Synthesis in Second Language Teaching: An Introduction to Linguistics and An Integrated Theory of Language Teaching (Two Volume Set)

Vital Statistics

Author: Hector Hammerly
Copyright: 1985
Publisher: Second Language Publications & Hector Hammerly
Title: *Synthesis in Second Language Teaching: An Introduction to Linguistics* and *An Integrated Theory of Language Teaching*

The two volumes that make up this set are different in their tenor, their organization, and their format. I will, therefore, discuss them, for the most part, separately.

Volume I

Any attempt at synthesis in the field of second language education is a welcome endeavor in this era of unresolved and competing perspectives on language and learning. A book whose title promises to unify the variety of issues related to second language acquisition and teaching and which is intended to address the needs and concerns of "all those who are interested in the theory and practice of second language teaching and learning" arouses the hopes and expectations of both the novice and the experienced second language teacher. The very size of the volume (693 pages) contributes to the anticipation of cohesion in a field so susceptible to change over the last few decades. It is disappointing, then, that this work—which seems so promising—fails to fulfill our hopes for unifying the field, and even seems prone to misleading rather than enlightening us.

Enlightened Eclecticism

In the introduction, Hammerly suggests that the field of second language teaching has no identity of its own, having been an appendage of many other fields, especially linguistics. "But it does not have to be that way"; the field "can break off hurtful entanglements and find its identity (it does not even have a fitting name of its own!), overcome its inferiority complex, and assert itself by pursuing its own goals in its own way" (12). Hammerly's answer to this apparent crisis is to propose a distinct name for the field, namely Brooks' *linguistics* (13).

A different label, however—and particularly one that has little mnemonic value—could camouflage the issues and interests that have concerned the field of second language education over the last several decades. Many new names have been suggested in recent years, some mentioned by Hammerly (12-13). Most attempt to reflect the increased breadth of the field and to represent more accurately the multiplicity of topics included in second language education. (See Van Els, et al. (1984). *Applied Linguistics and the Learning and Teaching of Foreign Languages* for a discussion of several recent labels, their sources and implications.) Sadly,

Hammerly's motivation for a change of name seems to be based on frustration and insecurity about the field that to him is adrift in indecision.

A degree of confusion, however, is not necessarily bad, since disequilibrium could merely be the interim price of progress; a new label runs the risk of veiling contrasting perspectives that cause this imbalance rather than highlighting them so that the conflict may eventually be resolved.

In attempting to define this autonomous field, Hammerly proposes that "what languistics needs is *enlightened eclecticism* [my italics]..., a "synthesis" resulting from "leaving behind extreme and unproductive positions and slogans and carrying over from the various positions into the more productive middle ground only those aspects that are logically defensible and demonstrably useful." (24) "Enlightened eclecticism" must meet three conditions: (25)

1) Languistics must be a separate discipline: "Only thus will it be able to reject decisively all unacceptable 'implications' and inexpedient 'applications' of theories in other disciplines."

2) There must be agreement on the goals of second language study: "Linguistic, communicative and cultural competence."

3) Scientifically conducted and empirical research on second language teaching and learning must be undertaken.

"After meeting these three conditions, enlightened eclecticism can become a reality by the implementation of the characteristics of its definition: enlightened eclecticism is *the gathering, from all reliable sources, past and present, of the best fact-supported elements that can be combined into a harmonious whole, adapting it to all appropriate variables and aiming it at the efficient and effective attainment of the stated goal."* (25).

Although "enlightened eclecticism" may appear to be a way to distill the diversity of the field, such an approach is likely to result in unmotivated theoretical compromises; there is simply no *a priori* assurance that empirical research will support an eclectic teaching approach instead of a single theoretical perspective. While the enlightened eclecticism

advocated by Hammerly may be appropriate for the language classroom on the level of technique or procedure and may even be worthwhile as a way of categorizing the complexities of the field, equating enlightened eclecticism with synthesis is as yet unsubstantiated and premature. "Logically defensible and demonstrably useful" (24) features are, apparently, any that anyone prefers, not theoretical positions that are empirically substantiated. But random selection of theoretical stances should not be sanctioned in any field that has a serious desire to establish itself as independent and consequential. A theory forms the background matrix for development of designs and practices of teaching.

Theories are not arbitrary beliefs; they are empirically supported and scientifically motivated perspectives. If theories are well-articulated, their adequacy is not a matter of whether the theory is believed to be appropriate but of what evidence supports or refutes it. The arbitrariness that could result from following the path of Hammerly's enlightened eclecticism could ultimately and unfortunately defeat Hammerly's aim of unity in the field.

Linguistics as Villain

Certainly, independence of the field is desirable, but it is perplexing, as Hammerly seems to suggest, that linguistics is held responsible for most of the ills of the field. Linguistics "may have less to offer second language teaching than psychology or education" and "...can help only with language description;" and, even then, the resulting grammar must be "radically changed" to be educationally useful (15).

