds of national governments, tens of millions of workers, and hundreds of millions of learners – it is not surprising that those interested in perpetuating the status quo should use their considerable power to ensure that ELT continues to be organized in the way that we have described throughout this book. Two well-honed tools used by the establishment to defend the current organization of ELT from attack are worth highlighting. First, encouraging only harmless "open discussion" and "innovation" among stakeholders, and second, depriving real critics of oxygen. The annual teachers' conferences, TESOL in the USA and IATEFL in Europe, are good examples of how these tools are used. The vast majority of presentations, workshops and publishers' events at these conferences showcase standard ELT materials, methods, training and testing, but there is always one plenary devoted to the gentle criticism of some part of the canon, e.g., use of the L1, drills, or native speaker teachers. Such a concession disguises the fact that most radical proposals for presentations are simply rejected out of hand by conference organizers. Of course, a few get accepted as a matter of political expediency, but they are invariably allotted early morning or late afternoon slots in small, hard to find rooms, far from the Exhibition Hall, now the commercial, throbbing heart of any conference. So those of us fighting the firmly established way things are in

ELT have a hard job getting our views heard when we talk about the way that ELT should be organized: we struggle for oxygen.

13.3 The politics of Radical ELT

To repeat, education is a political act. Those espousing radical approaches to ELT tend to be activists, involved in various types of opposition to the establishment in their everyday lives. They generally hold left-wing political views; they support feminism and LGBTQ+ rights; they oppose racism and discrimination against non-native speaker teachers; and they fight for more liberal policies of education and for better pay and conditions for teachers. As Crookes (2009b, 2010) suggests, language teaching is an especially political part of education, because of the role language plays in the formation of identities and its implication in ideologies. It might also be because of the prevalence of ELT in specialized, semi-autonomous adult education, such as refugee camps and literacy campaigns. Crookes further suggests that only in the last sixty years or so has language teaching been sufficiently self-aware to conceive of itself, as a professional field, as having a political agenda, and to regard some of this work as having a radical orientation. L1 learning is, after all, something that children do "naturally", organizing their learning experiences for themselves, and learning in an unconscious way, given the right educational environment. Crookes (2009) cites Goodman (1962) and Holt (1976) as two radicals who pointed to L1 acquisition as exemplifying the kind of learning that should be generalized to all kinds of learning. Apart from stressing the importance of egalitarian relations between teacher and student and of group work, they saw the non-directive pedagogic techniques of L1 acquisition as an attractive model for education.

It is probably the work of Paulo Freire (1967, 1970, 2004) that has had the greatest effect on radical foreign language education. Working among the illiterate poor, Freire developed his critical pedagogy until the 1964 Brazilian coup, when he was first imprisoned and then exiled. After that, his ideas spread rapidly in the English- speaking world and began to influence ELT from the mid-1970s on. Freire forcefully articulated the view which we have already expressed here, that education cannot be divorced from politics; teaching and learning are political acts, and teachers and students must be made aware of the politics that surround them and their education. Most famously, Freire referred to established educational practice as "banking", where students are seen as empty accounts, to be filled by teachers in such a way that students are transformed into receiving objects,

their thinking and actions controlled, and their creative power inhibited. In contrast, Freire argued that education should be seen as liberation. In this view, people discover that through learning they can make and remake themselves; they take responsibility for themselves as human beings capable of knowing - knowing that they know and knowing that they do not.

Freire's basic pedagogy is one of problem solving, or 'problem-posing' as he called it. It consists of questioning the given, and interrogating common-sense, conventional 'explanations' of reality. It discovers and then reacts to the possible 'contradictions' that are discovered, identifying ways in which things can be said, done, or exist differently. There are three stages:

1. Naming. What is the problem?
2. Reflection: Why is this the case? Why are things the way they are? How do we explain this situation?
3. Action: What can be done to change this situation? What options do we have?

Summing up this approach, Freire says:

> "It is a permanent, critical approach to reality in order to discover it and discover the myths that deceive us and help us to maintain the oppressive, dehumanizing structures. It leaves nobody inactive. It implies that people take the role of agents, makers and remakers of the world." (Freire, 1970, cited in Crookes, 2009, p. 258).

Elsewhere, Crookes (2012, p.5) lists some of the key principles that Crawford (1978) derived from Freire's s work on language critical pedagogy:

a) the purpose of education is to develop critical thinking by presenting students' situation to them as a problem so that they can perceive, reflect and act on it.
b) the content of curriculum derives from the life situation of the learners as expressed in the themes of their reality
c) the learners produce their own learning materials
d) the task of planning is first to organize generative themes and second to organize subject matter as it relates to those themes
e) the teacher participates as a learner among learners
f) the teacher contributes his/her ideas, experiences, opinions, and perceptions to the dialogical process of the course
g) the teacher's function is one of posing problems
h) the students possess the right to and power of decision making.

