# Second Language Pedagogy

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**Appendices**

# Acknowledgements

# 1   The Context

This book aims to present a particular view of second language pedagogy, together with an account of a five-year project of exploratory teaching which helped to articulate that view and to develop procedures of teaching consistent with it.[1]

   The project consisted of teaching English to a small number of classes in primary and secondary schools in southern India, over periods of time varying between one and three years. The teaching was planned, carried out, and reviewed regularly by a group of interested teacher trainers and teachers of English as a part-time activity, but with institutional support from the Regional Institute of English in Bangalore and the British Council in Madras. Some comments which have appeared in the literature refer to the project as the 'Bangalore Project', the 'Bangalore-Madras Project', or the 'Procedural Syllabus Project', but the project team itself used the name 'Communicational Teaching Project'.[2]

   The stimulus for the project was a strongly-felt pedagogic intuition, arising from experience generally but made concrete in the course of professional debate in India. This was that the development of competence in a second language requires not systematization of language inputs or maximization of planned practice, but rather the creation of conditions in which learners engage in an effort to cope with communication.[3] This view will be discussed at some length in later chapters of the book, but one or two points can be made at this stage to prevent possible misunderstanding. In the context of the project, competence in a language was seen as consisting primarily of an ability to conform automatically to grammatical norms, and communication as a matter of understanding, arriving at, or conveying meaning. The focus of the project was not, that is to say, on 'communicative competence' (in the restricted sense of achieving social or situational appropriacy, as distinct from grammatical conformity) but rather on grammatical competence itself, which was hypothesized to develop in the course of meaning-focused activity.[4] Attempts to systematize inputs to the learner through a linguistically organized syllabus, or to maximize the

practice of particular parts of language structure through activities deliberately planned for that purpose were regarded as being unhelpful to the development of grammatical competence and detrimental to the desired preoccupation with meaning in the classroom. Both the development and the exercise of grammatical competence were viewed as internal self-regulating processes and, furthermore, effort to exercise competence in response to a need to arrive at or convey meaning was viewed as a favourable condition for its development. It was decided that teaching should consequently be concerned with creating conditions for coping with meaning in the classroom, to the exclusion of any deliberate regulation of the development of grammatical competence or a mere simulation of language behaviour.[5]

The teaching which was undertaken was exploratory in three ways. First, it was an attempt to develop in the course of sustained teaching in actual classrooms, and by trial and error, a teaching methodology which was consistent with the initial intuition and maximally replicable in relation to such classrooms. The methodology which developed has since been referred to as 'task-based teaching' and will be discussed in this book in some detail. Secondly, the teaching was a means of developing a clearer perception of the intuition and of articulating it more fully in a number of ways. As the perception was influenced by the teaching, the teaching too was influenced by the emerging perception, so that theory and practice helped to develop each other in the course of the five years. Thirdly, the process of this development was reported as fully and frequently as possible to a wide audience of teachers and specialists in India, through periodical newsletters and at annual review seminars, in an effort to expose it as fully as possible to fellow-teachers' criticism or corroboration at every stage.[6] The regular debate thus generated, not only with teachers and specialists in India but, to a significant extent, with visiting specialists from outside India, was an important input to the project.[7] It is possible to think of progress in pedagogy as resulting from a continual interaction not only between perception and practice but also between differing perceptions, so that focused debate becomes a valuable means of sharing and influencing perceptions in ways that act as a process of error elimination. It is in this spirit that the project was submitted for discussion in India at various stages and it is in the same spirit that it is now being submitted for wider discussion.

It will be clear from the above that the project was not designed as an experiment to 'prove' a given methodology empirically, but was rather a classroom operation for developing a methodology and gaining some understanding of it.[8] An attempt was, however, made to see to what extent empirical evidence of outcomes can be obtained within the constraints of such an exercise and the result is included as Appendix VI. Equally, it has not been possible, with the staffing support available to the project, to gather and analyse observational data from the classroom as extensively or systematically as might have been desirable, though readers will, I hope, be able to form an impression of what teaching on the project was like from the description in the next chapter and the lesson transcripts in Appendix IV.[9] In general, what is offered in this book is an interpretation of classroom experience, with as clear an indication as possible of both the nature of the experience and the point of view from which the interpretation is made. Perhaps this will, among other things, serve to illustrate the value or otherwise of a project of this kind.

The project's concern for developing teaching procedures which are realistic and replicable in the Indian classroom does not necessarily imply that these procedures are being recommended for large-scale implementation in India. Nor does it imply that the relevance of such procedures is limited to Indian conditions. There can be different views on the relationship between pedagogic innovation and large-scale implementation, and my own is outlined in the last chapter of this book. On the question of local and global relevance, while it is true that teaching and learning situations can vary to a large extent on one or more of several dimensions, it would be unfortunate if innovations related to real and specific situations were, for that reason, assumed to be of limited relevance; one consequence of such an assumption might be to place too high a value, in terms of range of relevance, on innovation based on abstraction or idealization.[10] A more desirable course would be to assume that an innovation has relevance beyond the specific situation it is associated with and to examine, for any given situation, at what level of generality such relevance can be established. This would involve asking questions of the form 'Why not?' rather than 'Why?' and seeking to eliminate application at too low a level of generality. Relating specific dimensions of a situation to particular aspects of a pedagogic proposal in this way can in itself be

a fruitful activity. Typologies of teaching situations commonly made in terms such as 'second' and 'foreign' languages, 'elementary', 'intermediate' and 'advanced' levels, 'young' and 'adult' learners – should thus be seen as an aid to investigating the extent of relevance of a pedagogic proposal, not as a means of treating pedagogic proposals as merely pragmatic responses to specific situations.