While it is true that there has often been greater expectation of linguistics than linguistics has been able to offer second language education, it is also the case that major insights into and theories of second language acquisition and teaching for at least the last several decades have come from linguistics. It is especially disturbing that to support his point, Hammerly states that "there have been excellent second language teachers who knew no linguistics..." (15). Would not even Hammerly have to admit that this is the exceptional case? More importantly, neither student nor teacher should be discouraged from pursuing all resources and information that any

field can potentially provide, especially a field from which a great number of crucial and relevant insights have come.

(It is particularly interesting to note that, despite Hammerly's desire to disassociate second language education from linguistics, the first portion of his volume is devoted virtually entirely to an introduction to linguistic concepts, principles, and issues.) Instead of minimizing the contributions of various fields to second language education (linguistics, psychology, education), it might be more productive for Hammerly to be calling for increased interaction and dialogue among second language teachers and scholars, and among the scholars themselves, in other related fields.

An on-going dialogue between researchers and practitioners will help promote a sensitivity to the tensions between the theoretical and practical questions that concern second language educators. The different perspective that each field offers on a relevant problem is crucial for a complete understanding of that problem. Indeed, the most valuable and productive insights are often those that result from the points of conflict generated by differing views. To muster the resources of many different fields, then, can only benefit the second language educator, not hinder him or her. To limit research to a narrowly defined field (as "languistics" could eventually become) may lead to redundancy of purpose with other fields and would deprive the field of the professional preparation and research traditions of the established field.

Inadequate References

The bulk of Hammerly's discussion in this volume concerns pedagogical, linguistic, cognitive, and methodological questions relevant to second language education. Somewhat disturbing about these discussions is their tendency *not* to reflect objectively and penetratingly all sides of the issues at hand. There seem to be many off-handed remarks about theoretical stances with inadequate references to the original studies that substantiate such claims.

For example, in introducing the idea of language acquisition, Hammerly states that "it has even happened, occasionally, that an author

presents data supporting the conclusion of important differences but claims the data support the opposite view" (86). There is no reference at all made here to the scholar(s) he has in mind. Similarly, there are only limited remarks made about important concepts such as language ego, inhibitions, and anxiety (96-97; 373).

Unhappy Inconsistencies

In addition, unhappy inconsistencies follow from Hammerly's cursory treatment of the issues. At one point, he discards entirely Chomsky's claim regarding "adult second language acquirers/learners." "Although they have the cognitive apparatus to engage in the testing of hypotheses, most seldom do so" (89). Later, however, Hammerly claims that

"the linguistically-adult second language acquirer may need to engage in the free testing of hypotheses in order to construct his own grammar, so he may need to make errors in order that, through feedback, he may learn the limitations of rules and thereby modify his hypotheses accordingly. The second language learner does not need to test hypotheses, as the rules are provided to him and whatever hypothesis testing he may do is limited and controlled..." (171).

With no distinction made between acquirers and learners in the earlier remark, it is unclear why Hammerly would suggest later that some students do test linguistic hypotheses. Furthermore, the implication that acquirers *deliberately* make errors as a means of testing linguistic hypotheses is unfortunate, since it suggests an inadequate understanding of the facts. (See Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* and Krashen, S. (1981). *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning.*)

Also, Hammerly does not substantiate with any referenced evidence that language *learners* do not need to test hypotheses; it is at least naive to believe that the rules provided a learner in the classroom will be completely sufficient in content or application. As with numerous topics throughout the volume, the information imparted in these representative examples is not necessarily wrong, but it is superficial. Limited and unreferenced statements such as these regrettably

lead the reader to question the general substance of the volume.

Off-handed and Derisive

It seems to be Hammerly's aim in writing this book to guide us through the issues relevant to second language education in such a way that we, too, arrive at the method that he proposes results from enlightened eclecticism. On the way to this goal, Hammerly mentions other methods used since the 19th century. In these overviews, his brief remarks often seem off-handed and derisive.

In discussing Total Physical Response, he says:

"Unfortunately, students exposed to the Total Physical Response make, when they eventually start speaking, numerous errors which have become fairly engrained. This should not surprise us, knowing what we do about subvocal speech and about the fact that such errors become engrained if they are not corrected from the start. But Asher has some strange notions about the speaking skill. According to him, the ability to speak a second language cannot be taught directly [1977:26]. When students start speaking, after about 20 hours of exposure to commands, they are not to be corrected ('penalized'!) for their errors. Asher thinks [ibid.] that the distortions will gradually disappear—but why allow them to develop in the first place?" (241-242).

In a footnote related to this comment, Hammerly further observes:

"I analyzed the sound track of the German demonstration film and found the speech of the students to be plagued with errors even after 30 hours of instruction." (241).