Note how, for the most part[1], these principles resonate with the methodological principles underpinning the TBLT approach outlined in Chapter 8 above, and also with Breen's process syllabus (1987b); Long and Crookes (1992, 1993); and Meddings and Thornbury's (2009) Dogme approach, discussed in Chapter 7 (and further elaborated below). We might also include those pioneers of the CLT movement, also briefly described in Chapter 7, who, in the early 1970s, rejected synthetic syllabuses and the materials that went with them. It was not just the presentation and practice of a succession of bits of language that the pioneers rejected; they also strove to escape a view of society projected through the lives of Mr. and Mrs. Jones, their children, John and Mary, and their dog, Winston, who all lived happily together in a house in London, had their letters delivered by Bert the postman, went for seaside holidays, and never, ever talked about PARSNIPs (politics, alcohol, religion, sex, narcotics, -isms, or pork). All the rebels, the radicals, one way or another, actively fought this one-dimensional, establishment view of society and its conservative values, and all were informed by the principles that Crawford derived from Freire's work. They all adopted a learner-centered approach to ELT, and they all embraced a critical pedagogy.

As noted above, our version of TBLT does not accept the principle that learners make their own materials. As we explain in Chapter 8, learners have needs which are identified in terms of target tasks. Experts in the domain of language use describe the target tasks, although, occasionally, the learner can do this, if the learner is already an expert in the tasks, or if the learner is *in situ* and can describe what he cannot do. Trained materials writers then take the information provided by the needs analysis to develop pedagogic tasks, after which teachers use pedagogic techniques that best suit the particular group of learners they have at any one time. Thus, the materials writers and teachers combine to make learning more efficient and effective. While there are important differences between our approach and that of courses using a process syllabus or a Dogme approach, we agree that ELT materials should avoid the glossy celebration of consumerism, the hypocrisy of establishment values, and the social stereotypes found in current coursebook series like *Headway,* which appeal to middle-class, aspirational, internationally-mobile individuals, to the exclusion of the poor, the unemployed and the marginalized everywhere.

[1] We do not accept Crawford's principle that "the learners produce their own learning materials." See below.

13.4 What is to be done?

Whatever the similarities and differences among those with radical aspirations for ELT today, they all face the same essential problem: the power of the establishment. Crookes (2009) among others has emphasized how difficult it is to get any program that even covertly espouses the main values of a radical position up and running, whilst a clear expression of intent to implement a program that truly challenges current educational policies quickly leads to the elimination of most funding sources. What is to be done? How can we change ELT so that it becomes more efficacious, and the decline in the pay and conditions of most of its workers is halted? In Chapters 8 and 9, we discussed alternative approaches to ELT, approaches based on what we know about how people learn an L2, as explored in Chapters 1 to 6, and that offer the hope of a brighter future for learners and teachers alike. The question is how to make these alternatives more widely appreciated and put into practice. Or, more simply, how to bring about change. The same question is asked, of course, by all those concerned with the disastrous consequences of a global, deregulated capitalist economy, indicating that the answer is largely political, to do with the redistribution of power and the ownership of resources. In the rest of this chapter, we will look at the views and work of a few radical thinkers and activists who are trying to bring about real change in the sphere of ELT. Much of the information was obtained from replies to an email we sent to those involved in radical ELT, in which we asked these questions:

- Who are you?
- What's your view of current ELT practice?
- What are you doing?
- What success have you had?
- What obstacles do you face?
- How optimistic are you?
- What should those who want radical change in ELT do?

13.4.1 Scott Thornbury and the Dogme Approach to ELT

Politicians of a radial disposition who manage to take a seat in parliament are usually quite quickly disillusioned when they realize how difficult it is to bring about any real, significant change. They are often persuaded by pragmatic, wise old members of the house that they will accomplish more by making compromises, affecting "piecemeal change" inside the powerful establishment tent than by pissing on it from the outside. Scott Thornbury

somehow manages to defy this binary choice. Series editor of the tame (and occasionally lame) Cambridge Handbooks for Teachers, author of books on how to teach CELTA, and probably the most sought-after conference speaker on the ELT circuit, he is, without doubt, a respected and much-admired member of the ELT establishment. At the same time, he is a fierce, articulate and tireless critic of coursebook-driven ELT, a passionate supporter of the Hands Up project (see below) and prime mover in the Dogme movement, which seeks nothing less than a revolution in ELT practice.

As already noted, there are important differences between Dogme and the TBLT approach discussed in Chapter 8 (no needs analysis, no pre-planned sequence of pedagogic tasks, for example); nevertheless, they share the fundamental principle that second language learning involves learning by doing and learning by using the language for relevant purposes, not learning by being told about the language. Dogme, like our TBLT, adopts an analytic syllabus, treats language holistically, and rejects the view of proficiency levels and "progress" as described in the CEFR framework. Its central "pillars", as Thornbury calls them, are conversation-driven teaching, a "materials light" approach, and an "emergent" view of language. While communication among learners that promotes social interaction is at the heart of Dogme, the authors accept that there might be contexts in which students do not wish to participate in classroom conversation. Furthermore, Dogme does not reject technology. The "materials light" injunction implies, more than anything, a complete rejection of modern General English coursebooks. Finally, Dogme reflects Thornbury and Medding's reliance on an emergentist view of SLA (as discussed in Chapter 8; see, e.g., Ellis and Wulff, 2020) and their belief that learners use and produce language without having been explicitly taught it. The Dogme approach to teaching second languages is fully explained in Meddings and Thornbury (2009). Here, we concentrate on Thornbury's replies to our questions.

