Anglica Wratislaviensia

XXX

**Edited
by Jan Cygan**

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Illusion and Reality in Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* and Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth*

The basic vehicle of artistic representation by virtue of which Art functions and is perceived as Art is pretence, or to be more specific, *illusion of reality*. It can hardly be denied that any dramatic performance at variance with this principle is simply unthinkable.

It will not be debatable that there is only one reason for the property to be arranged on the stage: to stir the imagination of the audience and, thus, allow it to forget about the limitations of the house—at least for the time of the performance. Yet, there is no gainsaying it will not suffice for a play to be successful; what is necessary is a tacit consent to be "signed" between the actors and the spectators, according to which the former are supposed to playact while the latter are expected to let them hold sway from the moment the curtain rises. In short, permission to be "deluded" must be granted. Such is the mechanics of traditional drama, as we know it, or of what we call a "well-made play."

Great theorists of modern drama have irrevocably repudiated traditional methods of staging. They have effected profound organic changes in the theatre itself. They have veered to experimentation which has ever since become an intrinsic part of productions by such great stage directors as Peter Brook, Tadeusz Kantor, Jerzy Grotowski, and the master of happenings, Allan Kaprow.

Ironically enough, even stage experimentation as a form of alternative drama has in the meantime established itself as a fixed tradition. In this regard its pioneers, Luigi Pirandello (1867—1936) and Thornton Wilder (1897—1975), whose plays are subject to analysis in this paper, can and should in all reason be referred to as *traditional* experimentalists.

Although there is a gap of twenty one years between the première of *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (1921) and the first public performance of *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942), the manifold resemblances between these two pieces of drama are far from circumstantial. Accordingly, it will be assumed that both playwrights, Pirandello and Wilder, each in his own way, emphasized in their programmes the theatricality of a performance; questioned the main assumptions of the so-called well-made-play; aimed at destroying the perfect illusion of reality of conventional stage; examined various levels of interplay between Illusion and Reality; and programatically explored the inherent relationship between Life and Art.

Definition of the key terms

To clarify both the meaning and scope of the key terms as employed in the present analysis, it will be remembered that in its restricted sense (as confined to theatrical experience only) *illusion* is to be construed as *als ob* or a generation of pretences and verisimilitude in order to make the audience assume events happening in front of them as fact. On the other hand, *reality* should be defined entirely as the actuality of the stage (not to confuse with the external outdoor reality). Moreover, in a much broader sense, the opposition between the foregoing notions assumes the form of antinomy between Life and Art (in general) as formulated in the theories of both the playwrights. Likewise, the interplay between Illusion and Reality will be studied on both theatrical and philosophical planes.

What is a "theatre play"?

Inasmuch as they constantly emphasize the importance of their theatrical form, *Six Characters in Search of an Author* and *The Skin of Our Teeth* can be roughly described as "theatre plays." Both Pirandello and Wilder insist that their audience be reminded they are watching a play: the spectators are therefore brought face to face with scenic raw materials. In this respect the dramatists' views on the nature of the theatre seem to concur with that of John Gassner, a drama historian, who says that "there is never any sense in pretending that one is not in the theatre; that no amount of make-believe is reality itself;

that, in short, theatre is the medium of dramatic art, and the effectiveness in art consists in using the medium rather than concealing it" (Gassner 1956:141).

A device most preferable to materialize such a concept of drama is a "play in the making"[1] employed by both playwrights. In this regard, a performance in rehearsal can make it possible to present on the stage those contributors to the play who do not usually belong to it (a stage manager, ushers, stage hands, etc.). Such treatment is designed to highlight the realistic aspect of the theatrical production.

Compared with Wilder, Pirandello appears to exploit this device more directly. His play opens with a group of actors gathering to rehearse a play by a Pirandello. As the stage is not set yet, the audience is brought face to face with some carpenters and stage hands still at work. Before the Manager comes up, "the actors and actresses, some standing, some sitting, chat and smoke. One perhaps reads a paper; another cons his part" (*Six Characters...* p. 215).

As soon as the rehearsal starts, the actors are all of a sudden interrupted by the arrival of six characters who insist that they should have their life drama performed on the stage. The reason for their coming has already been stated in the very title of the play: "conceived" by an author who failed to write a dramatic piece, to which they could naturally belong, they are in search of an author to write "the book" of their life and make their existence fully justified.

The same treatment is applied in *The Skin of Our Teeth*. A group of ushers and dressers are supposed to stand in for the absent actors, unexpectedly taken ill. Mr. Fitzpatrick, a Stage Manager, is going to have a short rehearsal with them, in reference to which one of the characters intervenes:

> Antrobus: Now this scene takes place near the end of this act. And I'm sorry to say we'll need a short rehearsal, just a short running through. And as some of it takes place in the auditorium, we'll have to keep the curtain up. Those of you who wish can go out in the lobby and smoke some more. The rest of you can listen to us, or... or just talk quietly among yourselves, as you choose (p. 158).

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[1] The notion as employed in the present analysis refers to the structure of the play, and is not to be confused with the phrase "the comedy in the making" (appearing at the beginning of the cast list in the English edition) which—as Eric Bentley suggests—is a mistranslation of the Italian "una commedia da fare" and should rather read "a play yet to be made" (1973:62).

In both plays breaking up the course of the performance was designed to look accidental and unintentional so as to create the impression that what follows is a piece of improvisation not included in the script. Needless to say, what apparently is to stand for the *reality* of the stage, revealing its mechanisms at work, is in actual fact the *illusion* of that reality.

The appearance of the six characters and the sudden sickness of the actors are not the only obstacles to hold back the plays, for it is also their Stage Managers who cut in several times to keep the performance going while the actors are openly expressing disapproval of the substance of the plays in which they are cast:[2]

Leading Man: But it's ridiculous!
The Manager: Ridiculous? Ridiculous? Is it my fault if France won't send us any more good comedies, and we are reduced to putting on Pirandello's works where nobody understands anything, and where the author plays the fool with us all? (*Six Characters...* p. 216)

At the beginning of *The Skin of Our Teeth* Miss Somerset taking the part of Lily Sabina suddenly "flings pretence to the winds and coming downstage says with indignation":

I hate this play and every word in it... Besides the author hasn't made up his silly mind as to whether we're all living back in caves or in New Jersey today, and that's the way it is all the way through. Oh — why can't we have plays like we used to have [...] good entertainment with a message you can take home with you? (pp. 101—102)

Various levels of the interplay between illusion and reality

In the foregoing passages one can distinguish several different levels of the interplay between illusion and reality. One of them pertains to the structure of the play while the others refer to its characters and their feelings. Like the quotations previously discussed (the lines of the Stage Managers), all the present intrusions of the actors are not what they seem to be, that is to say, they are "illusory." They are related not to the play in progress (which in *reality* proceeds uninterrupted) but to the "play in the making." As regards the actors in "the play in the making," their sudden discontent is an inseparable part of "the book" and has nothing to do with the expression of their personal attitudes.

The third level of the interplay is a result of the application of similar devices by the both playwrights: they make their characters criticize their own works and praise the traditional play, the prin-

ciples of which they have undertaken to challenge. The interaction between what is actually stated (*illusion*) and what is really meant (*reality*) constitutes the substantial element of structural irony employed by the authors of the plays.

In uncovering the secrets of theatrical production Pirandello and Wilder continue to remind the audience that it is the stage itself which is the place of action of their own dramatic works. According to Eric Bentley, for instance, "what earned the Maestro [Pirandello] the highest compliments for originality was that... the boards of the theatre represent — the boards of the theatre. That is to say, they do not represent, they are. They are appearances which are the reality" (Bentley 1973:61).[2]

The distinction between the character and the actor

Pirandello and Wilder insist that the audience accept the fact that the theatre is — in its very essence — both illusory and real, because theatrical *illusion* and *reality* go hand in hand. As a rule, the audience readily give credence to the existence of even the most freakish character on the stage; yet, they never lose sight of the real man — an actor — who endows the character with life and his own personal characteristics.

Going a step further in their experimentation with the theatrical medium, both Pirandello and Wilder accentuate the distinction between characters and actors. In *Six Characters in Search of an Author* the division is stressed in the cast list by grouping all the *dramatis personae* into "characters of the comedy in the making" and "actors of the company," which is to be preserved throughout the play. As opposed to the living actors who, by theatrical means and their acting, create an illusion of reality for the audience, the six characters are entirely imaginary, "fantastic" and "have no other reality outside of this illusion" (p. 237). Accordingly, the main conflict in the play leading up to the clash between those two parties arises from the interplay between the *illusion of reality* (as performed by the actors) and *the reality of illusion* (as experienced by the characters).

What strikes the eye, while comparing *Six Characters in Search of an Author* with *The Skin of Our Teeth*, is that in the latter play the division into actors and characters is also of consequence, though it is not

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[2] A similar opinion about Wilder's works was expressed by Donald Heiney (1974: 237): "Wilder always sees the stage as stage; theatre is not so much a slice of life as life is like the theatre."

entirely "mechanical." One *dramatis persona* in Wilder's play is intended to function at the same time both as a character (Lily Sabina) and an actor (Miss Somerset). The split into Man-the-Character and Man-the-Actor is noticeable whenever characters step out of their roles and present themselves merely as actors. Therefore the spectator finds out, for example, that Miss Somerset was forced to accept her part in the play since she had to earn her living, for, as we learn, "waiting for better times in the theatre" is no profitable business at all. Not only does she display her disillusionment, but even refuses to perform certain scenes from the play.