Whatever one's opinion of Total Physical Response, these remarks could easily mislead the reader, since they miss the crucial insight that it is not the gross number of errors that students' speech reflects that is important but the nature and types of errors found in speech. (Bialystock, E. (1978). "A theoretical model of second language learning." *Language Learning,* 28(69-83); Corder, S.P. (1973). *Introduction to Applied Linguistics;* Krashen, S. (1981). *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning;* and Selinker, L. (1972). "Interlanguage." *International Review of Applied Linguistics, 10* pp. 201-231.)

If students have not yet mastered a rule, their speech will manifest errors related to that rule. Furthermore, the careless references to error correction make no mention of the work that shows the adverse effects of correction on the psyche and motivation of the student (Hendrickson, 1980; Long, 1977; Virgil and Oller, 1970).

Similarly, in discussing the communicative (functional) approach, Hammerly states:

"The main problem with the Communicative Approach is that if teaching materials are organized according to communicative acts rather than structure, the students will be structurally quite confused. Teaching all these [structures that have the same communicative function] together is clearly inadvisable. And the only way they can be separated is according to structural criteria." (259).

But certainly, as even the early work on communicative syllabi suggests (Wilkins, D. (1976). *Notional Syllabuses*), there are other criteria for grading communicative acts besides structural ones. Both needs analysis and the principle of cycling are other possibilities. (See Johnson and Morrow, 1981, for several articles addressing this issue.)

While many might agree with Hammerly that structural criteria are relevant in differentiating communicative acts, Hammerly's biased discussion could mislead the reader into assuming that because the topic of grading has not been solved to everyone's satisfaction, the communicative approach should be abandoned entirely.

The C.A.B. Method

On page 640 of this volume, the reader learns about Hammerly's method of choice, a method that emerges out of enlightened eclecticism:

"It is in the light of the above discussion that I would like to propose a new method— new not so much in its elements but in the fact that it represents a new combination of known elements plus one or two new elements of its own." (640).

The proposed method, the C.A.B. Method, is an up-dated version of Audiolingualism:

> "The *C* standing for 'Cognitive,' the *A* for 'Audiolingual,' and the *B* for 'Bilingual'.... In fact, the *C* stands for more than 'Cognitive'—it represents 'Cognitive habit formation.' Similarly, *A* should be understood as representing 'Audiolingual-visual,' that is, audiolingual emphasis with visual support. The *B* does represent only 'Bilingual'." (640-641).

Hammerly's C.A.B. Method is a language-centered method that views language as structure—phonology, grammar, and semantics.

> "This order of second language subsystems corresponds to their logical order of emphasis in teaching/learning—first we teach control over the sound system...; then we tackle the morphology and syntax...; and then, once the structure of the language is well under control, we emphasize the learning of vocabulary..." (206).

This method is clearly reminiscent of Fries (Fries, C.C. (1945). *Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language*) "Oral Approach."

> "A person has 'learned' a foreign language when he has thus first, *within a limited vocabulary* mastered the sound system (that is, when he can understand the stream of speech and achieve an understandable production of it) and has, second, made the structural devices (that is, the basic arrangements of utterances) matters of automatic habit." (1945:3).

The general motivation for Hammerly's method appears to be its eclecticism.

> "Since this is an eclectic method, it includes every type of good teaching that is not in conflict with its basic principles. It is thus the opposite of special or exclusive methods that attempt to teach second languages by relying primarily on a single procedure. As an eclectic method, the C.A.B. Method is an organic, developing system, with room for new procedures and improvements as they prove themselves effective. At all times, however, its elements must be in harmony, or much effort will be wasted and there

will be much loss in effectiveness; the concept of enlightened eclecticism excludes the haphazard putting together of any group of procedures that do not harmonize." (640).

Method Lacks Theoretical Foundation

It is not clear, however, that eclecticism would produce the method advocated here or any other single method. Presumably, any method that does not reach the appropriate level of "internal harmony" mentioned will be excluded from consideration. However, the question remains: How does one decide if and when harmony has been achieved?

It would seem possible that methods that are theoretically unmotivated could achieve a reasonable level of harmony; or methods that are thought to be theoretically justified but advocate a single, uniform perspective on language teaching could be thought to be harmonious. Harmony need not always follow from eclecticism, even when it is enlightened. Its lack of theoretical foundation is this method's greatest defect.

Breadth at the Expense of Depth

In the light of Hammerly's appropriate call for research in the field (634)—a definitional feature of linguistics—it is somewhat surprising that he would advocate a method. It would seem more judicious to make such suggestions only *after* research is well on its way to motivating a particular methodological perspective.

Although pulling together all the topics that concern second language education into one book would seem to be an honorable undertaking, it seems highly unlikely that in such a task one could avoid breadth at the expense of depth. Unfortunately, the breadth of this volume is a major flaw: The intended audience is so large and diverse that it would be virtually impossible for a discussion of the issues to be sufficient, appropriate, and useful for everyone in that audience. As a consequence, no motivated synthesis is likely to result.