Thornbury describes himself as a teacher educator, writer on methodology, and agent provocateur. He then insists that there is no ELT practice, only local practices. Curriculum design, he says, including methodology, must respond "responsibly, appropriately, creatively, imaginatively, adaptively, undogmatically", to these local circumstances.

At present, Thornbury is doing a lot of (online) teacher training that directly or indirectly promotes a Dogme ELT methodology. Dogme, now two decades old, has experienced a renaissance, partly as a response to the increasing commodification of ELT, including the all-pervasive grammar

syllabus and the alienation effect created by the precipitate shift into online teaching. There is, says Thornbury, "a genuine interest in how real teaching and learning processes can be rescued in the face of these threats, and Dogme seems to offer a kind of a solution". In 2020, Thornbury ran two fully subscribed online courses for experienced teachers, and at the time of writing, he is running a third. At the same time, Thornbury has been training teachers in the basics of Dogme methodology for the UK-based charity, Mosaik Education, and doing it all online. Thornbury notes that this is the first time (in twenty years) that there has been a consistent program of training teachers in Dogme techniques and principles over an extended time span. He comments that the response has been "hugely encouraging", with a great deal of enthusiasm and engagement, and that for him personally, it is the most stimulating and gratifying work he has ever done, "since, for a start, it involves putting into practice what I have been preaching".

In reply to the question "What success have you had?", Thornbury says that the response has been very positive. In all his work with teachers, he rarely has to deal with the 'That would never work here' response. And he is "hugely" optimistic. The key issues are plausibility "(e.g., how far can you move up the IELTS scale doing describe and draw activities?!)", sustainability (over what time span and using what technologies can the initiative remain viable? and scalability (e.g., how can the intimate experience of working closely with a relatively small group of teachers – say 20 – be extended to a much broader constituency, without it losing its sense of contingency, interactivity, relevance, etc.?).

Finally, what should those who want radical change in ELT do? Thornbury's reply was this: "Abandon coursebooks and work with the raw materials, including the language that emerges from the needs, concerns, hopes and desires of the people in the room. Eschew theory and let the principles emerge through reflecting on practice. 'Take pains, be perfect!'" This is, of course, what we would expect the creator of Dogme to say, and while we do not agree with Thornbury's rejection of theory, we most certainly endorse his rejection of coursebooks and his commitment to radical reform in ELT.

13.4.2 Paul Walsh

Paul Walsh is an example of a teacher who is informed by radical political beliefs and who is making practical attempts to "walk the talk". He has been teaching English since 2005 and now teaches EAP at a university in Berlin, Germany. In his work with university students, Walsh has succeeded in

introducing a strong version of TBLT, where the syllabus comprises a sequence of pedagogic tasks organized around producing a university journal. In 2015, Walsh set up the 'Teachers as Workers' Special Interest Group, which the ruling body of IATEFL refused to recognize, but which, nevertheless, enjoys a considerable following. Walsh has been particularly concerned with teachers' pay and working conditions and has talked about precarity in ELT in several papers (see, for example, Walsh, 2019), where he often stresses the importance of Freire's work.

Walsh compares the current ELT world to the Brezhnev era in Soviet Russia: an era of stagnation. He recalls an old joke from that time. A man walks into a shop and asks the clerk, "You don't have any meat?" The clerk says, "No, here we don't have any fish. The shop that doesn't have any meat is across the street." The parallel he is drawing is one of stasis: nothing is moving. In the biggest bookshop for English teachers in Berlin, "there are literally hundreds of coursebooks that are, in terms of structure, more or less the same as the ones I encountered when I started teaching over fifteen years ago".

What energy there is in ELT seems to go, in Walsh's opinion, towards maintaining the ideological fairytale that English teachers are performing a social service by spreading English throughout the world. Part of this myth involves seeing the ELT community as an inclusive, cozy group of 'good people' within a benign global system one might call 'gentlemanly capitalism'. Thus, argues Walsh, many within ELT misunderstand the nature of communities, which are, he argues, fractious by nature. He cites youth worker and community activist Jeremy Brent (2009), who describes community action as "divisive, dividing the inside from the outside, and producing internal strife between different factions". It involves power games and power battles, and communities often define themselves just as much by who or what they exclude rather than by who or what they include. "Any group of people who deny this", says Walsh "are in danger of running a puppet show rather than building or maintaining a community".

In reply to our question about what those who want radical change in ELT should do, Walsh recommends building more "medium-term institutions". These include hubs, networks, platforms, and publications that push for change, but avoid the ephemeral characteristics of blogs and other social media exchanges. He gives the example of the radical science movement of the seventies, which questioned how science was being used by, for example, the arms industry. Perhaps it is time for radical teachers to take on the ELT industry in the way that the scientists took on the arms industry.

13.4.3 The Hands Up Project

In 2014, Nick Bilbrough, using simple video conferencing tools, started connecting online to a small group of children in a library in Beit Hanoun, Gaza for weekly storytelling sessions. Today, the 'Hands up' project works with thousands of children and young people in Gaza and other parts of Occupied Palestine, and to a lesser extent with young Syrians in refugee camps in Jordan.

As Bilbrough said in 2017, on the Hands Up Project website:

> "More than 500 kids a week now connect to volunteers around the world who work in collaboration with the local teacher to tell stories to each other, to play games and to do other activities to help them bring the English that the children are learning come to life" (Bilbrough, n.d.).