This is not to deny that features of specific teaching situations influence the feasibility of particular pedagogic procedures and, indeed, the development of particular pedagogic perceptions. An important feature of the English-teaching situation in India is that English is a part of statutory 'mainstream' education, with such factors as the allocation of time, the size of classes, and examination requirements decided on in the context of the teaching of all other subjects. Second language teaching in this institutional context has to come to terms with the norms and expectations of formal education in general. There are, for instance, perceptions of the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom and there is an expectation of serious, substantive content to handle. When pedagogic perceptions of language as skill or of language learning as a matter of social interaction lead to classroom activities such as playing games or acting out non-classroom roles, 'having fun' or managing without the teacher, there is a conflict with the norms of formal education and with what may be called the 'classroom ethos'.[11] The traditional perception of language as formal grammar, and of language learning as a matter of studying (or translating or memorizing) serious texts, suited the educational framework much better. This is not to suggest that the constraints of formal education should have precedence over innovative perceptions of language pedagogy; but neither should it be assumed that these perceptions can, or should necessarily seek to, alter the formal context of teaching. Developing feasible classroom procedures based on a given perception of pedagogy involves a reconciliation with the constraints of the teaching context, and it should be regarded as a strength for classroom procedures to be able to develop within and draw support from such constraints while remaining consistent with the perception involved. It is one of the advantages of a teaching project which is not a 'designed experiment' that it is able to explore the possibilities of such reconciliation and ensure some general viability to the teaching procedures it develops. Thus, while the pedagogic perception

behind the project in southern India is that language ability develops in direct relation to communicational effort (and that language structure as content is unhelpful in language teaching), the teaching procedures which evolved on the project crucially involve a preoccupation with meaning-content and activities in which teachers act as teachers and learners act as learners in the way they do in the rest of the school's work. It will be claimed that both the focus on meaning-content and teacher-directed activity are advantages from the point of view of the perception of learning in question.[12]

It may be useful to conclude this discussion by mentioning some general features of the English-teaching situation in India. English has the constitutional status of an 'associate official language' in a highly multilingual national context and is the dominant medium of higher-level administration, higher education, the learned professions, large-scale industry and commerce, and a considerable part of literary and artistic activity. Indians who use English are estimated to constitute only about 5 per cent of the nation's population, but this group forms a very large proportion of those who are in leadership roles and are concentrated in the largest cities in the country, where English functions as a lingua franca. The age at which the teaching of English starts at school varies between different states, but is generally between 7 and 12 years. Examinations in English at school-leaving and first-degree stages are compulsory in the majority of states and optional in others. Only a small proportion of the students being taught English at school, those in the large cities and from highly-educated or high-income backgrounds, come into contact with the language outside the language classroom. This may be in subject classes in the small number of private English-medium schools, or at home. English is, however, widely regarded by students and parents alike as the language of opportunity, opening the door to higher education, a better job, upward social mobility, and so on. Consequently, there is a widespread general desire to learn the language. An estimate of the number of students being taught English throughout the country at this time is twenty million, and virtually all the teachers of English are Indians who have learnt English in the same educational system. Class size in primary schools varies from 30 to 45 and in secondary schools from 40 to 60. Few classes use teaching aids beyond the blackboard, chalk, paper, and pencil.

**Notes**

1  No distinction is made here between 'second' and 'foreign' languages. Some indication of the teaching situation which gave rise to the project can be found later in this chapter and in the next.

2  See Johnson (1982: 135–44); Brumfit (1984a: 101–9); Brumfit (1984b: 233–41); Howatt (1984: 288); Beretta and Davies (1985: 121–7).

3  There is a parallel to this in Brumfit's account of how he was led to formulate the principle of fluency activity in language teaching (1984a: 50–51).

4  The view developed during the course of the project thus differs from what is generally called 'communicative language teaching' both with regard to objectives (grammatical competence in the former case, a distinct communicative competence in the latter) and with regard to means (meaning focused activity in the former case, practice activity organized in terms of features' of situational appropriacy in the latter). This point will be taken up again in the next chapter.

5  The project group became aware with the publication of Krashen (1981), when the project had completed two years, of the striking similarity between these concepts and Krashen's concepts of 'acquisition' and 'comprehensible input'. There are, however, significant differences which will become clear at various points later on.

   The general concept of second language acquisition as an internal, self-regulating process is, of course, an old one. Howatt points out how, as long ago as 1622 (in the context of teaching Latin), Joseph Webbe had argued that 'no man can run speedily to the mark of language that is shackled and ingiv'd with grammar precepts' and 'By exercise of reading, writing, and speaking after ancient Custom . . . all things belonging to Grammar will without labour, and whether we will or no, thrust themselves upon us' (1984: 34–5; and also 192–208 for a survey of other such proposals through the ages). Similarly, Palmer argued that (1) 'in learning a second language, we learn without knowing what we are learning', (2) 'the utilization of [the adult learner's] conscious and focused attention [on language] militates against

the proper functioning of the natural capacities of assimilation', and (3) in teaching a second language 'we must design forms of work in which the student's attention shall be directed towards the subject matter and away from the form in which it is expressed' (1921: 44, 8, 51). Bloomfield thought too, that 'our fundamental mistake has been to regard language teaching as the imparting of a set of facts. . . . Language is not a process of logical reference to a conscious set of rules; the process of understanding, speaking, and writing is everywhere an associative one. Real language teaching consists, therefore, of building up in the pupil those associative habits which constitute the language to be learned' (1914: 294). These are arguments against the overt teaching of grammar: the project has been concerned with developing an alternative to covert grammatical systematization as well, as will be seen in later chapters.