Volume II

The second volume of this set is a book of 245 pages (three introductory chapters, eight central

chapters, and three appendices). It is apparently meant as a teaching text, since each chapter is followed by a list of questions for discussion and the paragraphs in most of the text are numbered. There is no express mention of the intended audience of the text, and consequently, that audience is difficult to identify.

Appeal to a Diverse Range of Readers

As in Volume I, the audience addressed seems to be extremely broad. Basic and general definitions (language, teaching, learning) and rudimentary assumptions of linguistics (language is arbitrary; language is rule-governed; language is systematic), psychology (types of learning, learning difficulty, the results of learning), and education (teaching makes a difference; teachers, teaching materials) are provided. However, such details would undoubtedly be redundant for language teachers; their somewhat simplistic nature is likely to make them inadequate for students who are future professionals in the field. Again, it seems that a desire to appeal to a diverse range of readers has cost a thorough treatment of the topics.

Why Was This Second Volume Necessary?

The text begins with a discussion of the definition of and nature of a theory, followed by brief mention of several theories of language teaching. This list includes (among more) the Logico-Literary, Structural-Behaviorist, Generative-Cognitivist, Sociopsychological, and Naturalistic theories.

While it is not uncommon to find these labels used loosely to refer to various language teaching methods and practices, it is misguided to use the conjunction of these terms as the names for unified "theories of language learning." They are, more appropriately, theories of the nature of language combined with theories of the process of language acquisition. There is no necessary relationship between these theories of language and of learning. By using these labels in this way, however, Hammerly implies that there is such a relationship. Structural-Behaviorism, for example, is said to lead to a "Linguistic Approach" (16), foremost of which is Audio-lingualism; Sociopsychological theories

(CLL, Silent Way), on the other hand, focus on learning processes. However, Hammerly makes no mention of the fact that in these latter learning-oriented methods, the nature of language is still assumed to be structural and that a grammatical syllabus is the basis of many of these "learning-centered" methods.

In Chapter Ten, we find a discussion of Hammerly's method, the "New CA-OB Method," which is an expanded version of the C.A.B. Method introduced in Volume I. CA-OB stands for Cognitive Audio-Oral Bilingual. As mentioned in Volume I, the method begins with a "mini-course" in phonology and passes through levels of increased grammatical difficulty, with communicative activities tightly controlled until the advanced levels. The discussion substantially repeats that provided in Volume I, making it difficult to understand why this second volume was necessary. What additional contribution does it make to the advancement of the field or to Hammerly's goal of unity in the field of second language education?

Conclusion

Both of these volumes seem to be vehicles for the introduction of a "new" method that Hammerly believes represents a middle-of-the-road policy, a reasonable compromise arising from a discriminating assessment of all the issues and conflicts related to second language education. The primary difficulty with Hammerly's endeavor, however, seems to be the lack of a theoretical foundation for the rational assessment and choices that are made. In addition, the breadth of the volumes and the intended audiences force many of the analyses to be limited and vague. Without fundamental, theoretical motivation for the method and with such a broad audience as target, Hector Hammerly's undertaking has difficulties that, sadly, seem likely to undermine its initially promising value.

Contributor Profile
Heather McCallum-Bayliss thanks C.T. Adger, F.C. Bosco, and D.P. Harris for their very helpful comments on earlier versions of this review. The content and opinions expressed in the review, however, are exclusively those of the author. Dr. McCallum-Bayliss is with the Department of Linguistics in the School of Languages and Linguistics at Georgetown University. Interested readers may write to her at the following address: School of Languages and Linguistics, Department of Linguistics, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. 20057.

Interactive Language Teaching

Vital Statistics

Author(s): Wilga M. Rivers (Editor)
Copyright: 1987
Publisher: Cambridge University Press
No. of Pages: Pp. xvii, 228
Title: *Interactive Language Teaching*
Cost: $10.95

Interaction from the First Encounter

Interactive Language Teaching is a collection of 15 short articles that explore "interaction" in language teaching and its wide array of applications in and outside the foreign and second language classroom. In the preface, Rivers— speaking for all the co-authors—defines communication as the essential goal in the classroom and counsels that "interaction must be present from the first encounter with the language." (p. xiv).

A short overview by the authors introduces the different subject areas. Clear section headings and a comprehensive style throughout allow the reader to follow each author's arguments easily. Each chapter concludes with questions for discussions, activities, and an annotated reading list. An up-to-date bibliography and topical index complete this interesting volume of readings.