On the Hands Up project's Facebook page there are dozens of examples of sessions where groups of students from schools around the world (in Totnes in England, Rio in Brazil, Ayb in Armenia, for example) talk by videoconference to students in Gaza, and other parts of Occupied Palestine. Rather than organize English teaching around placement tests and subsequent coursebook-driven classes for so-called beginning, intermediate and advanced level students, the Hands Up Project uses a teaching methodology centered around the telling and performing of stories. When we talked to Nick about his work, he explained that stories are naturally attractive to children; they are inherently engaging to listen to, and can provide an easy, reassuring and motivating learning experience for children who may have experienced dislocation, war, trauma and loss. Furthermore, the stories are used as a springboard for dramatization; they are taken as the raw material for plays which the children rehearse and perform, often integrating drama and chants. A final step is that the children write their own stories collaboratively, and then rehearse and perform them online to students in classrooms all over the world. While stories and plays are the main activities, "show-and-tell" activities, where children talk about their favorite possessions, for example, are also used. Everything is done using the simplest and cheapest technology, with frequent power cuts the only major problem.

For about two years, Bilbrough worked alone from his home in the UK, doing all of the teaching himself, but since then, he has made dozens of trips to Palestine and has also trained a growing number of volunteers to work with him. The team of volunteers now numbers more than forty, and they work in countries such as the USA, Finland, Mexico, Russia, and Japan.

Every week, more than thirty volunteers and 500 schoolchildren take part in sessions which together make up the Hands Up network. It is hard to convey the energy and enthusiasm that radiates from these sessions; we advise readers to go to the Hands Up website and see for themselves this inspiring example of radical ELT in action (https://www.handsup project.org/).

The students themselves are unanimous in their praise of the project. They express their enjoyment of the sessions and demonstrate a rapidly growing English language competence, which the teachers confirm. The students demonstrate improved vocabulary and grammatical awareness, plus development in listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. While the sessions focus on general communicative competence, attention is also given to their need to pass their national English exams. Particularly notable, as Scott Thornbury (a founding member and trustee of the project) says, is how empowering it is for the students to perform their stories to a large, extended audience. There are many videos of these performances available for viewing on the Hands Up Project website. In 2019, a group of children in Gaza performed live for a large group of participants at the annual IATEFL Conference in Glasgow. On 21st May 2021, United Nations Cultural Diversity Day, and coincidentally the day in which a cease fire was declared in the 2021 bombardment of Gaza, Bilbrough invited us to attend a performance of a remote play, acted simultaneously by young people in Ukraine and Gaza. The "playwrights" in Gaza were moved and delighted to see their work get a public performance.

The teacher education program is equally impressive. As a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, online teaching has now become very widely used, and the "big names" in teacher education are scrambling to acquire the new skills and competencies required. But Bilbrough stole a march on them all - he already has five years' experience of this medium, which he has used to develop technical and pedagogic tools that facilitate teamwork, collaborative learning, and effective collaboration between the remote teacher and the teacher on the ground. Rather than use Zoom to deliver online versions of coursebooks, where the teacher uses multimedia texts to contextualize and present pre-chosen items of the language items before getting the students to do some "freer" practice, in the Hands Up project, teachers acquire new ideas and fresh ways of working, based on Crawford's (1982) radical principles of education discussed above. Such has been the response to the project that Bilbrough no longer has to do all the teacher education work himself. Now, a small team coordinates the work between remote and local teachers, while both the blog and YouTube channel are rapidly expanding

spaces where teachers upload and download free language teaching materials and swap new ideas for their classes. Thornbury (2018) notes the tremendously positive effect that working on the Hands Up project has on teachers, who feel a renewed enthusiasm for teaching, simply by being a part of this shared experience.

There are many testimonies to the success of the project on the Hands Up website; here is one:

> "The most amazing thing about the Hands up Project is that it is not just another online resource for English language teachers, but a resource point through which the team behind it can actually show you how to do online story telling. Syrian refugee children in refugee camps in Jordan are thrilled to be able to benefit from the Hands up Project for learning English. I can see the difference it makes to our young learners by employing this innovative method that is very appealing to them." (Danijel Cuturic, Education Program Manager, Relief International, Zaatari refugee camp, Jordan).

In reply to our questions, Bilbrough said that he considered himself a radical, because he was "enabling voices to be heard that are normally silenced or ignored". He attributed his success to the team of volunteers and the support that his project has received from a few influential backers, particularly Scott Thornbury. The obstacles he faces are mainly to do with the political conflicts in the region and the lack of adequate resources. He remains enormously optimistic, suspicious of approaches by commercial interests and extremely reluctant to be in the limelight. When we asked him "What should those who want radical change in ELT do?" he replied that they should have confidence in their ability to work outside the framework imposed by coursebooks, proficiency tests and established teacher education. In common with everybody we consulted, he stressed the importance of building a team who share a common view and of forging international links with other groups of radical teachers.