6 The Newsletters were published as a Special Series by the Regional Institute of English in Bangalore and consist of 1/1 (July 1979), 1/2 (September 1979), 1/3 (March 1980), 1/4 (April 1980), 2/1 (October 1980), and 2/2 (October 1980). Mimeographed lesson reports continued to be made available from the British Council office in Madras, from October 1980 to February 1982. Teaching in the last two years of the project (1982–4) was based largely on a re-use of classroom tasks devised earlier, with new classes, in different schools, and by different teachers.

The introduction to the first Newsletter said: 'We are publishing [these reports] in an attempt to share with interested fellow-professionals our thoughts on a possible new direction for English language teaching in India. . . . It is common for those who innovate to concentrate on defending or disseminating what they advocate. This series is an attempt to record, at every stage, our assumptions, methods, doubts and conclusions so that those who wish to may examine them; in this way the weaknesses, which we assume are many, may be discovered before they do much damage – or we ourselves are tempted to cover them up! Furthermore, we hope that, as the project develops, a body of theory about how one can employ a communicational approach in the teaching of English to school-age learners will be evolved; for this reason, the records of the lessons, which are the

breeding ground of new theory, are included in some detail with the conclusions that arose from the group's discussion of these lessons as it observed them.'

7 The visiting specialists who participatcd in different review seminars are: Keith Johnson, Dick Allwright, Christopher Brumfit, Douglas Barnes, S. Pit Corder and Alan Davies. In addition, Keith Johnson and Henry Widdowson participated in two earlier seminars which prepared the ground for the project.

8 Richards (1984: 19–20) criticizes the project for not being a 'true experiment' and concludes that, for that reason, little can be learnt from its results. While the account given in this book might enable the reader to judge what value there is to a project which is not a 'true' experiment, it is also possible to ask how realistic it is to expect progress in language pedagogy from 'true' experiments. Brumfit provides fundamental arguments for the view that 'it makes little sense to treat language teaching, or indeed any teaching, as if it can be prescribed as a result of experimentation or predictive hypothesizing at a specific level' (1984a: 21). See also Ericson and Ellett (1982: 506): 'Our coin of knowledge is not firm generalizations, but is more akin to the good measure of meanings: plausibility. In educational research, as in education as a whole, good judgement should be seen as the prized intellectual capacity. Good judgement will not yield certainty, but it can yield interpretations and analyses far more acute and powerful than even the most skilful application of the empiricist "scientific method".'

More specifically, experimentation in language teaching seems to me to face three major problems: (1) the measurement of language competence involves elicitation (in some form) of specific language behaviour, but the relationship between such elicited behaviour and language competence which manifests itself in natural use is unclear; (2) given the view that the development of linguistic competence is a holistic process, there is not enough knowledge available either to identify and assess different intermediate stages of that development or to relate those stages to some table of norms which can be said to represent expectations, and (3) there is, ultimately, no way of attributing, with any certainty, any specific piece of learning to any specific teaching: lan-

guage learning can take place independently of teaching intentions and it is impossible to tell what has been learnt because of some teaching, and what in spite of it.

9  Collingham (1981), Gilpin (1981), Kumaravadivelu (1981), and Mizon (1981), all provide further samples and analyses of classroom discourse on the project. See also Rajan (1983) and Saraswathi (1984).

10  Brumfit (1984a: 17–18) provides a concise statement of the various dimensions of situational variation.

11  See Howatt (1984: 297): 'The exchange of ideational meanings is more amenable to the conditions of the typical classroom than interpersonal socialization (particularly if it is role-played or simulated).'

12  There is perhaps an informative comparison to make between innovations in second language teaching arising in contexts of formal education, and those with their origins in special functional texts (e.g. the Berlitz Schools, the Army Specialized Training Program in the USA, present-day pre-sessional language courses, and private language schools). The comparison may suggest relationships between types of teaching contexts and forms of innovation on the one hand, and the limits (and effects) of generalization across contexts on the other.

# 2 The Project

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a factual account of the project, confining attention to what was thought and done at different points in its development and leaving a more detailed discussion of the issues involved to later chapters. It should therefore be seen as a historical description rather than an interpretation or justification. I will first indicate how the initial pedagogic perception took shape and then describe aspects of the teaching that was done.