Creative Classroom Interaction

Interactive Language Teaching is divided into three parts. Section I entitled "What is interactive language teaching?" consists of two essays: The first, "Interaction as the Key to Teaching Language for Communication" (Rivers), addresses theoretical concerns from cognitive psychology and observations on the way people interact, perceive, and express themselves in oral or graphic communication. Rivers stresses that effective language learning can best take place through a combination of listening and speaking activities in a non-threatening environment that allows students to engage in creative and exciting classroom activities.

The second essay (Kramsch) entitled "Interactive Discourse in Small and Large Groups," analyzes classroom interaction from the standpoint of its specific microworld and the character of attendant interactive discourse. According to Kramsch, this interaction has to move from the traditional teacher-controlled towards more student-controlled forms; nevertheless, Kramsch warns about the dangers of leaving the control of the classroom interaction solely to the students.

Classroom Language Use

Section II—encompassing eight essays— centers on classroom language use. Sadow recommends the use of imaginative activities (such as dreaming up new pets, designing new money, story-writing activities, recreating scenes from history, etc.) to enhance speaking and listening, particularly those aimed at interaction and problem-solving tasks. Sadow's underlying assumption is that imaginative activities make learning more meaningful.

Melvin and Stout exemplify how authentic materials can be used for motivating both language learners and teachers. Both argue that even though authentic materials are not equal to the educational experience of visiting a foreign country, they still can be effective substitutes for a first-hand experience with the culture of the target language.

The three essays that follow, entitled "Interactive Oral Grammar Exercises" (Comeau), "Interaction of Reader and Text" (Papalia), and "Writing: An Interactive Experience" (Russo),

demonstrate a variety of practice activities, including dialogues, interactive readings, and examples of writing. Each author acknowledges the complexity of interaction but shows how it can be transferred to the classroom by leading the student toward meaningful participation in a motivating environment. The succeeding chapters by Maley and Via provide insights on how to use poetry, sound, and theater as learning activities. In the last essay of Section II, Mueller addresses the need to reform traditional test procedures. Among her many suggestions for making tests interactive and reducing examination anxiety, one idea stands out: students testing students.

Modern Technology in Language Teaching

Five essays comprise the third section which is entitled "The Wider World." In two of them, Price and Frommer focus on the impact of modern technology on language teaching. Price's primary concern is the effective use of available audio-visual technologies. Ariew and Frommer concentrate on interaction in computer-assisted language learning (CALL). All of these authors see the need to complement the traditional four categories of CALL (drill and practice, tutorials, simulations, and games) with contextualized activities (stressing the creative use of language) and tool programs (such as word processing and database management). Ariew and Frommer identify three major problems in CALL development: 1) lack of high-quality software with educational values; 2) incompatibility of many computer systems; and, 3) administrators' and teachers' resistance to change. In spite of the embryonic state of CALL, these authors have high hopes due to the development of faster processors, larger memory space, high-quality audio storage and retrieval systems, and the increased use of networks and sophisticated authoring systems.

Two of the remaining three articles explore how culture can contribute to different styles of speech (Robinson) and how pen-pals, telephone friendships, national culture agencies, sport activities, and sister cities can be helpful in building an effective community interaction for language learning (Stevens).

The volume concludes with ways to prepare the language student for his or her professional development through analysis of case studies, contracts with the business community, and the development of speaking skills and strategies (Dow and Ryan).

Conclusion

The essays in *Interactive Language Teaching* are essential reading for any pre- and inservice teacher interested in contemporary issues on communicative language teaching, and are specifically germane for teacher training programs. The authors offer an interesting variety of examples to enhance interaction in the language classroom. Since the volume is oriented to the practitioner, it does not lend itself primarily to the researcher interested in theoretical models of interaction but rather to a wide audience of teachers and a broad spectrum of languages.

Contributor Profile
Josef Hellebrandt is a doctoral candidate in Media and Foreign Language Education at Purdue University. Interested readers may write to him at the following address: Foreign Language Education, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907.

Initiatives in Communicative Language Teaching II: A Book of Readings

Vital Statistics

Author(s): Savignon, Sandra J. and Margie S. Berns (Eds.)
Copyright: 1984
Publisher: Addison-Welsey Publishing Co.
No. of Pages: 244
Title: *Initiatives in Communicative Language Teaching II: A Book of Readings*
Cost: $18.50

Useful Idea Bank

Classroom teachers interested in communicative language will find this second volume of *Initiatives* to be a thought-provoking rationale and a useful idea bank for creating instruction that is responsive to learner needs. Editors Savignon and Berns have again collected relevant examples of programs that meet the goals of communicative competence. The universality of communicative language teaching is reiterated in ten solid essays by authors who respectively describe successful programs in Brazil, Japan, India, West Germany, Canada, and the United States. This second volume also adds a useful glossary of technical terms, but like its counterpart, it contains no end bibliography.