13.4.4 The SLB Cooperative

The SLB (Serveis Lingüístics de Barcelona, SCCL) is a cooperative of mainly freelance language teachers, teacher trainers, writers, and translators. Under Catalan cooperative law, they are a cooperative of services, which means that they share fiscal advice, materials, job opportunities and professional development/training. Their principal aim is to improve the economic conditions and technical abilities of members, who are free to work with whomever they like, but can also find work through the co-op,

either through clients the co-op contracts, or through the informal sharing of opportunities. Each member has an equal voice and vote, can collaborate with other members to develop self-managed projects, and participate in democratic processes, such as choosing executive positions and approving annual accounts. Members meet regularly, communicate via online tools, and access resources through their websites (https://wwwlearn.slb.coop and https://learn.slb.coop).

The president and co-founder of SLB is Neil McMillan, who started the cooperative with Irene Almazán, Alan Ritchie and George Chilton in 2014, in response to dissatisfaction with working in the private sector in Barcelona as teachers, teacher trainers and translators. He is critical of coursebook-driven ELT and teacher training courses such as CELTA, and has a strong personal commitment to change. Not surprisingly, perhaps, members of the cooperative generally share his views, and that includes a realistic, pragmatic response to the local ELT environment. Together, they compete with private language schools in Barcelona for contracts to run in-company classes, and with other freelancers or agencies to win materials-writing contracts, sometimes with big publishers. Lower running costs than their competitors, plus high standards of teacher competence and motivation mean that they often win contracts against the "big guns". According to our data, gathered from meetings, conversations and email exchanges with Neil McMillan and others, members of the SLB get better pay than most teachers in Barcelona, and express higher job satisfaction. The job satisfaction is largely the result of doing work that is decently paid and that they themselves have chosen to do and which often involves collaborating with local community projects.

The SLB devotes a lot of time to on-going teacher development. Members meet regularly for workshops where one of them will share their expertise in a certain area, or where local experts are invited to lead a session. Through SLB's communication channels, new articles from journals are posted, questions about classes are raised, working hours are exchanged, The SLB website includes a members' area, where new articles from journals are posted, questions about classes are raised, working hours are exchanged, and personal experiences are shared. Part of the SLB budget goes to paying for members to attend courses and conferences and those who receive funds give full reports. There is a great deal of interest in approaches that run counter to mainstream ELT practice, such as TBLT; both of us have had the privilege of collaborating with the SLB in its online TBLT training course. Partly as a result of their interest in TBLT, SLB plans

to publish materials from their materials bank which reflect alternative approaches to those taken by mainstream publishers.

In reply to the questions we sent him, McMillan explained that the SLB is run on the principle of a bottom-up, democratic, teacher-led organization. While they are technically a for-profit organization, they have consistently voted to re-invest any profits to maintain and improve the services they provide their members. Obstacles they face include their lack of experience in management, fiscal matters, and marketing; low expectations of the monetary worth of language classes and of teacher-training (the large numbers of free teacher training webinars offered by established companies, for example); the demands from some clients for synthetic approaches and/or materials; and the demand from some clients for native-speaker teachers only. The Covid 19 crisis was a major setback; they lost several important long-term clients because of it. With regard to successes, McMillan highlighted being able to support members through maternity leave so they don't lose clients; setting up a materials bank; helping members get paid when clients renege on contracts; employing an administrative worker on a permanent contract; setting up an online training platform, then creating and running the TBLT course; securing and maintaining clients such as public hospitals even through the Covid 19 crisis; and branching out into materials development.

So, is he optimistic? McMillan replied, "I don't think I'm optimistic, but I am bloody-minded. I would be a lot more pessimistic if it weren't for the mutual support of our members and their desire to be a part of this and to help it keep going". Last but not least, in reply to the question "What should those who want radical change in ELT do?", Neil said: "Join SLB or a co-op like it, or form their own. Join a union. Join or form grassroots, informal groups which inform and develop teachers and related language workers".

13.4.5 Heart and Parcel

Heart and Parcel (Heart and Parcel, n.d.) is an informal ESOL and food project based in Levenshulme, Manchester. It was founded in 2015 by Clare Courtney and Karolina Koścień, with the aim of helping women from migrant communities to develop their English language and communication skills "through the medium of food". Karolina has since moved to work in another charity. Heart and Parcel run a variety of projects "which use food and cooking as a way for participants to gather together, connect and to share their past stories, experiences and lives with others, whilst practicing and developing their English language skills". One of their most popular

courses is “From Home to Home”, an online course which helps participants to improve their English by giving a series of cooking classes. The “Main Class”, Cooking and English, is given every week, followed, two days later, by a “Post-class Discussion Class”, where students practice their English with other students and qualified teachers. “Extra Study” is provided by “Homework” (vocabulary and grammar exercises about the food and recipe from the main class) and a “WhatsApp Discussion Group” (share recipes, videos, photos of food, and communicate in English with other students and qualified teachers). Additionally, Heart and Parcel run public fundraising public food events such as supper clubs, markets, catering, and private workshops. They also publish a collaborative cookbook “working with participants to share recipes and stories from their communities, cultures and lives”.

Like the Hands Up project, Heart and Parcel is truly inspirational, and, as with the Hands Up project, the best way to appreciate the enthusiasm and energy that characterizes their work is to visit their website (https://heartandparcel.org/.), where the project’s hugely empowering effects on the women involved is quickly evident. “Getting them out of the house to have fun, make friends and share experiences together” drives the whole endeavor. The aim is to encourage language learning by engaging participants in cooking and working together, where conversations naturally take place. Courtney and a growing number of staff and volunteers guide the women in their language learning, while Heart & Parcel partners with organizations such as Refugee Action, Boaz Trust, and Medaille Trust to deliver their work.