## Background

### The Structural-Oral-Situational method

It is relevant to look briefly at the theory of English language teaching which has been prevalent in India in the past thirty years and which formed the background to the project's initial perception. A major innovation in teaching English was introduced into the state education system between 1955 and 1965, at the initiative of the state and central governments and with substantial assistance from abroad. The innovation consisted, essentially, of the use of structurally and lexically graded syllabuses, situational presentation of all new teaching items, balanced attention to the four language skills (but with listening and speaking preceding reading and writing), and a great deal of controlled practice using techniques such as the substitution table and choral repetition.[1] This was in contrast to earlier procedures such as the translation and explication of written texts, the reading aloud and memorization of texts, and a good deal of explicit grammar in the form of sentence analysis and parsing. Large programmes for the intensive re-training of teachers were conducted to implement the innovation, and ten state-level institutions were established in different parts of the country to provide more systematic and continual in-service teacher training and to create support services such as the provision of textbooks, teachers' guides, and radio broadcasts. In addition, a large national institution was set up to provide specialist-level

training to potential teacher trainers and to undertake research-level activity in support of the teaching reform.

The Regional Institute of English in Bangalore was one of the ten state-level institutions, set up in 1963, to serve southern India following a massive 'campaign' of intensive teacher re-training based in Madras between 1959 and 1963.[2] This institute has used the term 'S-O-S' (Structural-Oral-Situational) to refer to the pedagogic principles it has been helping to implement and I shall be using that term, for convenience, at various points in this book. The indication given above of what the principles consisted of is perhaps an over-simplification, but two of the appendices to this book will help to show how the innovation was viewed at the time of its implementation. Appendix Ia reproduces a report which appeared in 1960 in a popular Indian newspaper, and which indicates not only what a demonstration of the new method was like but how there was a general sense of excitement about its potential. Appendix Ib is a form of assessment, made in 1965, of observable effects in the classroom of the 1959–63 'campaign' in Madras.

By about 1975, S-O-S was being regarded as a well-established method of teaching English, though there was some doubt about how well it had been transmitted to teachers and how widely its procedures were actually being followed in the numerous classrooms. S-O-S principles were, at the same time, increasingly being questioned, mainly on the grounds that learners' ability to make correct sentences in a classroom-practice situation did not ensure that they could make sentences correctly in other contexts, and that, although learners seemed to learn each structure well at the time it was taught, their command of language structure at the end of a structurally graded course lasting several years was still very unsatisfactory, requiring a good deal of remedial re-teaching which, in turn, led to similarly unsatisfactory results. It was also being suggested that concentration in the classroom on one structural pattern at a time might be inducing an overgeneralization of particular structural patterns leading to an increase in errors, and that the attempt to achieve comparable progress in all four language skills might be resulting in a holding back of attainable progress in the important receptive skill of reading. In addition, it was felt that the requirement of varied oral situational presentation of each new teaching item made too high a demand on teachers' inventiveness, while structural and lexical grading led to an

artificial and dull repititiousness both in textbook materials and in classroom activity. There was, however, no clear evidence that learners' attainment levels were higher or lower than they had been under an earlier method of teaching, and it is therefore possible that the discontent being expressed largely represented a wearing out of the intellectual momentum of S-O-S pedagogy and a loss of plausibility to some of the perceptions behind it. This discontent was reinforced by an awareness of new pedagogic approaches being explored abroad – such as notional/functional syllabuses, communicative perspectives on language, and the designing of specific-purpose courses. As a result, a series of professional seminars were held in different parts of the country for the purpose of discussing one or another of the new approaches.

## Preparatory discussion

Two such seminars were held at the Regional Institute of English in Bangalore. Participants included the specialist staff of both the Regional Institute itself and several of its sister institutions, English language specialists from some universities and state education departments, specialist staff of the British Council in India, and a visiting specialist at each seminar from a British University. At the first seminar held in January 1978, the discussion focused on notional/functional syllabuses (as proposed in Wilkins 1976 and presented at that seminar by Keith Johnson), while the second seminar focused on a discourse view of language and its pedagogic implications (as put forward in Widdowson 1978 and presented at the seminar by Henry Widdowson himself).[3]

It is natural for discussion at such seminars to be interpreted and responded to differently by different participants: what follows is my own view of how that discussion related to the project. Although the two seminars examined two different approaches to second language pedagogy, they threw up very similar problems for local participants in relating those approaches to their own situation and perceptions. The difficulty can perhaps be stated in the form of three conceptual mismatches.

First, an important principle of the prevailing S-O-S pedagogy was that grammar in the classroom was to be only implicit, not explicit – that is to say, grammar was to be used only for systematizing language data and for organizing practice materials,

not for providing learners with an explicit knowledge of the rules. Explicit grammar in. the classroom would only lead to a knowledge *about* the language, not an ability to make correct sentences automatically – a point forcefully argued by Palmer (1921), whose insight lay behind the structural syllabus and the associated procedures of situational presentation and practice. His point was that learners would internalize structural patterns subconsciously and, as a result, be able to employ them automatically if they encountered sets of sentences exemplifying particular structural patterns under conditions which ensured that they understood the meaning of the sentences concerned.[4] Influenced by Palmer's thinking, S-O-S pedagogy had aimed to promote in learners an internal grammatical competence which would manifest itself in the natural use of grammatically correct language. Although there was now a good deal of discontent being felt about that pedagogy, an internal grammatical competence was still seen by many participants in the seminars to be the main objective of language teaching. However, the new approaches based themselves on the argument that natural language use involved much more than a grammatical competence (which was persuasive enough), and that language pedagogy should therefore address itself to those additional forms of competence (which was much less persuasive). If one granted that there were dimensions to language use distinct from grammatical competence, it did not necessarily follow that these additional dimensions were more important for pedagogy than grammatical competence and should be paid attention to at its expense. The issue of how grammatical competence itself is best developed in learners did not seem to be addressed by the new proposals being examined. Examples of how grammatically correct sentences could still be socially inappropriate were not very helpful while available forms of pedagogy were found to be inadequate for enabling learners to achieve grammatical correctness itself, and social appropriacy did not seem a particularly pressing objective for second language learners in a formal educational setting.