Important Theoretical Considerations

Initiatives II is divided into two parts. A brief introduction by the editors identifies the intended audience: classroom teachers and administrators interested in curriculum development. The first section, Background Perspectives, holds a theoretical discussion of assumptions and principles that prefaces the practical examples of extant communicative language teaching projects contained in Section Two.

The writings of Section One offer important theoretical considerations on second language instructional design. Orem (Chapter 1) borrows the term "empowerment" (a collaborative problem-solving and decision-making process) from the field of adult education and uses it to argue for shifting responsibility in power relationships (e.g., teacher/learner, teacher/teacher, institution/teacher) to improve communication and curricular design. Busnard and Braga (Chapter 2) counsel that language pedagogy should aim at developing the student's critical perception of cultural assumptions that impact on language learning. Ruiz (Chapter 3) demonstrates how current college texts claiming to include interactive activities too often lack both context and purpose, and assume instead that knowledge of linguistic code is a prerequisite for language use in the classroom.

Approaches, Methods, and Techniques

Section Two, Approaches, Methods, and Techniques, provides examples of various curricula. Ullman (Chapter 4) outlines a multiple-syllabus framework that provides a databank of learning/instruction modules to adapt to students' needs. Beretta (Chapter 5) reports on research that compares a "communicational method" (i.e., meaning over form) in India to a structural approach with results favoring the former. English for Special Purposes (ESP) is the focus of Chapters 6 and 7. Smith (Chapter 6) describes an alternative course in ESP designed for managers of a German Corporation that utilizes L1 strategies developed by the company as the organizing principle for L2 activities; the author includes a sample unit, "The Tunnel Project."

Solange Costa (Chapter 7) addresses the process of instructional design in ESP for computer science students in Brazil, paying particular attention to the important interaction between course designers, students and staff to make the instruction responsive to actual learner needs. Chapters 8 and 9, perhaps, the most salient in the book, focus on reading. Carrell (Chapter 8) reports on interactive activities useful for teaching reading strategies and reading comprehension involving top-down and bottom-up processing modes. Byrnes (Chapter 9) reviews recent research in reading with implications for both teacher and learner. The chapter contains exemplary reading activities in French, German, and Spanish. Helgesen (Chapter 10) offers a rationale for game playing as a vehicle for communication and includes numerous examples in English of effective individual, pair, and group games.

Compulsory Reading for Second Language Educators

Savignon and Berns suggest that *Initiatives II*, like its companion *Initiatives I* (Addison-Welsey, 1984), is meant to be a resource for classroom teachers and program coordinators. Although the theoretical discussions, in particular Orem's vague argument for "empowerment," are not likely to appeal to the classroom teacher, the study of current university-level Spanish texts by Ruiz will be a useful tool for those engaged in textbook adoptions—despite a somewhat dated list of titles (i.e., prior to 1984).

By contrast, Section Two of *Initiatives II* is a rich resource of working models of communicative language teaching. For example, teachers interested in additional references for developing reading skills will find in Carrel and in Byrnes an extensive list of sources. One notable exception is the report by Solange Costa which purports to be a "practical approach," but is clearly based on theory of instructional design and reading research for which references would have been useful.

Nevertheless, *Initiatives II* is compulsory reading for second language educators who wish to examine their philosophical assumptions towards communicative competence and classroom activities in light of other functioning programs with similar goals.

Contributor Profile
Mary Sue Barry teaches in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at Purdue University. Interested readers may write to her at the following address: Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Stanley Coulter Hall, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907.

¿Que Tal?
An Introductory Course

Vital Statistics

Author(s): Dorwick, Thalia; Marks, Martha Alford; Knorre, Marty; VanPatten, Bill; Higgs, Theodore; Ruiz Morcillo, María José—photo essays
Copyright: 1987
Publisher: Random House
No. of Pages: 466
Edition: Second
Title: *¿Que Tal? An Introductory Course*
Series: Other supportive materials with this text: *Workbook to Accompany ¿Que Tal?* by Alice Arana and Oswaldo Arana; *Tape Program* and *Laboratory Manual to Accompany ¿Que Tal?* by María Sablo Yates; *Tapescript to Accompany ¿Que Tal?* by María Sablo Yates; *Instructor's Manual to Accompany ¿Que Tal?* by Marty Knorre and Martha Alford Marks; *Instructor's Resource Kit; Computerized Language Program* available through Edith Beard Brady, Marketing Manager, RANDOM HOUSE, Inc., 703 Market Street, Suite 408, San Francisco, CA 94103; *Random House Video Program for Beginning Spanish* available through Aldo Panattoni, Total Video Company, 220 East Grand Avenue, South San Francisco, CA 94080.
Intended Users: College students
Level of Difficulty: Beginning

General Description

This first-year Spanish program consists of a textbook with four preliminary chapters and 28 thematic chapters. The textbook material is supplemented by a workbook, audio cassette tapes, and laboratory manual. Teaching aids for the instructor include an instructor's manual with lesson plans and sample tests, a tape transcript describing exercises and offering suggestions for use, and a kit with supplemental materials such as slides, realia, and exercises that may be photocopied or made into transparencies. Also available are two computer programs and a video program to accompany the materials in *¿Que Tal?*.