At first glance it seems apparent that Miss Somerset and "the actors of the company" (from Pirandello's play) represent theatrical reality. Actually, Miss Somerset is as "imaginary" as Lily Sabina, or "the characters of the comedy in the making," because both the actors (Leading Lady, Mr. Fitzpatrick, etc.) and the characters (The Father, Mr. Antrobus, etc.) are all the *dramatis personae* of the play performed in front of the audience.[3]

Another character who presents himself as an actor is Henry (*The Skin of Our Teeth*). The climactic dialogue between him and his father, Mr. Antrobus, happens to be interrupted by Miss Somerset who fears that Henry may really strangle his partner. That is how Henry—as the 'actor' who has stepped out of his role—accounts for his strange behaviour:

Henry: I'm sorry. I don't know what comes over me. I have nothing against him personally... But something comes over me. It's like I become fifteen years old again. I... I... listen: my own father used to whip me and lock me up every Saturday night. I never had enough to eat... My father and my uncle put rules in the way of everything I wanted to do. They tried to prevent my living at all—I'm sorry. I'm sorry (p. 171).

At this critical juncture the audience begins to feel confident that Henry-the-actor under the impact of some painful memories from his boyhood transfers his hatred to and desires to avenge himself on his fictional father, Mr. Antrobus. The scene in question appears to be crucial for the *illusion* versus *reality* interplay. Henry's own reminiscences from the past commingle with his illusory theatrical experience,

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[3] Raymond Williams elucidates this point in his comment on *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, which also holds good of *The Skin of Our Teeth*: "The contrast is not between artifice and reality, but between two levels of artifice. The characters, that is to say, cannot represent a reality against which the artificiality of the theatre may be measured; they are themselves products of the theatrical method" (1983:181).

and, as a result, the pretended attempt on Antrobus' life assumes the form of an actual act of violence. Travis Bogard comments on the scene in the following way: "When Cain's murderous frenzy becomes the actor's reality, when the artificial enactment of a symbolic gesture becomes the particular actor's truth, illusion and reality merge" (1965:368).

However, the moment the audience are beginning to see Henry's point and feel capable of distinguishing between what is *real* and what is *illusory*, Sabina hastens to rectify his words.

Sabina: That's not true. I knew your father and your uncle and your mother. You imagined all that. Why, they did everything they could for you. How can you say things like that? They didn't lock you up (*The Skin of Our Teeth*, p. 172).

Now the spectators come to realize that what they have so far considered a reality (Henry-the-actor's childhood) once again turns out to be a sort of illusion of that reality which Henry creates about himself. This perspective, perpetually angled, makes it sometimes almost impossible for the confused audience to detect whether the lines belong to the actors or to the characters they perform: this is where the borderline between *illusion* and *reality* as good as disappears.

A similar kind of perplexity is to be found in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, where, at the close of the play, the Actors are confronted with a scene enacted by the six newcomers, in which the Boy is shown to have shot himself with a revolver.

The Manager (*pushing the Actors aside while they lift up the Boy and carry him off*): Is he really wounded?
Some Actors: He's dead! dead!
Other Actors: No, no, it's only make believe, it's only pretence!
The Father (*with a terrible cry*): Pretence? Reality, sir, reality! (p. 242).

Reality versus illusion on the theatrical plane: conclusions

When examining the interplay between *reality* and *illusion* on the theatrical plane, one can hardly fail to discern the "interpenetration" of the real and the illusory. The special effect seems to have been accomplished by the application of "the play in the making" device which determines the structure of the plays as well as the construction of the *dramatis personae*. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the interplay between *illusion* and *reality* on two separate levels: 1) that of an actual performance, and 2) that of the play in the making. It does not

imply, however, that these two levels are mutually exclusive, since each of them makes up the integral part of the other. And so, the physical stage functions as the place of action for the play in the making, whereas the incidental interruptions of the continuity of the latter mark the endings of the successive acts of the actual performance.[4]

Needless to say, the introduction of the new dimension of double illusion has established new relations between the *dramatis personae* in the plays. In the play proper the distinction between actors and characters seems obvious: the audience gathered in the auditorium see the actors (*reality*) perform their roles of characters (*illusion*) on the stage. And the same time, however, it happens that all the characters of the two plays are either actors or characters of the play in the making—both equally illusory as opposed to the living actors.

In *The Skin of Our Teeth* "the effect is a little like the infinity to be found in barbershop mirrors: Lilith, the eternal temptress, is a maid named Sabina, who is played by an actress named Miss Fairweather, who in turn was played by an actress named Tallulah Bankhead" (Bogard 1965:367).

Such an original handling (manipulation?) of the theatrical medium whose goal is to expose and highlight these aspects of the stage production, which traditional presentation *does* conceal, requires a new kind of audience. Unlike the 19th-century theatre-goers who "fashioned a theatre which could not disturb them,"[5] the new breed of spectators are not expected to watch the modern plays passively, but conversely, they are to respond to everything that is spoken and done on the boards, for as Wilder explains in his essay "Some Thoughts on Playwriting," drama is a "collaborative effort shared by the playwright, the actors, and the playgoers who sit 'shoulder to shoulder' as the play unfolds" (Goldstein 1965:116).

The spectator, as an organic constituent of a theatrical production, is drawn into participation in the performance. In the *Skin of Our Teeth*,

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[4] It holds true of *Six Characters in Search of an Author* which is meant to be "the comedy without acts or scenes." In actual fact the play in the making is interrupted twice: for the first time when "the manager and the chief characters withdraw to arrange the scenario" (the break marks the end of the first act of the actual performance), and later, when "by mistake the stage hands let the curtain down" (the end of the second act).

[5] Cf. Preface to *Three Plays* (pp. 8—10) and Wilder's critical view of the 19th-century traditional drama which attempted to suit the tastes of the middle class audience.

for example, Sabina addresses the audience directly and once even stimulates them into action:[6]

> Sabina (*after placing wood on the fireplace comes down to the footlights and addresses the audience*): Will you please start handing up your chairs? We'll need everything for this fire. Save the human race. — Ushers, will you pass the chairs up here? Thank you (p. 126).

As regards *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, although the spectators are not expected to display any sign of activity, the role of the *responsive* audience is taken over by the group of actors who are watching the play-within-the-play performed by the characters: when the latter are beginning to speak in an unintelligible manner, the former break in to disapprove:

> Leading Man: What does she say?
> Leading Lady: One can't hear a word.
> Juvenile Lead: Louder! Louder please! (p. 231).

Reality versus illusion on the philosophical plane

The confrontation between the actors (brought down to the role of an audience) and the characters (anxious to take the part of actors) forms the main conflict in the play, defined by Pirandello himself as "the inherent tragic conflict between Life (which is always moving and changing) and form (which fixes it immutable)."[7] This statement definitely stresses one aspect of the opposition between Life and Art, that is to say, the mutability of life in the realm of time versus the immutability of form in the realm of art.

Apparently, it is not at all difficult to determine who is who in the play. The characters (fantastic creations existing only in the author's imagination) represent Art as opposed to real, living actors intended to symbolize Life. At the same time, however, the characters—who gradually become so independent of their creator that they declare they are willing to live on their own and present their family drama on the stage *themselves*—signify the immediacy of experience, a characteristic of

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[6] Some other examples of Sabina addressing people gathered in the auditorium are to be found at the beginning and in the middle of the first act: "Now that you audience are listening to this, too, I understand it a little better" (p. 105); "Ladies and gentlemen! Don't take this play serious" (p. 117).

[7] Cf. Pirandello 1952: 245.

Life. In contrast, the actors trying to imitate characters stand for the theatre or Art. The following inference complies with Eric Bentley's interpretation of the main source of discord in the play, namely the difference between living and rehearsing a scene: "We see a central group of people who are 'real.' They suffer, and need help, not analysis. Around these are grouped unreal busybodies who can only look on, criticize and hinder" (1987:182).

As the characters go through traumatic scenes from their life in front of the actors, the Stage Manager continues to remind them of the limitations of the theatrical staging:

Stage Manager: On the stage you can't have a character becoming too prominent and overshadowing all the others. The thing is to pack them all into a neat little framework and then act what is actable (*Six Characters...* p. 235).

As the members of the theatrical company contend, the embarrassment with which the characters are re-living their personal tragedies, and also their insistence on having the scenery reconstructed with meticulous care, are out of line with any of the widely accepted theatrical conventions. On the other hand, the characters are never content with the way the actors perform their (the characters') parts. The stage directions say:

The rendering of the scene by the actors from the very first words seem to be quite a different thing, though it has not in any way the air of parody. Naturally, the Stepdaughter and the Father not being able to recognize themselves in the Leading Lady and the Leading Man, who deliver their words in different tones and with a different psychology, express, sometimes with smiles, sometimes with gestures, the impression they receive (*Six Characters...* p. 233).

What we realize in the course of the play is that the reality of the theatre (which is only an illusion) and a dramatic illusion (which is the characters' reality) come to form irreconcilable antinomies. The task of the company is clearly defined by the Stage Manager ("Acting is our business here. Truth up to a certain point, no further" — p. 234), while the point of view of the characters is presented by the Mother who vehemently reacts to what has happened on the boards:

The Mother: I can't bear it. I can't.
The Manager: But since it has happened already... I don't understand!
The Mother: It's taking place now. It happens all the time. My torment isn't a pretended one. I live and feel every minute of my torture (p. 236).