Secondly, proposals for communicative teaching seemed to aim at an activation or extension of the grammatical competence already acquired by learners, for real-life use in particular areas of activity such as social discourse or academic study. It followed that courses constructed for such teaching were limited-purpose ones meant for learners already at an intermediate or advanced

level of grammatical competence and were not significantly concerned with developing that competence itself.[5] The search in southern India, however, was for procedures of teaching suitable for schoolchildren and capable of developing grammatical competence from early stages.

Thirdly, it was true that notional syllabuses had been proposed (in the context of the Council of Europe's work) for the early stages of language learning and that one of the arguments for using such semantic syllabuses was, attractively, that they would increase attention to meaning in the classroom and make the learning of the grammatical system less conscious.[7] However, such syllabuses did envisage a matching of each notional category with one or more linguistic forms, which meant that in the classroom the linguistic forms concerned were to be presented and practised in situations suggested by the notional category. It was not clear that this was significantly different, in terms of what happens in the classroom, from the situational presentation of language items from a linguistically organized syllabus. There was an inevitable loss of grammatical systematicity, while such semantic systematicity as was attainable seemed to have more value for a European context (in bringing about some comparability between courses in different languages) than for places like India. More importantly, the replacement of one mode of syllabus organization by another did not entail any major difference, in terms of classroom activity, from S-O-S pedagogy: specific items of language would still be preselected for any teaching unit and practised in contexts which suited them.

In general, the development of grammatical competence in learners continued to be viewed as the primary objective (and problem) in teaching English in India, while communicative approaches were seen to be concerned generally with objectives other than grammatical competence.

## Initial perception

At the two seminars, discussion arising from such differing perceptions helped to heighten an awareness of the issues involved and, in particular, led to a re-examination of the assumptions of S-O-S pedagogy. The reason why grammar was to be used only for organizing the samples of language to be presented to learners was that learners would thereby be led to abstract the rele-

vant structural patterns directly from the samples and at a sub-
conscious level of the mind – 'we learn without knowing what
we are learning' (Palmer 1921: 44). It was this subconscious
abstraction of the grammatical system that enabled the system
to operate subconsciously in learners' later language use in a
way that knowledge resulting from explicit grammar teaching
would not operate – 'We form our sentences in unconscious obedi-
ence to some rules unknown to us' (Palmer 1921: 5). The issue
was thus one of the nature of grammatical knowledge to be
developed: if the desired form of knowledge was such that it
could *operate* subconsciously, it was best for it to *develop* sub-
consciously as well. S-O-S pedagogy attempted to regulate and
facilitate the process by which learners abstracted the grammat-
ical system by (1) ordering the elements of the system in ways
considered to be helpful for learning, (2) limiting, the samples of
language presented to learners in such a way that only one new
element had to be abstracted at a time, and (3) increasing the
chances of the new element being abstracted by increasing the
number of relevant samples encountered by learners – devices
which may be called (1) planned progression, (2) pre-selection,
and (3) form-focused activity. The use of these devices, it was
hoped, would not alter the nature of the knowledge they were
trying to promote. However, in re-examining that assumption,
and in reviewing actual experience of such teaching, it seemed
likely that those devices did in fact lead to a form of grammati-
cal knowledge closer to an explicit knowledge than to the inter-
nal, self-regulating system being aimed at.[8] It also seemed likely
that the most important condition for learners' abstraction of
grammatical structure from relevant language samples was not
so much an encounter with many samples of the same kind in
quick succession but rather an intense preoccupation with the
meaning of language samples – i.e. an effort to make sense of
the language encountered, or to get meaning across in language
adequately for given, and immediate, purposes. If this was so,
the S-O-S procedure of situationalizing new language was of
value not just in ensuring that the meaning of the new language
was internalized along with its form but, more importantly, in
bringing about in learners a preoccupation with meaning and an
effort to understand. The nature of some imaginative classroom
procedures being developed for communicative language teach-
ing – such as the communicative exercise types discussed in
Johnson (1982: 163–75) – also indicated an intuition about the

value of a preoccupation with meaning for language learning; and Widdowson's observation that 'we do not simply measure discourse up against our knowledge of pre-existing rules; we create discourse and *commonly bring new rules into existence by so doing*' (Widdowson 1978: 69; my italics) suggested a similar perception.

Communication in the classroom – in the sense of meaning-focused activity (i.e. a process of coping with a need to make sense or get meaning across) could therefore be a good means of developing grammatical competence in learners, quite independently of the issue of developing functional or social appropriacy in language use. Further, discussion often pointed to what was clearly a fundamental question about grammatical competence, namely, its 'deployability'. True grammatical competence was seen to be deployable – in the sense that it came into play in direct response to a need to communicate – without any linguistic elicitation and with equal levels of accuracy within and outside the classroom. The observation that learners' ability to make sentences in the classroom did not carry over to other contexts indicated a lack of deployability in the form of knowledge promoted by S-O-S procedures. It seemed plausible, in contrast, that deployability would be ensured if effort to communicate was in fact the context in which knowledge of the language developed. The aim of using communication as a pedagogic procedure would thus be to develop in learners an internal system which was deployable and, when deployed, capable of achieving grammatical accuracy.