The intent of the authors is "to help students develop proficiency in the four skills and cultural awareness" for communication. This goal is approached through early acquisition of vocabulary in each lesson, cyclical organization with frequent review and re-entry of vocabulary and structures, varied and contextualized exercises, small-group activities, sequencing of structures from formulaic expressions to creative self-expression, and embedding language practice in culturally significant situations. The text also offers students study hints on such topics as learning vocabulary, reading for comprehension, recognizing false cognates, studying and learning verbs, and using a Spanish/English dictionary.

Improved Edition

The authors of the second edition of *¿Que Tal?* adopt a communicative approach to language learning based on the 1986 ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. The Guidelines appear in the *Resource Kit* under "Using *¿Que Tal?* in the Proficiency-Oriented Classroom" by Martha Alford Marks. Assuming that language is to be *used* rather than merely studied, the authors provide numerous opportunities for creative language use based on students' personal experiences. The second edition also has fewer chapters and limits grammatical points to two per chapter. Thus, emphasis is shifted from knowledge of structures and discrete items to communicative use of the language. In addition, increased review and re-entry of vocabulary and structures helps students store these in long-term memory.

Cultural awareness is developed through the new color-photo inserts and black-and-white photo essays in the textbook. These photographs give students insight into the hispanic world, its diverse people and their culture. The revised cultural readings present similarities and differences among America and the modern Spanish-speaking world. Realia—everything from newspaper ads to laundry tickets—bring an added concreteness.

Positive Features

The authors have made a concerted effort to implement the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines throughout the program. They provide numerous opportunities for relevant practice in contexts corresponding to the Novice and Intermediate ranges of the ACTFL rating scale. The tape program moves away from the boring listen-repeat-compare format of the audio-lingual method to situational activities and student interviews.

Text organization is clear and easy to follow. The Table of Contents consists of a chart not only giving page numbers, but plainly showing the theme of vocabulary items, the structures and their uses, the titles of the cultural readings, and the types of skill practice exercises in each chapter. Chapter format is consistent throughout the book with grammar and vocabulary reviewed in the *Repaso* section.

¿Qué Tal? fosters instructional flexibility. The instructor may present grammar points within a chapter in any convenient order, use many of the exercises for either oral or written practice, and select alternative and/or additional activities from the *Instructor's Manual* and *Kit*. The abundant materials and wide variety of exercises affords instructors greater adaptability and students varied exposure to the target language.

Many exercises in the text and *Workbook* are suitable for independent work. The tape program, *Laboratory Manual* and CAI allow self-correction. Consequently, instructors may focus class time on developing communicative competence rather than drilling grammar.

Language acquisition follows a logical, step-by-step progression from controlled precommunicative practice to communicative interactive practice. Each chapter begins with thematic

vocabulary which serves as a basis for the grammatical content and reading exercises. The varied exercises similarly progress from controlled to open-ended activities.

Cultural materials represent more than one Spanish-speaking country and generally avoid stereotypical images. Although cultural differences are addressed, similarities are also indicated, thus dispelling the image of "foreign" as "really strange." Most importantly, culture is not treated as a mere appendage, a trivial afterthought, but, as an integral part of language. It is intertwined with vocabulary and structures to form a meaningful whole.

The audio cassette lessons and the corresponding laboratory workbook provide new ways to practice vocabulary and grammar. The learner is frequently asked to respond based on his/her experiences. Interview exercises and the provision of a context for most exercises, make these focused exercises much more interactive and relevant. The use of native speakers and authentic speech in the tape program provides students with good models, particularly important where the instructor is not a native speaker.

The *Instructor's Manual*

The *Instructor's Manual* is a boon for the inexperienced teacher. It provides general information on *¿Qué Tal?*, suggestions for organizing the course and for preparing a syllabus, ideas for lesson planning and for getting to know students, and tips on teaching techniques and classroom testing. More experienced teachers will welcome the interesting ideas and alternative activities. In addition, the instructional *Kit* is a treasure-trove for introductory materials and for providing supplementary student activities.

Limitations

Drawings used in foreign language teaching should be clear and unambiguous. Some illustrations in the text are too small or unclear. In the vocabulary introduction on page 15, for example, the illustration for *wallet* was interpreted as a credit card holder by one of my students and as a road map by another. Similarly, on page 316, the Spanish word for keys on a computer keyboard lies almost hidden within the

small drawing of the keyboard. Fortunately, many of the same illustrations become clear in the student's *Workbook* and *Laboratory Manual,* and in the instructor's *Kit.*

In an effort to make exercises relevant, the authors occasionally create some questionable contexts. For example, on page 131 of the *Laboratory Manual,* the student must "write what you did today" using the verbs given. Among these verbs and phrases are *llegar...a la oficina* (arrive at the office) and *trabajar hasta las* (to work until). These items assume that all students work. Students who do not work must provide a hypothetical response, thereby defeating the purpose of personalized questions.