Teachers involved in the project adopt Jenkins’ (2007) English as a lingua franca view and they strongly reject the belief that native English speaker teachers make the best teachers by virtue of their ‘native language’”. Courtney writes on the website that they aim to “deliver sessions that celebrate and platform the very knowledge experience and combined skills of learners, showing that learning is a shared and democratic process, and language learning can be fostered through other learners, intrinsic motivation, communication, lifelong learning and self-study”. As to methodological principles, they focus on “emerging language: learner-led content and lessons using a more community driven approach, a bottom up and learner centered approach”. The needs of Heart and Parcel learners often confound the boundaries set up by conventional distinctions between EAP, EFL, ESOL, etc. Many have done general English courses which ignored their interest in academic English, for example; and so the teachers make a special effort to identify their learners’ needs. They also explore other

learning opportunities through food, such as budgeting, healthy meals, using food for social change, employability and community cohesion through communal eating.

A particularly interesting feature of their organization is the opportunities they offer the learners to get involved. Learners can volunteer to do catering events, market stall cook-alongs and presentations, thus creating further opportunities to meet people who are more within their interests, line of work, or study. Thus, Courtney is committed to encouraging learners to progress through to paid positions in the project, where they can take on teaching positions and thus help to develop the skills of newer learners who enter the program. This points to the seriousness of the ELT part of the project, and to its founders' commitment to radical educational practice. Courtney explained to us that this led to what she calls "something of an identity crisis!" She continued:

> "We subvert fixed spaces where our work usually sits, working across disciplines and studies - social work, ELT, food, migration, and gender studies. This organic focus on the learners' realities and their lives, and the type of learner that we support (usually accessing ESOL) means that our English language provision has always been labelled as informal, and as such, brings with it connotations of lower regulation, accountability and volunteer-led provision. It seems we are out of place in the ELT world! We have felt conflicted in this, our teachers and volunteers using methods from our work in universities and schools and our teaching informed by research. We aim to run high quality provision with our schemes of work and plans cross referenced with the CEFR framework and stay rooted in current ELT research and best practice.
>
> At the same time, it has been hard to find funding that matches the resource for this - and we often find ourselves out of place too in the third sector where we have found that ESOL and English language classes historically tend to be last on the list of organization and charities' budgets. We are attempting to forge a new space where 'informal' learning can be seen as a valuable asset by the government, funders and other stakeholders in an adult learners' life opportunities and satisfaction" (Courtney, 2021, personal correspondence).

In fact, the project was begun as a reaction to the UK government's consecutive cuts to funding in ESOL since 2010 and the impact those cuts had on migrant women. In early 2016, money went back into English classes, but this time with a specific motive. Prime Minister David Cameron specifically blamed Muslim women not speaking English as the reason for the rise in terrorism, and the Hearts and Parcel program was a response to

the “deficient and hostile discourse”, as Courtney calls it, which positioned migrant women as to blame for the UK society’s problems, with no regard for the rich existing skills and knowledge that many women bring with them into the UK.

> "We therefore set up a space for women to come and learn the English they wanted to learn, with no restrictions, no targets no requirements, just to relax and learn the English they needed for their lives. The cooking was a way to take away that pressure from looking like an English class. With this policy and these funding restrictions to match (only certain people were eligible for free ESOL classes - and this changes a lot depending on your income, your job status, your immigration status, the council you are in). These classes were more about proving yourself to the larger society, rather than equipping yourself with the English you need for the control in your life" (Courtney, 2021, personal correspondence).

Courtney adds that the focus on cooking has brought up other questions around the gendered roles of men and women. By using cooking, they have faced criticism from both sides (externally, not by learners) - men feeling left out, and women feeling that they stereotype women, that the only place for women is in the kitchen. They are, Courtney says, still exploring these comments and deciding how to resolve them.

In reply to our question “What success have you had?”, Courtney replied that they have created and self-published their own cookbook made up of delicious recipes and stories written and given by their learners. All funds from the cookbook go back into the project, generating further provision for their learners. This, she says, symbolizes everything they stand for: “learner led content, recipes and texts”. The book itself is now in the process of being developed into two separate ELT material suites for A1 and B2 learners.

Finally, regarding what those who want radical change in ELT should do, Courtney advises the following:

- Start with small actionable changes within your classrooms, with your learners, your organization.
- Continually reflect on what frustrates you and seek to find solutions in other disciplines, industries.
- Campaigning is important, widen the reach of people who are listening - we found that by involving the general public and the mainstream through food events, we were then able to open up conversations about ESOL, the view of migrant women, the way in

which language is used as power and control. This helped us to gain more support.

13.4.6 Ljiljana Havran

Havran works as an English teacher and librarian at an aviation academy in Belgrade, one of Europe's largest pilot training centers. The Academy has its own airport with an air traffic control tower, 1700 square kilometers of dedicated airspace, a fleet of 20 airplanes, and a modern training center with a state-of-the-art trainer simulator. The academy is now run by the Serbian Government's Ministry of Education and consists of a secondary state school, a pilot and air traffic controller training center, and a training center for aviation mechanics. Since pilots and air traffic controllers must achieve and maintain a high level of English, all students do English courses, and passing the Test of English for Aviation (TEA) is a requirement for successful graduation. Havran's widely followed blog (Havran (n.d.) gives regular reports and commentaries on her work, reflecting her commitment to a radical view of ELT in a challenging environment.