The juxtaposition of these two contrastive perspectives allows for concluding that, as regards Pirandello's concept of drama, no actor is in a position to impersonate any character because individual experience cannot be shared. Although it is possible to repeat words and imitate gestures, no one is able to enter a *dramatis persona's* mind or feel what he/she is feeling at a given moment. The only thing an actor can venture is, indeed, try to interpret the character's experience (Life) by virtue of his acting (Art). Yet, by creating an illusion of reality with the aid of manifold theatrical conventions, he destroys at the same time the illusory reality of the characters.

The gap between the actor and the character becomes more and more "unbridgable" by the fact that — as the Father himself puts it — unlike living men "he who has had the luck to be born a character can laugh even at death. He can not die" (p. 218). The point is expanded in the argument between the Father and the Stage Manager, where the former maintains that the characters are truer and more *real* than the actors:

The Father: Ours is an immutable reality which should make you shudder when you approach us if you are really conscious of the fact that your reality is a mere transitory and fleeting illusion, taking this form today and that tomorrow (p. 238).

However, one cannot help feeling that the immutability of the characters' reality (seemingly superior to the aging bodies and uncertain future of the actors) proves to be their curse. They are doomed to go on repeating the same harrowing and embarrassing scenes from their family life over and over again, as they can do nothing to escape their destiny and torment.

This view is also shared by Jørn Møstrup who comments on the inevitability of the six characters' lot as exemplified by the Son: "The Son resists the father's and daughter's plans of having their story turned into a play, and this is a psychological detail which is used to characterize him in relationship to the others. He is a closed and reticent nature, and he does not wish to participate together with the three other children, whom he considers to be intruders. But this modest descriptive detail takes on a special significance because it emphasizes the necessity of their situation. He cannot avoid participating; he came along against his will, and against his will he must act his part to the bitter end and share defeat with the others" (1972:186).

Cyclical forms of the plays

The deterministic view of the characters' lives creates an air of fatality and pessimism throughout the play. The double failure of the characters to understand each other, and of the actors to understand the characters, is reflected in the cyclical form of *Six Characters in Search of an Author*: from the Manager's last words the audience are bound to infer that the moment curtain rises again he will try to go on with the interrupted rehearsal, which brings the spectator back to square one. This aura of despondency mounts with a scene of the Manager complaining about the wasted time, from which can be concluded that he has not taken a lesson from this strange encounter.

The same kind of cyclical form has been adopted in *The Skin of Our Teeth*; likewise, its action runs back to its start. This time, however, the last act ends with the opening scene of the play, namely, Sabina repeating her opening lines and addressing the audience with a short epilogue:[8]

Sabina (*she comes to the footlights*): This is where you came in. We have to go on for ages and ages yet (p. 178).

The notion of a cyclical recurrence of things, as employed in the play, is redolent of the theories of Giambattista Vico, an 18th-century Neapolitan thinker, according to whom all nations and civilizations must pass through the subsequent stages of growth, decline and fall, and again regrowth. This process of cultural and civilizational development parallels, to some extent, a child's acquisition of knowledge through broadening experience.

It seems that Wilder (as opposed to Pirandello who dwells basically upon the notion of Art and the existence of artistic creations) focuses his attention on the value of human endeavours and Life and its requisite, Vitality. Therefore in *The Skin of Our Teeth* the experience of an individual merges with that of the whole race: a striking effect produced by Wilder's ingenuity in manipulating time. Namely, the playwright sets

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[8] The notion of the inevitability of human destiny is additionally stressed in Sabina's violent monologue in the middle of the third act: "That's all we do — always beginning again! Over and over again... Some day the whole earth's going to have to turn cold anyway, and until that time all these other things'll be happening again: it will be more wars and more walls of ice and floods and earthquakes" (*The Skin of Our Teeth*, p. 167).

together the geological time of the Ice Age in the first act with the biblical time of Noah's flood in the second and the time of World War II in the third act of the play. As the time of action encompasses both the prehistoric past and the present (the play was written — as Wilder himself points out — "on the eve of our entrance into the war")[9] characters naturally represent contemporary Americans, cavemen, etc., in general, human types, "everymen," whose conduct reflects the universal experience of humanity.[10]

Accordingly, it can be concluded that this primordial experience of the race shared by all human beings, the Jungian "collective unconscious," is the key to the proper understanding of the play and, especially, of the climactic scene in which Henry is trying to strangle Mr. Antrobus. It explains why Henry-the-actor confuses the reality with the theatrical illusion: he cannot help identifying himself entirely with Henry-the-character, even though his individual experience is not identical. Besides Mr. Antrobus-the-actor himself admits that his own way of acting must have "prompted" Henry to take such a radical and inexplicable course of action:

Antrobus: It's not wholly his fault that he wants to strangle me in this scene. It's my fault too. He wouldn't feel that way unless there were something in me that reminded him of all that (*The Skin of Our Teeth*, p. 172).

It will possibly be agreed that this "something" might be typified as the potentiality of each and every actor to identify himself with each and every character, the source of which is the archetypal experience they *do* share.

If we compare the actor-character relationship in *Six Characters in Search of an Author* with that of *The Skin of Our Teeth*, we may be able to find that Pirandello and Wilder considerably differ in opinions on that point. For the former, the actor is incapable of identifying himself with the character (hence, the splitting of the cast list into two separate groups). For the latter, on the contrary, the actor is able to impersonate any character whatsoever (as has been proved in the Henry — Mr. Antrobus climactic scene).

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[9] Cf. Wilder 1984: 13.

[10] Rex Burbank suggests that Mr. Antrobus is the middle class American, Adam, and the "father pilot" of the human race at the same time; his wife is the American mother, but also Eve and a symbol of eternity, etc. (1961: 105 – 106).

The relationship between Life and Art

It can be inferred that the difference in treating the actor-character relationship by the two playwrights originates from their opposing conceptions of the relationship between Life and Art. As has already been stated, for Pirandello art is both timeless and unalterable:

Hence, always, as we open the book, we shall find Francesca alive and confessing to Dante her sweet sin, and if we turn to the passage a hundred thousand times in succession, Francesca will speak her words, never repeating them mechanically, but saying them as though each time were the first time with such living and sudden passion that Dante every time will turn faint. All that lives, by the fact of living, has a form, and by the same token must die—except the work of art which lives for ever in so far as *it is* form (Pirandello 1952: 248).

For that reason, Art is not an appropriate means to reflect changing and transitory processes of Life. Whenever a "piece" of life has been arrested in artistic form, it becomes eternal, although it is bound to lose its fluidity. In this respect—as Susan Bassnett avers— "Art is a kind of death, since it freezes and fixes the unfixable" (1983:26).

For Wilder it is quite the contrary. The analysis of his play proves that both its form and content are designed to demonstrate that it is Life that possesses the quality of timelessness; Life, not as an individual being, but as a process or force which carries mankind through the times of woe. This triumph of Life is hinted at in the very title of the play, for—as M. Goldstein observes— "no matter how hard pressed or frightened, the human race has power to survive its great adventure in the world where physical nature and its own internal conflicts pose endless threats" (1965:118).

As a result of definite universal human needs and nature, all efforts aimed at avoiding extinction are common to men of all epochs and cultures. For this reason, Wilder introduces various mythological figures and presents a mixture of philosophical trends.[11]

In consequence, the cyclical form of the play reflects not only the recurrent disasters that threaten human race with annihilation, but also Man's propensity to commit the same mistakes time and again. Optimistically enough, the idea of progress has not been entirely denied: the posterity will still have a chance to learn a lesson from the errors of their ancestors:

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[11] Cf. Burbank 1961: 110.

Antrobus: All I ask is the chance to build new worlds and God has always given us that. And has given us (*opening the book*) voices to guide us; and the memory of our mistakes to warn us... We've come a long way. We've learned. We're learning. And the steps of our journey are marked for us here (*he stands by the table turning the leaves of a book*) (*The Skin of Our Teeth*, p. 176).

Antrobus in his monologue defines the function of art as reflection and record of human activities. Art is timeless and universal *only* because Life it imitates possesses those qualities. As the process of living has no end, the play which is to translate it into the language of Art has no finite form either. At the very end of the last act Sabina bids the audience goodbye, saying: "You go home. The end of this play isn't written yet." This is the way the play comes to a halt: no ending, no denouement, no *catharsis*.

Concluding reflections

The manipulation of theatricality in Pirandello's and Wilder's plays (the final goal of which is to obliterate the line between *illusion* and *reality*) appears to be nothing but the sleight of hand of a conjurer's who has invited a spectator to take part in his show. The latter is basically aware that all he bears witness to amounts to the former's dexterity; yet, what he sees is beyond his ken. Therefore he can hardly deny it is magic.

The relativity of events on the stage makes it impossible for the spectator to treat the play as pure entertainment. The play ceases to be a *play*; it turns into a sort of *game* whose rules he is trying to learn in the course of the performance; the spectator is no longer a passive recipient: he should commit himself. The theatre has thus become a "happening" reality to which he is expected to conform. This new experience of his goes beyond his aesthetic experience. This is where Art converges on Life.

Pirandello's and Wilder's attempts at experimentation have finally paved the road to the experimentalist theatre of today in which plot has become a set of images and events; action has turned into activity, roles into tasks; themes have given way to no pre-set meaning; scripts have been replaced by scenarioes or free forms: where product has become a *process*. The new concept of the theatre has ever since become "the play in the making."