The National Geographic-like slides included in the *Kit* offer a beautiful armchair tour of the Spanish-speaking world. Although they vary in geographic location, they reveal little about the people, their customs, their values or traditions.

Greater content variety and more socio-cultural themes would improve their educational value.

A few typographical and editorial errors should be corrected. Perhaps the worst I encountered was incorrect answers given on the cassette tape and in the *Tapescript* for Chapter Eight *Minidiálogo: Haciendo planes (Tapescript,* page 60). Such errors confuse the unsure learner.

Finally, though poor print quality and cheap paper stock is understandable for tear-out, throw-away workbooks, it is unappealing in an instructor's manual. At first glance, the well-written *Manual* does not invite perusal. In this instance, first impressions are important.

Contributor Profile

Inés Márquez-Chisholm is teacher of Spanish and director of the Language Learning Center at the University of Florida. Interested readers may write to her at the following address: Office of Instructional Resources, General Purpose Building A, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

L'Art de la conversation Deuxième Edition

Vital Statistics

Author: Yvone Lenard
Copyright: 1985
Publisher: Harper & Row
No. of Pages: 183 + xiv
Edition: Second
Title: L'Art de la conversation
Supplementary Materials: Audio Tape Program and Tapescript
Cost: $16.25
Intended Users: Intermediate French Conversation classes

Language in Context

The second edition of L'Art de la conversation remains faithful to the author's initial concept by presenting vocabulary and culture in a conversational context. Each of the ten chapters is devoted to a broad notional topic whose essential terms are provided in personalized, interlocutory form. Approximately 20% of these highlighted structures will already be familiar to the average student of late second or early third-year French; this limited redundance ensures a common lexical base and eases the introduction of new terms. After a series of exercises, the basic vocabulary is further reinforced by a substantial dialogue representing an authentic, often humorous situation. Cultural information is embedded in these conversations and also appears in appended notes.

Application

Students are able to apply the targeted structures in a series of exercises designed to encourage personal expression. Each introductory section is followed by several exposé topics and debate formats, all of which are accompanied by guide questions. Comprehension questions and one-sided conversations elicit responses in the "spirit" of the chapter's dialogue. Further exercises entail role-playing, imaginary telephone conversations, and captioned movie stills. Finally, the author has added to the second edition a new section entitled "Parlez avec les jeunes." This section, which appears at the end of every lesson, provides a list of "stable" slang expressions and reinforcement exercises.

Audio Tape Program

L'Art de la conversation is accompanied by a set of audio tapes intended for additional oral practice. Students initially work on new vocabulary and syntax in structured substitution or question-answer drills. A more communicative exercise asks open-ended questions with no "correct" answers; this section might be used for testing purposes. In addition, students are able to hear (but not imitate) the dialogues. A final exercise, entitled "Réagissez en français," elicits colloquial exclamations in a conversational context.

Limitations

While the text does provide a variety of exercises, two sets out of six follow the "silent speaker" format: Students are asked to play the role of a fictional character and imagine the appropriate questions and responses. This format wears quickly, as students do not always seem to identify with the rather silly characters. A more elaborated set of personalized situations, based on the subject and patterns of the dialogues, might be more effective.

In addition, instructors should be warned about a rather annoying number of typographical errors. Witness the following mistakes in the initial vocabulary presentations: agreement errors on pages 8 and 39 ("même(s)" and "un(e)

accoutumance"); page 84, "actuellement" should be translated as "presently" and not "actually"; page 137, faulty repetition of "chaque trimestre."

The audio program does allow students to practice and test oral expression, but some of the exercises are too difficult to accomplish without the aid of a visual cue. Substitution drills often require students to remember and transform rather lengthy sentences. A supplementary laboratory manual would, therefore, be a valuable addition to the program.

Conclusion

Despite the deficiencies, *L'Art de la conversation* can be used with success in the intermediate conversation class. Students have found the topics interesting and the vocabulary quite useful. It is noteworthy that this text may be adapted to a variety of teaching formats. In the traditional conversation-grammar review course, each of the different topics may be paired with a specific grammar point; chapters are easily studied out of sequence. Conversation and debate subjects also lend themselves well to composition themes. With supplementary materials and some re-structuring, the text might even be implemented in a functional-notional syllabus. As a whole, *L'Art de la conversation* offers the intermediate student a solid, flexible base of conversational French.

Contributor Profile
Catherine Jones teaches French in the Department of Romance Languages at the University of Georgia. Interested readers may write to her at the following address: Department of Romance Languages, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602.