In more general terms, possible grounds for dissatisfaction with S-O-S pedagogy could be summarized as follows: those who had been taught English, for several years at school were still unable:

– to use (i.e. deploy) the language when necessary outside the classroom (they found themselves deliberating unnaturally).
– to achieve an acceptable level of grammatical accuracy in their language use outside the classroom (though they might achieve such accuracy in a classroom context).
– to achieve an acceptable level of situational appropriacy in their language use outside the classroom (though they might achieve grammatical accuracy).

Although experience indicated that there was some truth to all three, the first two were seen to be much more serious and cen-

tral to pedagogy than the third, and communication in the classroom (in the sense of meaning-focused activity, as indicated above) was seen to be a form of pedagogy likely to avoid those two problems. It was to indicate the difference between this particular interpretation of the nature and role of communication in pedagogy on the one hand, and forms of pedagogy which addressed themselves primarily to the third problem above on the other, that the project used the term 'communicational' teaching, instead of the more current 'communicative' teaching.

S-O-S pedagogy, too, could be said to have addressed itself to the first two problems in rejecting the teaching of explicit grammar and in seeking instead to regulate learners' internalization of the grammatical system through planned progression, pre-selection, and form-focused activity. If, however, it was meaning-focused activity which facilitated learners' subconscious abstraction of grammatical structure from the samples of language encountered in that context, then form-focused activity was a mistaken pedagogic procedure. Further, the attempt to regulate and organize samples of language in grammatical terms through planned progression and pre-selection could have been a mistake as well. The assumption behind such regulation was that the teacher, or syllabus designer, already had a description of the grammatical system which learners were to internalize and was transferring that system, part by part, to learners' subconscious minds through appropriate samples of language. But developments in grammatical theory and description, in particular transformational-generative grammar, had shown clearly that the internal grammatical system operated subconsciously by fluent speakers was vastly more complex than was reflected by, or could be incorporated into, any grammatical syllabus – so complex and inaccessible to consciousness in fact, that no grammar yet constructed by linguists was able to account for it fully.[9] Perhaps the most important implication of generative grammar for second language pedagogy was that the grammatical descriptions used for constructing syllabuses or practice materials were hopelessly inadequate as descriptions of the internal system which learners had to develop in order to achieve grammatical accuracy in their language use. It was therefore unlikely that any planned progression in a grammatical syllabus could actually reflect or regulate the development of the internal grammatical system being aimed at.

Perceptions such as these led, at the end of the second seminar, to the setting up of a teaching project with the aim of developing pedagogic procedures which would (1) bring about in the classroom a preoccupation with meaning and an effort to cope with communication and (2) avoid planned progression and preselection in terms of language structure as well as form-focused activity (or planned language practice) in the classroom. The main issues involved in such teaching will be examined in some detail in later chapters, which will indicate how the perceptions themselves were influenced by the experience of the project. Meanwhile, some indication of how the initial perception was actually stated at the time of setting up the project can be found in Appendix II.

## Classes taught

Table 1 lists some facts about the eight classes of children taught on the project. The classes were at different schools (with the exception of numbers 7 and 8) in different towns or districts and at different stages of both schooling and instruction in English. They received project teaching for varying lengths of time (for reasons to be indicated shortly). Thus, class 1 in the table was at a secondary school in Malleswaram, initially consisted of fifty girls (see, however, below), was Standard VIII (i.e. the eighth year of a ten-year school course), was in its fourth year of instruction in English, and was taught on the project for three academic years. (An academic year is from June to the following March or April; so class 1 was taught on the project from June 1979 to March 1982.) The schools were in two different states. Classes 1, 4, and 6 were in the state of Karnataka where instruction in English begins in Standard V (age 10) and continues for six years up to the end of Standard X. Classes 2, 3, 5, 7, and 8 were in the state of Tamil Nadu where instruction in English begins in Standard III (age 8) and continues for eight years up to the end of Standard X. (For a list of all the schools see Appendix III.)

There is a public examination at the end of Standard X in each state, marking the end of secondary education. Although the syllabus in English for the successive standards is primarily a graded list of structures and vocabulary, the syllabus for the final year (Standard X) includes, in addition, a set of literary, descriptive, or discursive texts, selected without regard to the linguistic

Table 1  Classes taught on the project

| Serial number and location of class | Students | Starting stage for project teaching | | Age | Project teaching done |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | On the school course | On the English course | | (1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984) |
| 1 Malleswaram | 50 girls | Standard VIII | 4th year | 13 | 1979–1981 |
| 2 Nungambakkam | 40 girls | Standard VI | 4th year | 11 | 1980–1982 |
| 3 T. Nagar | 30 girls + boys | Standard III | 1st year | 8 | 1981–1984 |
| 4 Tasker Town | 60 boys | Standard VIII | 4th year | 13 | 1981–1982 |
| 5 Cuddalore | 45 girls + boys | Standard III | 1st year | 8 | 1982–1984 |
| 6 Jayanagar | 50 girls + boys | Standard V | 1st year | 10 | 1982–1984 |
| 7 Tiruvottiyur | 60 boys | Standard VI | 4th year | 11 | 1983 |
| 8 Tiruvottiyur | 55 boys | Standard VI | 4th year | 11 | 1984 |

syllabus, though with some consideration of their difficulty-level in terms of both content and language. But, more importantly in relation to the project, the public examination requires students to manipulate given sentences and words (for example to rewrite sentences as directed, fill in gaps, match items in different lists, and spot or correct grammatical or lexical errors) and to reproduce the gist of the texts in the form of summaries or short essays which are often memorized in advance.[10] As a result, project teaching had either to devote some of the time in a Standard X class to summarizing texts and doing exercises on grammar and vocabulary (thus deviating from the project's principles) or to avoid teaching any class in Standard X. For this reason, only class 1 received project teaching in its Standard X year.