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Language

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English Grammar in English-Polish Dictionaries

The subject of this article is a critical investigation of the way in which bilingual dictionaries (BDs) provide the translator with grammatical information which is, besides the primary, lexical data, indispensable for obtaining correct, and satisfactory, translation. The analysis deals with two English-Polish BDs, that is *The Kościuszko Foundation Dictionary* (Bulas, Whitfield 1967) and *The Great English-Polish Dictionary* (Stanisławski 1988), which will further on be referred to as KFD and SGD, respectively. Let us also introduce here the abbreviations Longman and Collins, which stand for *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (Summers 1987) and *Collins Dictionary of the English Language* (Hanks 1986), as the two dictionaries will be often referred to in the paper, too.

When translating a text from one language into another it is not enough to know the TL lexical equivalents of the SL expressions. The equivalents found in the BD have to be connected into sentences in accordance with the rules of the TL grammar. Consequently, we are confronted here with the problem of the range of grammatical or, speaking more broadly, linguistic information one could expect a BD to carry. Most (if not all) of our BDs are traditionally compiled in such a way that they imply a certain minimum of grammatical knowledge of the foreign language on the part of the user, no matter whether he or she translates from or into that language. The two BDs that are the subject of this study are no exception—they certainly do not contain all the grammatical information required in the process of translation. In the English-Polish KFD and SGD it is taken for granted that the user of the dictionary has a sufficient fund of grammatical knowledge enabling him or her on the one hand to produce any form of a given word from the entry form, and on the other hand to associate a given

form in a text with the respective entry form, so that he or she can find the given word in the dictionary.

A BD is not assumed to be a handbook on grammar, as not every piece of information that can be found in grammar books is practically useful for the translator. Moreover, not everything can be written down in a dictionary format. A dictionary should not, therefore, be loaded excessively with grammatical data, which should never exceed the amount of information on meanings, phraseology, etc., as it is on account of these that we consult dictionaries most often. The best solution is to limit the amount of grammar to the data readily useful in the process of translation. In this way the grammatical data would be confined to the information that has direct influence upon the correctness (and thus quality) of the translation. Consequently, the dictionaries should be verified in this aspect: on the one hand, the information should be significantly limited, on the other hand, it should be supplemented (Mędelska, Wawrzyńczyk 1992: 42—43).

The translator is supposed to know the grammar. It is rather unlikely, however, that he or she could remember all the rules and, what is more important, all the exceptions. This is why it appears necessary to include some grammatical data in the BD. The traditional, printed form of the dictionary is based on the principle of avoiding needless repetition in order to save as much precious space as possible. It would be advisable then, to include some grammatical information not in each, single dictionary entry but outside the main body of the dictionary, in the form of an appendix. Such an appendix would contain an outline of the main grammatical (especially morphological) rules of, preferably, both languages. It might take a form of a special contrastive, or translational, grammar, the inclusion of which might both enrich the content of a BD and help to avoid repetitions. This could be less handy, however, as it is much easier to find a ready equivalent of a given entry than to form it according to the rules, either already known, or provided by the grammatical supplement.

The contrastive grammars should be based on the principle that grammar embraces a body of information of general nature, referring to a whole series of language phenomena, which it would be uneconomical to include in the BD. The dictionary, on the other hand, should comprise also some pieces of information about facts, but only those related to individual words, not to larger series. The grammars should be very specific and show all the differences between languages that the user might not anticipate, all the peculiarities and characteristic features

of the given language, e.g. word order, word formation, the use of articles, etc. For example, it should state how to form plurals in English, which is a universal rule and does not have to be repeated at each nominal entry. The exceptions, however (such as *oxen, children, men* etc.) should be indicated at every single entry.

The inclusion of a contrastive grammar in the BD would have two main advantages. First, as it has been said, some space could be saved, secondly, the dictionary could be more consistent, as the lexicographers would be more likely not to repeat or overlook some information, which occurs quite often. Consequently, such a grammatical supplement might greatly improve the functionality of the BD. It is highly regrettable, then, that both English-Polish KFD and SGD do not include any grammatical appendix. A little encouraging is the fact that at least Polish-English SGD does include an outline of Polish grammar. Still, as the subject of this paper concentrates on English-Polish BDs, we have to admit that the dictionaries are deficient in this aspect—not only do they not include a contrastive grammar appendix, but they do not include any outline of English grammar, either. (SGD is inconsistent, introducing only the Polish grammar appendix. It seems, however, that the author, aware of the complexity of Polish syntax, considered it necessary to include it in the dictionary, while in the case of English it did not seem so much important.)

Now we are going to examine how much grammatical information the two BDs provide and whether this information is adequate, deficient, or redundant. The following are the main grammatical features of the English-Polish KFD and SGD. Abbreviations and explanatory words used in the dictionaries:

a, adj	— adjective;	*rz*	— rzadko, rarely;
adv	— adverb;	*s, sing*	— singular;
czas	— czasem, sometimes;	*t*	— także, also;
id	— idem;	*v*	— verb;
jako	— jako, as;	*vi*	— verb intransitive;
l	— lub, or;	*vt*	— verb transitive;
lit	— literary use;	*zam*	— zamiast, instead of;
og	— ogólnie, generally;	*zob, zbior*	— zbiorowo, collectively;
pl	— plural;	*zw*	— zwykle, usually;
pp	— past participle;	*zwl*	— zwłaszcza, particularly;
praet	— past tense;		
reg	— regular form;	*†, arch*	— archaicznie, archaic.

1. Regular plural forms of nouns (formed by the addition of -s or -es), also of those ending in -y, are omitted in both dictionaries. Irregular plurals, and such as might give cause for doubt are provided. Both BDs, however, are rather inconsistent in their treatment of the number of nouns—they sometimes do not follow one pattern or rule in a systematic way, they differ from each other and also from the data provided by MDs. Let us analyse several examples.

(a) some singular invariables:

	KFD	SGD	Longman	Collins
measles	pl	pl	sing	sing, pl
mumps	sing	sing	sing	sing, pl
rickets	sing	sing	sing	sing, pl
shingles	sing	pl	sing	sing
billiards	sing	pl	sing	sing
bowls	pl	—	sing	sing
darts	—	pl	sing	sing
draughts	pl	pl	sing	sing
checkers	pl	pl	sing	sing
fives	sing	sing	sing	sing
ninepins	pl jako sing	sing	sing	sing

(b) some summation plurals:

	KFD	SGD	Longman	Collins
bellows	sing, pl	pl	sing, pl	sing, pl
binoculars	sing, pl	sing	pl	pl
pincers	pl	pl	pl	pl
suspenders	pl	pl	pl	pl
tights	pl	pl	pl	pl
trousers	pl	zw pl	pl	pl

(c) unmarked plural nouns:

	KFD	SGD	Longman	Collins
cattle	sing	sing (pl~)	pl	pl
clergy	sing, pl	sing, pl	pl	sing (pl -gies)
folk	sing, pl	sing (pl ~s)	pl	sing, pl
police	sing, pl	sing (pl~)	pl	sing, pl
vermin	zw pl	zw pl	pl	sing, pl
youth	sing	sing (pl ~s)	sing, pl	sing (pl ~s)

(d) plurals with optional voicing:

	KFD	SGD	Longman	Collins
dwarf	pl t. rz. dwarves	reg	dwarfs, dwarves	dwarfs, dwarves
handker-chief	reg	reg	-chiefs, -chieves	reg
hoof	pl t. hooves	pl ~s, hooves	hoofs, hooves	hooves, hoofs
scarf	pl ~s, zwł. Br, -ves	pl scarves, ~s	scarfs, scarves	scarfs, scarves
wharf	pl ~s, -ves	pl ~s, wharves	wharfs, wharves	wharves, wharfs

(e) zero (or optional zero) plural:

	KFD	SGD	Longman	Collins
grouse	pl id	pl~	pl grouse	pl grouse, grouses
plaice	reg	reg	pl plaice	pl plaice plaices
salmon	zb. zw. s. zam. pl	pl~	pl salmon, salmons	pl -ons, -on

	KFD	SGD	Longman	Collins
pike	reg	reg	pl pikes, pike	pl pike, pikes
trout	pl id	pl ~	pl trout, trouts	pl trout, trouts
carp	reg	pl carp	pl carp, carps	pl carp, carps
deer	pl zb. zw. id	pl deer	pl deer	pl deer, deers
moose	pl id	reg	pl moose	pl moose
antelope	reg	reg	pl -lopes, -lope	pl -lopes, lope
reindeer	pl id	pl ~	pl reindeer	pl -deer, -deers
fish	pl zb. id	pl ~es, zbior fish	pl fish, fishes	pl fish, fishes
flounder	reg	reg	pl flounder, flounders	pl -der, -ders
herring	reg	reg	pl -rings, ring	pl -rings, -ring
elk	pl zwł. zb. id	reg	pl elks, elk	pl elks, elk
duck	reg	reg	pl ducks, duck	pl ducks, duck

(f) foreign plurals (obligatory or optional):

	KFD	SGD	Longman	Collins
cactus	pl zw. -uses, t. -i	pl ~es, cacti	pl -uses, -ti	pl -tuses, -ti
focus	pl t. -ci	pl foci, ~es	pl -cuses, -ci	pl -cuses, -ci
fungus	pl t. -i	pl fungi, ~es	pl -gi, -guses	pl -gi, -guses