Havran introduced CLT in her school about 15 years ago, but faced a great deal of opposition. While she personally found that trying out communicative activities made "a welcome and refreshing change to the grammar-translation approach which was the established norm", students' feedback at the end of each school year was disappointing: most students claimed that her way of teaching and grading was not clear, they insisted on more explicit grammar teaching, on more use of the L1 in classes, and on translating the texts in the coursebooks into Serbian. When she tried to persuade students, colleagues, and the head teacher that a CLT approach was more efficacious, she was told: "That will never work here!". Ironically, a few years later, English language teachers at the academy were encouraged to adopt what they called CLT, but what was, in fact, a coursebook-driven approach; an approach which, in Havran's words, "completely destroyed the possibility of implementing CLT".

A breakthrough happened when Havran started working in the school library in 2014. There, she worked hard to make the library a "liberated space: the most democratic space in the school, where open discussion and the free exchange of ideas is encouraged". Her main goals were "to promote reading, critical thinking, learner-centeredness and collaboration". In the library itself, she set about giving students opportunities to interact in English, by offering students extra Aviation English assignments and tasks. She designed and delivered English classes where students were engaged in

communicative tasks focused on meaning; students spent their time talking in the target language, not listening to a teacher talk about language. As the teacher, Havran provided texts, useful vocabulary lists, and help with grammar through Long's (1991) focus on form, i.e., recasts and reactive feedback. The classes were extremely well received by students, which encouraged Havran to go further, and, in 2021 to offer something more complete, ambitious, and radical: a task-based language course for pilots and air traffic controllers, based on the principles of Long's (2015) book on TBLT, discussed in Chapter 8.

Basing herself on the course "Aviation English 3", a textbook she had prepared in 2012, Havran completely revised the curriculum using Long's (2015) TBLT as her guide. In a post describing the course (Havran, 2021a), she explains how she carried out a needs analysis to identify target tasks required for communication between pilots and air traffic controllers. In one of the target tasks ("Dealing with problems in flight and suggesting actions"), she used a transcript taken from a YouTube video of the pilot of an Emirates B777 flight communicating with air traffic control about emergency fuel problem at Vancouver as the basis of a sequence of pedagogic tasks. The sequence of pedagogic tasks was designed according to Long's (2015) key methodological principles (see Chapter 8). In addition to the YouTube video transcript mentioned above, online newspaper and magazine articles, interviews with professionals, example texts and aviation documents are also used. Aviation terminology and concepts are explained with simple definitions, and materials are selected on the principle of 'input elaboration,' improving the comprehensibility of relevant spoken or written texts by adding redundancy and regularity, as discussed in Chapter 8.

In another post (Havran, 2021b), Havran discusses her Library course – "Carpe Librum" - which, in response to the Covid 19 pandemic, is delivered on the Moodle platform and aimed at students with a love of literature who want to improve their English by following an extensive reading and listening program. Students are given a choice of different modules: school libraries and books; critical thinking and logical fallacies; science and pseudo-science; information and media literacy. The course aims are to promote reading books in English and Serbian, develop intellectual curiosity and critical thinking skills, encourage teamwork and collaboration, and promote life-long self-directed learning. Each module includes: a short presentation with carefully designed activities, interactive exercises or quizzes, interesting forum discussion topics, assessed tasks, and surveys on students reading habits and information and media literacy skills.

Havran has not managed to persuade the school director to implement her "Aviation 3" course, and so, like her library course, it remains an optional course. Government policy and the problems caused by the Covid 19 pandemic mean that this is not the best moment for Havran to push too hard for general adoption of the alternative courses she has pioneered. Her immediate plans are to continue improving her work in the library and to design courses which can be delivered in the library and online, working with a group of like-minded, motivated teachers and students.

We are impressed with Havran's dedication and her commitment to radical change. Her work shows just how much can be achieved by a teacher who fights to go beyond a limited remit in a conservative environment so as to bring about real change. Furthermore, Havran's work adds to the evidence provided by studies and meta-analyses such as that of Bryfonski & McKay (2019) which challenge the claim that strong versions of TBLT "just cannot work" in certain teaching environments. To us, an aviation academy is the ideal context for the implementation of the TBLT approach we champion. Once the necessary heavy lifting (needs analysis, materials production and syllabus design, and teacher training) has been done, a course of English that serves the needs of a stable body of students can be delivered henceforth year after year, with relatively minor modifications, to the benefit of everybody concerned. We can see no good reasons for using a General English coursebook in such a context. And yet, the old ways remain entrenched, so Havran is forced to pioneer an alternative on her own initiative, and to be content with relatively minor successes. This is a story which has echoes around the world: efficacious alternatives to the use of coursebooks are either ignored or hampered, and it takes a brave pioneer to buck the trend.