There is also a public examination half-way through the school course – at the end of Standard VII in Karnataka and at the end of Standard VIII in Tamil Nadu – which created greater problems for project teaching. The examination is generally modelled on that at the end of Standard X, which meant that the project had, once again, either to avoid teaching a Standard VII class (or a Standard VIII class, depending on the state) or include specific examination preparation in its teaching of such classes. More seriously, the classes in a school are almost always reorganized after a public examination, to take account of failures and students changing schools or discontinuing study, which meant that the project could not have the same group of students to teach before and after Standard VII in Karnataka and Standard VIII in Tamil Nadu. There is, in addition, a movement of students from primary to secondary (or middle) schools at the end of Standard IV in Karnataka and Standard V in Tamil Nadu, which also meant that the project could not have the same group before and after that stage. The consequence of all these institutional constraints was that no class was available for continuous teaching for more than three school years and some classes could be taught only for two years in order to avoid the year of a public examination. In two cases (classes 4 and 7), other institutional factors led to a discontinuation of teaching after only a year.

All the eight classes were in schools within the state system, where the language of instruction was the language of the state and the mother tongue of most students. They were, furthermore, schools which generally drew children from homes and social groups in which no English was spoken (and, in many

instances, the mother tongue was not read or written, though the students themselves had acquired some literacy in the mother tongue at school by the time they started receiving instruction in English). There were also homes which frequently had to hold children back from attending school and sometimes to withdraw them from school altogether; so the number of children shown in the table for each class is only the initial number, which was reduced by a few students each year. There was also a high level of absenteeism (about 15 per cent of the class, on average) all the time.

The time given to English in the schools is one teaching period of forty minutes a day, five days a week in some schools and six in others. A year's teaching of English amounts to about 130 teaching periods, which works out at about ninety contact hours (not counting the absenteeism mentioned above which reduces this time for particular students). Project teaching of a given class meant that all teaching of English for that class was done according to the project's principles, thus ignoring the syllabus and course-books laid down by the state system. No change was made in other aspects of the teaching situation such as class composition, timetabling or physical facilities. Some of the classes involved in the project were at a post-initial stage (i.e. fourth year) of learning English while others were beginners. There was one post-initial class in the first year of the project and two in the second. In the third year, there were three post-initial classes and one class of beginners. In the fourth and fifth years, there were three beginners' classes and one post-initial class. In general, most of the work was done with post-initial classes in the earlier stages of the project, while in the later stages the emphasis shifted to beginners.[11]

### Teachers

Those who did the teaching on the project were either specialists (i.e. teacher trainers or teachers with specialist qualifications in teaching English) or regular teachers at schools. The first two project classes were taught entirely by specialists, while the teaching of the third class was shared between a specialist and a teacher at the school concerned. The fourth class was taught by specialists, while the fifth and sixth classes were taught partly by specialists and partly by regular teachers. The seventh and eight classes were taught entirely by regular teachers. Teaching can

thus be seen to have passed, in a limited way, from specialists to regular teachers.

Eighteen people in all participated in the teaching, nine of them teacher trainers by profession, two university teachers, three members of the British Council's specialist staff in India, and four regular teachers in the schools concerned. They are referred to as the 'project team' (or 'project group') in this book but did not in fact function as a single team at any stage. The fourteen specialists were all in full-time employment in various institutions and were taking up project teaching as a voluntary part-time activity for the length of time (one, two, or three years) that was convenient for them. Those who functioned as a team in any one year were those who were doing the teaching in that year – four to eight teachers. There was also a geographical separation of up to 200 miles between different project classes and schools, which meant that only those who were teaching the same class (two or three teachers) were in daily contact with each other.

## Principles and procedures

### Teaching in the first year

Project teaching in much of the first year was marked by uncertainty about procedures, repeated disappointments, conflicting perceptions or interpretations of particular lessons, and a good deal of negative response from learners. The project group (consisting of four teachers at that time) had a general concept of what it wished to bring about in the classroom, namely a preoccupation in learners with meaning and a resultant effort to understand and say things; it also had a clear notion of the procedures it wished to avoid, namely pre-selection of language and form-focused activity. It had, however, few ideas about what procedures it could or wished to follow. Among those which seemed to be promising at the time were story completion – the teacher telling a story up to the point considered most interesting and then inviting students to suggest possible conclusions, simulation (involving role-play or dramatization), puzzles of various kinds, and 'real-life talk' – the teacher and learners talking to one another, as they would outside the classroom, about themselves, their views, or their experiences. Story completion was attempted repeatedly, but generally failed to evoke the response

expected. If the class did not find the story particularly interesting, there was little desire to try to complete it; and if the story did prove to be interesting, there was a demand that the teacher go on to tell the rest of it, and a sense of resentment when this was not done. Simulation quickly showed itself to be unsuitable: it was difficult to find situations which were associated with the use of English in India and accessible to the students' experience; and the students, in any case, regarded such activity as non-serious and would only engage in it as deliberate language practice work (that is, with the sentences they were to say provided to them in advance). Puzzles turned out to be too demanding (for example difficult to state in simple language without destroying their cognitive challenge) and also too unrelatable to one another to support any sustained and structured activity. Real-life talk conflicted directly with notions about the classroom and was persistently viewed by learners as only a friendly preliminary to more serious work rather than as a serious activity in itself.