	KFD	SGD	Longman	Collins
nucleus	pl -ci	pl nuclei, ~es	pl -clei	pl -clei, -cleuses
radius	pl -ii	pl radii	pl -dii	pl -dii, -diuses
terminus	pl t. -ni	pl termini, ~es	pl -nii, -nuses	pl -ni, -nuses
syllabus	pl t. -bi	pl syllabi, ~es	pl -buses, -bi	pl -buses, -bi
antenna	pl ~s, -ae	pl antennae	pl -nae, -nas	pl -nae, -nas
nebula	pl -ae	pl nebulae, ~s	pl -lae, -las	pl -lae, -las
vertebra	pl t. -ae	pl vertebrae	pl -brae	pl -brae, -bras
aquarium	reg	reg	pl -iums, -ia	pl -iums, -ia
medium	pl t. -ia	pl media, ~s	pl -dia, -diums	pl -dia, -diums
symposium	pl t. -ia	pl symposia	pl -siums, -sia	pl -siums, -sia
criterion	pl -ia	pl criteria	pl -ria, -rions	pl -ria, -rions
pheno-menon	pl -na	pl phenomena	pl -na	pl -ena, -enons
automaton	pl t. -a	pl automata	pl -ta, -tons	pl -tons, -ta
adieu	reg	reg	pl adieus, adieux	pl adieus, adieux
bureau	pl t. ~x	pl ~x	pl bureaux	pl -reaus, -reaux
tableau	pl ~x	pl tableaux	pl -leaux, -leaus	pl -leaux, -leaus
chamois	reg	pl chamois	pl chamois	pl -ois

	KFD	SGD	Longman	Collins
chassis	pl id	pl ~	pl chassis	pl -sis
corps	pl id	pl corps	pl corps	pl corps
libretto	pl -i	pl libretti, ~s	pl -tos	pl -tos, -ti
virtuoso	pl t. -si	pl ~s, virtuosi	pl -sos, -si	pl -sos, -si
solo	pl ~s, soli	pl t. soli	pl -los	pl -los, -li
tempo	reg	reg	pl -pos, -pi	pl -pos, -pi
cherub	pl t. ~im	pl ~im	pl cherubs, cherubim	pl cherubs, cherubim
seraph	pl ~im	pl ~im, ~s	pl -aphs, -aphim	pl -aphs, -aphim

(g) regular nouns in -o with plural (optional or obligatory) -oes:

	KFD	SGD	Longman	Collins
embargo	pl ~(e)s	pl ~s	pl -goes	pl -goes
archi-pelago	pl ~(e)s	reg	pl -goes, -gos	pl -gos, -goes
buffalo	pl ~(e)s	pl ~es	pl -loes, -los, -lo	pl -loes, -lo
cargo	pl ~(e)s	pl ~es	pl -goes, -gos	pl -goes, -gos
commando	pl ~(e)s	reg	pl -dos, -does	pl -dos, -does
tornado	pl ~(e)s	pl ~es	pl -does, -dos	pl -does, -dos
volcano	pl ~(e)s	pl ~es	pl -noes, -nos	pl -noes, -nos

(h) KFD does not provide plurals for compounds, while in SGD we have e.g.:

passer-by — passers-by
mother-in-law — mothers-in-law

grant-in-aid — grants-in-aid
man-of-war — men-of-war
gentleman-farmer — gentlemen-farmers
man-servant — men-servants

2. Regular verb endings are omitted (including verb forms ending in -e), but SGD makes an exception for the cases where the user may be likely to be in doubt as to the spelling in verbs ending in -y:

SGD: cry (cried, cried; crying)
    dry (dried, dried; drying)
    try (tried, tried; trying)

This information appears redundant since the rule -y>-ied>-ying is a very powerful one as the vast majority of English verbs belong to this regular class and the user can predict the other forms if he or she knows the base (the rule, however, should be included in a grammatical appendix to the dictionary).

Both BDs provide endings for:

(a) the two verbs that have a change -y>-i also after a vowel:

KFD: lay (laid, laid)
SGD: lay (laid, laid)

KFD: pay (paid, paid)
SGD: pay (paid, paid; paying)

(b) the verbs ending in -ie:

KFD: die (died, dying)
SGD: die (died, died; dying)

KFD: lie (lying)
SGD: lie (lied, lied; lying)

KFD: tie (tying)
SGD: tie (tied, tied; tying)

(KFD appears to be less precise in this aspect.)

(c) some verbs ending in -ee, -ye, -oe, and sometimes -ge, but the dictionaries seem inconsistent in this matter. They give some information on the following:

KFD: free
SGD: free (freed, freed; freeing)

KFD: dye (dyed, dyeing)
SGD: dye (dyed, dyed; dyeing)

KFD: hoe
SGD: hoe (hoed, hoed; hoeing)

KFD: singe (-eing)
SGD: singe (singeing)

but they do not, for example, provide endings for *agree* which falls into
the same category.

3. Verbs which double the final single consonant in derivatives are
indicated in both dictionaries:

KFD: bar (-rr-)
SGD: bar (-rr-)

KFD: permit (-tt-)
SGD: permit (-tt-)

KFD: humbug (-gg-)
SGD: humbug (-gg-)

KFD: traffic (-ck-)
SGD: traffic (trafficked, trafficked; trafficking)

4. Differences in British/American English are indicated only in
KFD; SGD gives only British forms:

KFD: signal (Br -ll-)
SGD: signal (-ll-)

KFD: travel (Br -ll-)
SGD: travel (-ll-)

KFD: worship (Br -pp-)
SGD: worship (-pp-)

5. Irregular verbs endings are given in the following order: the past,
the past participle, the present participle if there may be some doubt as
to the spelling:

KFD: put (put, put, -tt-)
SGD: put (put, put; putting)

6. If the verb has more forms than one for the past or the past participle,
these are separated in SGD by the use of the qualifying additions: *praet*
and *pp*; KFD indicates only the alternative forms. Compare:

KFD: burn (burnt, burnt, *czas.* burned)
SGD: burn (*praet* burnt, burned, *pp* burnt, burned)

KFD: dwell (*past i pp t.* dwelt)
SGD: dwell (dwelt, dwelt)

KFD: learn (*t.* learnt, learnt)
SGD: learn (*praet* learnt, learned, *pp* learnt, learned)

KFD: smell (*t.* smelt, smelt)
SGD: smell (*praet* smelt, smelled, *pp* smelt, smelled)

KFD: spell (spelled *l.* spelt)
SGD: spell (*praet* spelt, spelled, *pp* spelt, spelled)

KFD: spill (spilled *l.* spilt)
SGD: spill (praet spilt, spilled, *pp* spilt, spilled)

KFD: spoil (spoilt *l.* spoiled)
SGD: spoil (*praet* spoilt, spoiled, *pp* spoilt, spoiled)

KFD: bereave (bereaved *l.* bereft)
SGD: bereave (*praet* bereft, *pp* bereft, bereaved)

KFD: dream (*past i pp t.* dreamt)
SGD: dream (*praet* dreamed, dreamt, *pp* dreamed, dreamt)

KFD: lean (*t.* leant, leant)
SGD: lean (*praet* leant, leaned, *pp* leant, leaned)

KFD: leap (*t.* leapt, leapt)
SGD: leap (*praet* leapt, leaped, *pp* leapt, leaped)

KFD: bet (*past i pp og.* betted, *z podaniem transakcji l. sumy* bet)
SGD: bet (-tt-)

KFD: bid (bad, bid, *zw.* bade; bid(den))
SGD: bid (*praet* bade, *pp* bidden, bid; bidding)

KFD: knit (knitted *zwł. o drutach l.* knit)
SGD: knit (*praet* knitted, knit, *pp* knitted, knit; knitting)

KFD: quit (-tt-; *past i pp t.* quit, *rz. Br.*)
SGD: quit (*praet* ~ted, quit, *pp* ~ted, quit)

KFD: rid (rid *l.* ridded)
SGD: rid (ridded, rid; ridding)

KFD: wed (-dd-)
SGD: wed (*praet* wedded, wed, *pp* wed; wedding)

KFD: speed (sped, sped)
SGD: speed (sped, sped) 3. (speeded, speeded) regulować szybkość

KFD: light (t. lit, lit; pp jako przydawka zw. lighted)
SDG: light (praet lighted, lit pp lighted, lit)

KFD: spit (spat, spat, arch spit, -tt-)
SGD: spit (praet spat, † spit, pp spat, † spit; spitting)

KFD: get (got, got, w złoż, arch. i US gotten; -tt-)
SGD: get (praet got, pp got, gotten; getting)

KFD: hew (pp t. hewn)
SGD: hew (hewed, hewn)

KFD: mow (pp ~ed, jako a. ~n)
SGD: mow (mowed, mown)

KFD: saw (pp ~n, rz. ~ed)
SGD: saw (praet sawed, pp sawed, sawn)

KFD: sew (pp sewn l. sewed)
SGD: sew (praet sewed, pp sewed, sewn)

KFD: shear (arch. shore; shorn, rz. ~ed)
SGD: shear (praet sheared, † shore, pp shorn, rz. sheared)

KFD: show (pp ~n, rz. ~ed)
SGD: show (praet showed, lit. shewed, shew, pp shown, showed, lit. shewed, shewn)

KFD: sow (pp t. sown)
SGD: sow (praet sowed, pp sowed, sown)

KFD: strew (strewed; strewed l. strewn)
SGD: strew (praet strewed, pp strewn, strewed)

KFD: swell (pp swollen, rz. swelled)
SGD: swell (praet swelled, pp swollen, swelled)

KFD: awake (awoke, rz. awaked; awaked, rz. awoke)
SGD: awake (praet awoke, † awaked, pp awoke, awaked)

KFD: hide (hid; hidden, hid)
SGD: hide (hid, hidden)

KFD: dive (past t. US pot i Br. dial. dove)
SGD: dive

KFD: thrive (throve, rz. ~d; thriven, rz. ~d)
SGD: thrive (praet throve, thrived, pp thriven, thrived)

KFD: shrink (shrank, shrunk i zw. a. shrunken)
SGD: shrink (praet shrank, shrunk, pp shrunk, shrunken)

KFD: wake (waked, woke; waked, arch. woken)
SGD: wake (praet woke, waked, pp. waked, woken, woke)

A difference can be noticed not only in the form of presentation, but also in the information presented.