Havran is currently planning a new English course: "Using A Library", where target tasks are: applying for a library card, asking the librarian for assistance, reserving a book, checking out a book, paying for damage made to a book, returning books late, using a computer to find books and articles, asking for information, locating/ evaluating resources, learning about information and media literacy (citation and issues of copyright and avoiding plagiarism, spotting fake news, producing digital content, etc.). The course will, of course, consist of doing all these things in English, in her library.

Replying to the question of what obstacles she faces, Havran says that coursebook-driven ELT remains the entrenched, prevailing model of teaching in her context. If English teachers were keen to deliver a TBLT

course, they would probably face the problem of learners' preferences for more traditional approaches. Furthermore, many English language teachers in the academy are still not willing to challenge the assumption that coursebooks are a good way to organize ELT, and there is, as she puts it, "a general reluctance to even join in the discussion". Havran adds that there is also "the constant problem of appalling pay and conditions of the Serbian teachers which results in low motivation to explore and apply new methods". With regard to her own trajectory, the biggest obstacles she has faced so far are lack of experience in promoting her library work, and the Covid crisis, which she has tried to overcome by using online platforms like Teams and Moodle.

How optimistic is Havran? "I'm not so much optimistic as stubborn", she says. She sees one of the key roles of a good school librarian as being to promote innovative teaching methods, and she is determined to keep working with her group to extend their influence. She continues to talk to all teachers, encouraging them to carry out collaborative projects by sharing some useful information with them on Teams and Moodle platforms.

Finally, in answer to the question "What should those who want radical change in ELT do?", Havran places particular emphasis on informing teachers about how people learn languages, which she is sure is the key to persuading teachers to abandon coursebooks, focus on learners' needs, and design syllabuses and materials based on their own learners' needs. She concludes "The most important thing is to believe that we can bring about change. I think this is possible if we start with building a team of people who share a common view on ELT teaching/ learning. Implementing some more efficacious ways of teaching and improving our pay and working conditions can boost enthusiasm and be inspirational for other teachers".

13.4.7 Lessons from the Six

What emerges from these accounts is that change must start at the local level, with local communities organizing their own alternative eco-systems, coordinating their efforts through national and supra-national networks. When we talk of the "ELT Industry" and "current ELT practice", we refer to the global activities of publishers, course providers, teacher education providers, and examination boards. They all share the same commercial motivation, which explains why they treat ELT as a commodity. All the radical challenges discussed above treat ELT as a local activity, and they all share the same non-commercial motivation, which, perhaps, explains why their work is so much more inspirational, more energetic, more attractive.

Those involved in radical projects like those described above are, in our opinion, implementing more efficacious teaching, and at the same time, providing local teachers with better jobs and contributing towards the life of their local communities.

There is renewed and persistent interest in Dogme from a growing segment of professionals (for many it has furnished them with the 'experimental practice' requirement of DELTA courses for example), and the on-site and online courses that Thornbury runs are always over-subscribed. Interest in TBLT, and in cooperatives like the SLB is also growing. The most encouraging part of Thornbury's story is worth repeating. He recounts that in his training courses, teachers hardly ever respond by saying "That would never work here", which is the stock response one hears from teacher trainers who are also coursebook writers, and who thus have a personal investment in coursebook-driven ELT. We have already mentioned the meta-analysis by Bryfonski and McKay (2019) which refutes the same "it just couldn't work here" claim made by so many teacher educators about TBLT. There are realistic, viable alternatives to all the major components of the ELT industry discussed in Sections 2 and 3 of this book, and there are encouraging signs that these alternatives are attracting growing numbers of teachers and learners.

As the "one size fits all" business model loses traction in so many parts of the global economy, the commercial interests involved in ELT are already responding with more "locally-tuned", "niche" versions of their products, and it is inevitable that what is radical today will be recuperated tomorrow. Even so, there are reasons for optimism, and we can but try. In his correspondence with us, Paul Walsh cites the words of James Baldwin (1962): "Not everything that is faced can be changed; but nothing can be changed until it is faced".

Summary

The ELT industry described in this book is primarily concerned with selling commodities; its interest in efficacious, educational principles is secondary. Radical voices in ELT see education as a political act, and, as Crookes (2009) suggests, language teaching is an especially political part of education, because of the role language plays in the formation of identities and its implication in ideologies. The work of Paul Freire is particularly valuable in articulating a radical approach to ELT, and the principles Crawford (1982) derived from Freire's s work serve as guidelines.

We consider the projects run by Dogme, the SLB, the Hands Up project, the Heart and Parcel project, and the TBLT courses designed by the librarian, Ljiljana Havran, to be examples of ways in which the current orthodox model of ELT can be successfully challenged. They all stress the importance of working at the local level with local communities organizing their own alternative eco-systems.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the four suggested heads of the "ELT Hydra"? How do they work together to commodify ELT?

2. How is digital technology speeding up the development of "vertical integration"?

3. What is Freire's contribution to radical ELT?

4. Do you think the principles Crawford (1982) derived from Freire's s work can serve as guidelines for teaching practice? What criticisms do you have of them?

5. Why does Walsh question the "ELT community"?

6. Does the SLB cooperative strike you as a feasible way to organize ELT practice?

7. How would you try to organize a cooperative in your local context?

8. What common threads bind the Hands Up project and the Heart and Parcel project?

9. What are the limitations of the projects described in Section 13.4.? Can they be overcome?

10. How do you see ELT evolving in the next few years?

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