In more general terms, there was a lack of shared expectations between teachers and learners which could enable each to interpret and evaluate the actions of the other. There was also a lack of stable patterning to different lessons such that it would indicate criteria of relevance and make it possible to accommodate unpredicted responses. The learners were facing not only new forms of classroom activity but new concepts of what classroom activity should be about; and the teacher's own sense of uncertainty about classroom procedures was not reassuring to them. For their part, the teachers were facing not only dissatisfaction with particular lessons but also difficulty in identifying the sources of dissatisfaction. As a result, they had problems in adjusting teaching during the course of a lesson so as to avoid or reduce felt dissatisfaction, and generally in using the experience of each lesson to ensure greater satisfaction in the next.[12]

## Task and pre-task

Gradually, however, the problems began to clarify themselves and criteria for assessing particular lessons began to emerge. It was noticed that whenever there was a piece of logical thinking involved in a teacher-class exchange it was possible for the teacher to meet wrong responses (or non-response) from the

class by breaking down the logical process into smaller steps, such that the class saw a general direction (and destination) to the sequence of steps and in the meantime found each step easy enough to take. The result was a sequence of exchanges with a perceived purpose and a clear outcome which was satisfying both to the teacher because it was a structured activity, and to learners because there was a clear criterion of success and a sense of achievement from success. Such a sequence gave the teacher ongoing and relatively unambiguous evidence of learners' involvement in the process and opportunities to adjust his or her own part in the interchange in the light of that evidence: the relevance and readiness of learners' responses indicated how far they were keeping pace with the logical steps being taken, and it was relatively easy for the teacher to make the next step smaller or larger accordingly. Teacher–class negotiation – in the sense of a sequence of exchanges connecting one point to another on a given line of thought and adjustable at any point as it occurs – was thus identified as a classroom procedure which was both feasible and desirable. Opportunity for such negotiation became an important consideration in selecting classroom activities, and it was recognized that negotiation was most likely to take place – and to prove satisfying – when the demand on thinking made by the activity was just above the level which learners could meet without help. An activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process, was regarded as a 'task'.

A related observation was that the learners' perception of the piece of thinking they had to do in any given instance was based largely on what parallel they saw between that instance and another, and that such analogic thought was a useful resource for the teacher both in getting learners to understand the task being set and in guiding their effort to carry it out. This meant that the piece of logical thinking demanded by a given task could be made clear not only by attempting to explain the logic involved but, much more easily and usefully, by setting a parallel task which was either simpler or more accessible to learners in some way, or which was worked out by the teacher himself or by some specially able students in the class, thus providing the necessary help. Such parallelism also meant that some students could learn to do what was demanded of them by observing others meeting a similar demand, and the class as such could

Second Language Pedagogy, Language and Intercultural Learning; Multiliteracies; Telecollaboration. Plurilingualism in Higher Education: A Collaborative Initiative for the Implementation of Plurilingual Pedagogy in an English for Academic Purposes Program at a Canadian University. Â  Paper presented at 8th International Conference on Second Language Pedagogies, University of Sherbrooke

ABSTRACT: â€œHow do you make your class operate like a work of art?â€ (Guattari, 1995, p.133) Guattariâ€™s provocation is more.

Evidence-Based Second Language Pedagogy is a cutting-edge collection of empirical research conducted by top scholars focusing on instructed second language acquisition (ISLA) and offering a direct contribution to second language pedagogy by closing the gap between research and practice. Building on the conceptual, state-of-the-art chapters in The Routledge Handbook of Instructed Second Language Acquisition (2017), studies in this volume are organized (1995). Second language acquisition theory and pedagogy. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. Ellis, N. (2002). Frequency effects in language processing: A review with implications for theories of implicit and explicit language acquisition. Studies in Second Language Acquisition 24.2, 143–188. Ellis, R. (1994). Second language acquisition research and teacher development: The case of teachers' questions. In Li et al. (eds.), 175–193. Ellis, R. (1997). SLA and language pedagogy: An educational perspective. Second Language Acquisition is dedicated to an understanding and study of how adults acquire non-native languages. MCLLC is dedicated to advancing knowledge in this area and in the best in language learning techniques in our classes. The following faculty have published in this area  Terence Tunberg: Dr. Tunberg's research interests include Latin Literature, Renaissance Studies, Latin Pedagogy and Active Latin. Second Language Pedagogy. N. S. Prabhu. Oxford University Press.  4 Second Language Pedagogy. a fruitful activity. Typologies of teaching situations commonly made in terms such as 'second' and 'foreign' languages, 'elementary', 'intermediate' and 'advanced' levels, 'young' and 'adult' learners – should thus be seen as an aid to investigating the extent of relevance of a pedagogic proposal, not as a means of treating pedagogic proposals as merely pragmatic responses to specific situations.

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