7. Irregular degrees of comparison of adjectives and adverbs are included in both dictionaries:

KFD: good a (better, best)
SGD: good adj (better, best)

KFD: bad a. (worse, worst)
SGD: bad adj. (worse, worst)

KFD: little a. (less(er) t. smaller; least, t. smallest) n. i adv (less, least)
SGD: little adj (less, least), adv

KFD: much
SGD: much adj (more, most), adv

KFD: many
SGD: many adj (more, most)

KFD: ill a. (worse, worst), adv
SGD: ill adj (worse, worst), adv

KFD: well adv (better, best), a. (better, best)
SGD: well adj (better, best), adv (better, best)

KFD: far a. i adv (farther, further; farthest, furthest)
SGD: far adj (farther, further; farthest, furthest), adv

KFD: old
SGD: old adj (older, oldest; w rodzinie: elder, eldest)

KFD lacks here some information as it does not provide the comparatives and superlatives for *much*, *many*, and *old*

8. Changes in spelling in regular inflections:

(a) doubling final base consonants is usually indicated:

KFD: big (-gg-)
SGD: big (-gg-)

KFD: fat
SGD: fat (-tt-)

KFD: sad (-dd-)
SGD: sad (-dd-)

KFD: wet (-tt-)
SGD: wet, wetter, wettest

(b) The BDs do not indicate the dropping of the final -e before the inflections, as in *brave - braver - bravest* or *free - freer - freest*, but these cases seem to me too obvious to include the comparative forms (the rule, however, should be mentioned in an appendix to the BD).

(c) The change of the final unstressed vowel (in bases ending in a consonant + y) to i in disyllabic adjectives is not included in KFD. The rule, however, is universal, so such a change can be predicted. SGD does include such changes (e.g. for *early, funny, friendly, mighty, dreamy* etc.), which, at the same time, signals that those adjectives can take inflected forms (e.g. *ugly - uglier - ugliest*). (The user of KFD may be in doubt whether the adjective can form its comparative forms by inflection or by periphrastic equivalents — with *more* and *most*.) SGD, however, is again inconsistent as, providing comparatives for most disyllabic adjectives ending in -y, it does neglect some (e.g. *wealthy, weighty*). Is it intended to suggest that all those remaining ones are modified only in the periphrastic way?

9. Each entry word is qualified by means of an abbreviation indicating the grammatical category which it belongs to. SGD, additionally, makes a distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs:

KFD: sun *v.* (-nn-) 1. wystawiać na słońce
                   2. siedzieć na słońcu

SGD: sun *vt* (-nn-) wystawi-ć/ać na działanie promieni słonecznych
        vi (-nn-) wygrzewać się w słońcu; zaży-ć/wać kąpieli słonecznej

KFD, in the introduction, justifies the omission of this distinction. The authors claim that such a mechanical division would require numerous needless repetitions, as the majority of English verbs can be both transitive and intransitive; and examples illustrating their use with nouns allow to infer whether the verb is used as transitive or not. The

Polish equivalents can, in this case, be joined in one unit such as, for example, in *revolve — obracać (się)*, which can save some space. In my opinion, these reasons are quite convincing.

10. The Polish noun equivalents are given, in SGD, in both the masculine and feminine genders when the latter exists, while KFD gives only the masculine form:

KFD: **owner** właściciel
SGD: **owner** właściciel/ka; posiadacz/ka ...

It is, in my opinion, a significant disadvantage as, when consulting KFD, a Polish user may sometimes not be sure whether there exists a separate English feminine form of the word or whether the form is the same for the masculine and feminine genders, e.g. as SGD gives for *author* only the masculine equivalent *autor* it suggests that there also exists an English feminine form of this word (i.e. *authoress*). In KFD, where we find e.g. *heretic — heretyk* we cannot be sure whether the word can also mean *heretyczka* or whether there is a special form for the feminine. The user of SGD will have no such doubts (*heretic — herety-k/czka*). What is more, KFD is inconsistent in this respect because there are cases where it gives also the feminine form, e.g. *dancer — tancerz l. tancerka*.

11. The Polish adjectives are given in the masculine gender in both dictionaries (with the exception for those used only in the feminine, such as *szczenna*).

12. The use of the definite article before certain names is indicated in a rather unsystematic way — both BDs lack consistency in most cases — and this may be not very relevant for a BD user translating a text from English into Polish, nevertheless, the data provided by the dictionary should be as precise as possible. Let us analyze several examples:

(a) both BDs omit the optional use of the definite article before the names of illnesses. Compare:

KFD, SGD	Longman	Collins
plague	(the) plague	plague
flu	flu	flu
measles	(the) measles	measles
mumps	(the) mumps	mumps

(b) articles before nouns denoting notions of which there is only one specimen are also usually omitted:

KFD	SGD	Longman	Collins
earth	earth	(the) earth	earth
sea	sea	(the) sea	(the) sea
sky	sky	(the) sky	sky
weather	weather	(the) weather	weather
the globe	globe	the globe	the globe

(c) both BDs signal *the* before a very limited number of proper names, e.g.: *the Hague, the City, the Mall, the Netherlands, the Midlands* (although SGD here contradicts itself: it has *the Midlands* in the main body of the dictionary, but *Midlands* in the geographical names appendix). Additionally, KFD puts *the* before *Ukraine* and SGD before *Levant*. Both dictionaries omit *the* before *Sahara, Crimea, West/East End, English Channel, Atlantic, Baltic, Thames, Danube, Canary Islands, Alps, Rockies*, and so on. The dictionaries not only do not signal the use of articles, but do not even include numerous proper names that employ them, e.g.: *the Antarctic, the Arctic, the Argentine*. KFD overlooks *the Saar, the Bronx, the Albert Hall, the Mansion House, the Strand, the Suez Canal*, while SGD omits *the Midwest, the Haymarket, the North Pole*.

13. Polish verbs in SGD are given in both the perfective and imperfective aspects, while KFD usually gives only the imperfective form of the verb:

KFD: **evoke** 1. wywoływać (duchy, wspomnienia, uczucia)
 2. wydobywać *l.* zdobywać się na (energię)
SGD: **evoke** 1. wywoł-ać/ywać (duchy, wspomnienia, uśmiech itd.)
 2. przen-ieść/osić (sprawę) do sądu wyższej instancji

I think SGD provides here excessive information as most Polish verbs regularly change the aspect. In my opinion, it should include only the forms involving the change in the stem (e.g. *take — wziąć/brać, put — położyć/kłaść, go — pójść/iść* etc.).

14. As far as syntax is concerned, both dictionaries provide necessary syntactic explanations but KFD seems more deficient in this respect. Compare:

KFD: **substitute** *v.* zastępować
SGD: **substitute** *vt* zast-ąpić/ępować (**one person** ⟨A⟩ **for another** ⟨B⟩ jedną osobę ⟨B⟩ inną osobą ⟨A⟩, **a herb etc. for tea etc.** ⟨tea etc. by a herb⟩ herbatę itd. zielem itd.) *vi pot* zastępować (**for sb** kogoś); pełnić funkcję (**for sb** w czyimś zastępstwie)

KFD: **implor~e** *v.* błagać o coś, kogoś
SGD: **implore** *vt* błagać (**sb to do sth** kogoś o zrobienie czegoś); **to ~ sth from sb** błagać kogoś o coś

KFD: **believe** *v.* wierzyć (komuś, czemuś, *in* w kogoś, coś); sądzić...
SGD: **believe** *vt* wierzyć (**sb, sth** komuś, czemuś); u/wierzyć (**sb, sth** w kogoś, coś); **to ~ sb** ⟨**sth**⟩ **to be** u/wierzyć, że ktoś ⟨coś⟩ jest...
 vi 1. u/wierzyć (**in sb, sth** komuś, czemuś; w kogoś, coś); dawać wiarę (**in sb, sth** komuś, czemuś); 2. mieć zaufanie (**in sb, sth** do kogoś, czegoś)...

KFD: **repine** *v.* zżymać się *at l. against* na coś
SGD: **repine** *vi* skarżyć się ⟨narzekać, sarkać⟩ (**at** ⟨**against**⟩ **sb, sth** na kogoś, coś); szemrać (**at** ⟨**against**⟩ **sb** przeciw komuś)

KFD: **presuppose** *v* 1. przypuszczać *l.* zakładać z góry; 2. wymagać czegoś jako warunku...
SGD: **presuppose** *vt* 1. przyjmować ⟨zakładać⟩ (z góry) (**sth** coś; **that** że ...); 2. Nasu-nąć/wać wniosek (**that** że ...); 3. implikować

KFD: **publicity** *n.* 3. rozgłos
SGD: **publicity** *s* 2. rozgłos; **to give ~ to sth** nada-ć/wać rozgłos czemuś; wydoby-ć/wać coś na światło dzienne...

Many more faults could certainly be found in the (generally speaking) grammatical data included in SGD and KFD, and the problem might serve as a subject for a dissertation that could explore it in detail. What I have done here is only signalling some most principal faults appearing in these two dictionaries.

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Applied Linguistics

Jerzy Chyb

Errors as Reporting Tools in L2 Written Output

Errors: Positive Aspect

Examining the errors made by L2 learners needs no justification. It is something that teachers have always done for purely practical reasons. Student errors are a major element in the feedback system of the teaching-learning process. "It is on the basis of the information the teacher gets from errors that he varies his teaching procedures and materials, the pace of the progress, and the amount of practice which he plans at any moment" (Corder 1981:35). Errors are manifestations of failure and must be treated as undesirable effects of the learning process. However, the general attitude to error has been fundamentally changed by recent work on the contribution of the learner to the process of learning. "Now, rather than seeing errors as forms to be avoided and prevented at all costs, we view them as useful evidence of the learner's response to his situation as a language learner. They illustrate stages in the process of learning" (Brumfit 1980:114).

Ellis emphasizes the positive aspect of error as evidence of continued hypothesis testing (1985:32). When errors are starting to form a systematic pattern of occurrence, the L2 teacher is able to predict the types of error that students are likely to make when introduced to a new lexical or grammatical item. Such awareness is of considerable help in the preparation of effective teaching materials, as "from the study of the learner's errors we are able to infer the nature of his knowledge at that point of his learning career and discover what he still has to learn" (Corder 1973:257).

The positive treatment of student errors is not purported to promote leniency or negligence on the part of the teacher. The advocated sympathetic approach should rather be founded on the understanding of the phenomena connected with the difficult, error-laden process of achieving a full command of L2. As Brumfit (1980:115) puts it, "[errors] show the kinds of hypothesis which are being made about the organization of the target language. This does not mean that eventually we hope that the learner's mistakes will persist, but rather that by analysis of the errors that occur our teaching will become more sensitive to the abilities brought to the task by the learner."

Error vs. Mistake

Technically, two words often used interchangeably in everyday life and some literature, namely *error* and *mistake*, should not be confused in linguistic terms. Error (French *erreur*, Polish *błąd*) is the linguistic category of systematic forms resulting from insufficient command of a language, i.e. pertaining to faulty competence (*langue*). Mistakes (French *fautes*, German *Fluchtigkeitsfehler*, Polish *usterki*, *pomyłki*) are nonsystematic breaches of performance (*parole*), i.e. ones made by competent users of a language able to correct themselves (Grucza 1978:30).

Since Error Analysis (EA) is predominantly concerned with competence inadequacies, especially when we focus on the written mode, where supra-segmentals, temporal variables or slips of the tongue/pen are rare or nonexistent, the term *mistake* should be avoided as synonymous with *error*.

Errors: Pragmatic Aspect

One of the conditions of progress is trial, which in turn presupposes committing errors. On the way to mastery a student has to go through a whole chain of approximative systems—called idiosyncratic dialects by Corder (1981), transitional constructions by Dulay et al. (1982), microprocesses by Faerch (1987), interlanguages (IL) by Selinker (1972)—step by step turning his imperfect, transitional grammar into a legitimate language system. Teacher-facilitator should examine the

naturally erratic outcome, diagnose it and then treat it or, if need be, remedy it in the best possible manner. In this sense, the process resembles a medical examination. EA, alongside with supplementary Performance Analysis (PA), provide adequate procedures for reconstructing learners' microprocesses on the basis of errors resulting from their IL competence or, in PA, competence and performance (Faerch 1987:8). The strategic aims, apart from remedying and eradication, would also, and perhaps first, include error prediction and prevention. As George (1972:18) writes:

Linguists say that language is a system, or a system of systems. What interests teachers in this statement is that from a system prediction is possible. From the viewpoint of the learner's productive use of English, when each hour gives or develops the basis for a large amount of successful prediction, the course and teaching are efficient. On the other hand, when one hour's work [...] partly undoes the learning effort, the course and teacher are not efficient. [...] It may be that the teacher has given [the learner] previous experience which did not lead to clear prediction.

If L2 acquisition is to bear any traces of L1 acquisition strategies (Universal Hypothesis, see e.g. Corder 1981:12, Ellis 1985:14), then some elements of the approach to developmental errors may be assumed as valid in L2 teaching-learning process. As Corder points out (1981:8), no one expects a child learning L1 to produce from the earliest stages only forms which in adult terms are considered correct. We rather interpret his "incorrect" utterances as evidence that he is in the process of acquiring language. Moreover, for those who attempt to describe his knowledge of the language at any point in its development, it is the "errors" that provide the important evidence. In this respect a similar pragmatic attitude should prevail in L2 teaching. Learners' IL is governed by its own transitional grammar and it simply has to be faulty, as linguistic hypothesis-testing is bound to spawn by-products.

Error Production Mechanism

Whatever approach, negative, positive or neutral, one is ready to assume, when defining error it proves almost impossible to avoid inherently derogatory words, e.g. "breakdown" and "failure" (Corder 1973:259); "unwanted form" (George 1972:2); "deviant utterance" (Grucza 1978:43); "the flawed side" and "deviation" (Dulay et al. 1982:138), etc. The introduction of some linguistically specific terms allows a more objective and precise definition, shedding new light on

the multifaceted problem of error production mechanism. According to George (1972:5), "it is when the learner's output includes an unwanted form which was not part of the input that we may usefully speak of an error." Also, when the input is somehow flawed right from the start, an erratic production may be expected, but in this case not caused by the learner (therefore, technically, not an error). The Black Box, or, in Chomskyan terms, LAD, does not store the input totally or perfectly: features are selected for storage, and the learner's selection tends to be erratic, causing a defective output. What directly affects selection, in turn, is the quality of the storage procedures employed by the learner. They may be either effective or bad enough to prevent proper mental selection.

The ineffectiveness of storage procedures does not necessarily have to be the learner's direct fault, though. If information presented for admission as input is not well-organized or classified, the chances of smooth mental "digestion" diminish rapidly. The way from the English language *per se*, i.e. the initial input, to the learner's English, i.e. the ultimate output, via course designer's selection of material, teacher's organization and presentation of the admissible data, learner's mental storage, etc. — is fairly long. An inadequacy may appear at any point of the input of any of the stages. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to track down with a hundred per cent certainty the real culprit responsible for an error in the learner's production. Normally, teachers are reluctant in admitting their own failures, "having confidence in their own selection" (George 1972:7).

It is not feasible for an L2 teacher to affect his students' brain storage or item selection mechanisms. However, his error-minded but positive and systematic *modus operandi* may facilitate their way to success in SLA.

Areas of Potential Difficulty

In his *Error Analysis and Interlanguage* (1981:58), Corder writes:

Learners do not immediately learn, on first exposure, what the syllabus prescribes should be learnt at that point. There are two possible reasons for this:
1. that the nature of the data or the manner in which they are presented is defective in some way, which makes it impossible for the learner to take them in, or
2. while the data are adequate, the state of the learning device is such that it cannot take them in. [...] It appears likely that learners are programmed cognitively to process

data in a certain way and the teacher may not be in control of the program, although he has a number of techniques which aim at controlling the learning process.

Sheer awareness of the presence of certain phenomena responsible for the occurrence of common incorrect forms in L2 output may sensitize the teacher to the potential points of difficulty.

Redundancy, safeguarding the message, may be one of such phenomena. More precisely, in George's terms, we mean redundancy type 2 here, that is one in the code itself (1972:9), whose general function is protection of communication. The foreign learner is more conscious of the individual redundant items than the adult native speaker, and is usually unappreciative of redundancies in the code. The question is whether L2 teachers should emphasize proper code-learning, even at the cost of overburdening the learner's input with redundancies, and consequently — high probability of error incidence. The answer is obviously positive, although, admittedly, in tactical terms, teaching simplistic nonredundant L2 ("telegraphic speech") with some morphological features intentionally disregarded in favour of stem forms, may appear tempting. The tendency towards unconditional efficiency measured in immediate communicative terms may prevail, but, as George (1972:11) notes:

The impasse is reached through the removal from the classroom of all need for the protective role of redundancy. Learning the code, whether explicitly or by induction, is, with respect to understanding particular messages, effort expended for redundant information — when the particular messages are adequately communicated. [...] Motivation to learn the code seems in many ways distinct from motivation to communicate and understand messages. It depends on anticipation that present effort will bring about not present, but a future reward. [...] When a learner himself initiates a communication in English, he may do so simply be repeating as output exactly what he has experienced as input [...] However, after the first few months in the classroom and in the tourist context, the inefficiency of the storage procedure is felt. At this point, the tourist has to keep referring to his phrase book, and many young beginners suddenly lose the feeling of accomplishment.

An example of redundancy in English is when both the grammatical marker, e.g. past simple -*ed*, and the lexical one, e.g. an adverbial of time, occur in a sentence. One of them tends to be dropped then, being redundant from the communicative point of view. The dropped marker is most often the grammatical one, as it appears to be more difficult for a learner to internalize. Efficiency-seeking strategies, naturally employed

by L2 learners, may psychologically account for the rejection of redundancy. E.g.:

* I watch TV yesterday. (Chyb 1992:17)

When a form has been introduced by the teacher and after some time another, opposing construction appears in learner's IL, the newer form may inhibit the older one, causing an error. This is attributable to the mechanism of retroactive inhibition. E.g.:

* I watched a TV.
* I went to the bed. (Chyb 1992:17)

In the two examples above, the learner may have been taught to always place an article before countable nouns first. Subsequently, it proved difficult for him to accept the "articleless" constructions of the go-to-bed type, introduced later.

Cross-association is similar to the mechanism of inhibition, with the difference that the resulting erroneous item is not in contrast to the taught one, but rather forms a "logical" inference of two or more items already present in the learner's IL. More precisely, it results from "mutual interference between partially learned items" (George 1972:153). Cross-association may be expected when a couple of constructions, still inadequately distinguished by the learner's transitional competence, are taught — or attempted to be taught — too close together, without a proper temporal interval. Therefore, it is advisable for L2 teachers to avoid presenting potentially confusing items concurrently. "Closeness of established associations for the teacher is a contraindication for teaching in association. In addition to learning the forms, the learner has to spend effort in keeping them distinct: this effort may exceed the effort required for learning both" (George 1972:44). E.g.:

I lent her a book.
I borrowed a book from her.

RESULTANT:
* I lent a book from her. (Chyb 1992:17)

Such and similar phenomena (e.g. homonymy, homophony, homography, analogy, polysemy; for useful lists and activities see McCarthy 1990:22-27, Grucza 1978:110-113, George 1972:156-160, Graver 1973:257-259) impairing L2 students' output should be borne in mind, expected and anticipated by the teacher at any point of the teaching-learning process.

Own Error Studies

Teacher's acknowledgement of universal points of potential difficulty is not sufficient, though, in employing positive error-conscious teaching strategies. Dealing with a particular group of L2 learners over a certain period of time allows, if not obliges, to conduct the teacher's own error occurrence surveys "so that we end with information not only about the possible forms but about their likelihood of coming inside the learner's experience" (George 1972:20). The teacher's role of a researcher should not be viewed as daunting or disheartening, as the amount of time and energy once invested in the examination of student errors is to pay later, when the teaching-learning process is likely to be facilitated and accelerated.

The proposed two-step procedure would include:

1. Descriptive classification of errors according to adequate taxonomies.
2. Attempt at a proportion study.

Four bases for the descriptive classification of L2 student errors have been distinguished by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982:146):

1. Linguistic Category Taxonomy.
2. Surface Strategy Taxonomy.
3. Comparative Analysis Taxonomy.
4. Communicative Effect Taxonomy.

To extract errors in written English, we may mark a bulk of homogenous work of a group of learners at a similar level of proficiency. The authors of Longman Dictionary of Common Errors based their study on thousands of errors taken from Cambridge First Certificate in English composition scripts (Heaton, Turton 1987). The sample size of an average L2 teacher's error study need not, however, be so ample.

In the unpublished MA thesis (1992:24), we have given, among other things, details of an error study conducted on the basis of a written material of a group of Polish subjects. It seems that such a preliminary description of basic study data should include (in brackets: examples from our dissertation): the number of corrected works (70), their average length (10 sentences per work), the total and mean number of extracted errors (550/8 per work), the type of environment (foreign), a short outline of the study subjects including their type of motivation

(80% instrumental, 20% integrative) and level of proficiency (up-per-intermediate), elicitation methods (translation, composition, voca-bulary test, grammar test), search design (cross-sectional study), mode (written), structures studied (general), nature of the task (controlled/free, classwork/homework), etc.

Taxonomies

The elicited and described material is now the basis for further study procedures, of which a systematic classification of written errors comes first. In the fairly traditional but useful Linguistic Category Taxonomy, errors are classified according to the language component (i.e. in written English: syntax and morphology, semantics and lexicon, discourse) and constituent (elements of each component, e.g. the clause, the noun phrase, the auxiliary, the preposition, etc.) that the error affects (Dulay et al. 1982:147).

In the Surface Strategy Taxonomy it is assumed that systematic learners' errors on the surface structure level tend to be based on some IL logic, and include: errors of omission (of grammatical morphemes, content words, major constituents), addition (double marking, regulari-zation-addition, simple addition), misformation (regularization-misfor-mation, archi-forms, free alternation) and misordering (wrong place-ment of morphemes in a sentence). The Linguistic Category and Surface Strategy Taxonomies should not cause major identification problems on the part of an average second language teacher.

Errors classified in this way start to form a relatively full picture of students' level of linguistic attainment and, consequently, provide statistically grounded strategies for error eradication in the long run. However, as (disputably) a fourth or, at the most—a third of all errors are reported to be interlingual errors, i.e. may be put down to L1 interference, it might also be worthwhile to examine the written output on the basis of the third, Comparative Analysis Taxonomy. Admittedly, classifying errors as developmental or interlingual is not an easy task, considering the number of ambiguous and other instances. ("Other errors" category has been labelled as "unique" by Dulay and Burt 1974.) If an error made by an L2 learner is found in the speech of children learning English as their first language, we can assume that LAD comes into play. In this case L2 researchers and teachers rely on the reported findings of L1 acquisition specialists. George (1972:45) writes: "Scores

of students have written theses on the *common errors* of learners of English with particular mother tongues. One is struck by the similarity of their lists of items, and in turn by their common similarity." On the other hand, "to identify an interlingual error, researchers usually translate the grammatical form of the learner's phrase or sentence into the learner's first language to see if similarities exist" (Dulay et al. 1982:171).

Finally, the Communicative Effect Taxonomy deals with errors from the perspective of their effect on the reader/teacher, distinguishing between errors that cause miscommunication and those that do not. Burt and Kiparsky (1972) divide the errors according to their com-municative effect into two major types: global and local errors. Systematic breaches of communication caused by defective overall sentence organizations are called global errors. Errors which do not hinder communication significantly, affecting single elements (con-stituents) of a sentence, are called local errors. Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982:193) write:

> Students must control global grammar in order to be easily understood, while it is possible to communicate successfully without controlling local grammar. Local gram-mar, of course, must be learned if the speaker is to approximate native fluency, but if successful communication is the learner's primary purpose, global grammar must receive top priority.

Proportion Study

A proportion study is one "in which errors in an entire body of speech or writing are classified and counted, enabling the researcher to state in quantitative terms the relative proportion of each error type" (Dulay et al. 1982:174). After a thorough examination of the elicited errors, error count and disregard of random spelling and punctuation mistakes, the ensuing procedures may follow:

(a) Extract a dozen or so commonest types of linguistic-type errors and put them in the order according to their frequency of occurrence in the corrected learners' works, item 1 being the most frequent category of errors, and so on. (Vertical column of the exemplificatory chart below.)

(b) Allocate the errors from particular linguistic categories to the respective four and three subcategories from the two major taxonomies: Surface Strategy and Comparative Analysis. (Horizontal sections of the chart.)

(c) Establish the proportion of error incidence for each separate type within one taxonomy, i.e. the percentage of all occurrences, on the basis of the frequency count.

(d) Count the final proportion of each error type, i.e. the average of all particular columns.

(e) Calculate the ultimate developmental/interlingual ratio of error occurrence after discarding the "ambiguous and other" category results.

In the model chart to follow overleaf, letters (a), (b), (c), (d), and (e) mark the above consecutive procedures for full clarity. This table is the result of a written-error study conducted on a group of adult Polish-speaking subjects in 1991, and is here intended as an example for L2 teachers' own studies with their groups (Chyb 1992:48).

Judging from our chart, the twelve commonest types of errors from the linguistic category (a) to be expected in L2 written output mark the points of difficulty for students in this group. If functionally combined with the inventory of the frequency of verb-form occurrence in the correct use of English (e.g. George 1972:20-121), the statistical count of erratic grammatical incidence may help the teacher in devising workable strategies (or, indeed, revising the existing ones) for the prevention and elimination of errors from the exposed high-frequency groups. Additionally, the results of our study may allow to draw some interesting conclusions of a more general and theoretical nature, for instance:

— students tend to *omit* words and morphemes most in the use of: articles, *there is/are* sentences and third-person singular constructions;
— *misformed* items dominate in the use of: prepositions, auxiliaries and modals, past tenses, infinitive/gerund, plural/singular, negation and all lexical forms;
— *misordering* is the surface strategy typical of word-order and question-formation errors;
— *addition* is relatively seldom resorted to, the highest observed incidence proportion being 15% in the case of plural/singular use;
— in our study (1992:48) only three categories from the Comparative Taxonomy, i.e. prepositions, word order and *there is/are*, have been observed to contain the majority of *interlingual* errors. In the case of one category (infinitive/gerund), the balance of developmental/interlingual error types has been recorded. The remaining ratios confirm the dominance of *developmental* errors

Proportional count of most frequent linguistic category errors recorded in L2 (English) written material

(a) TYPE OF ERROR (Linguistic category)	(b): SURFACE STRATEGY TAXONOMY				COMPARATIVE TAXONOMY		
(c):	omission	addition	misform.	misord.	develop.	interl.	amb., oth.
1. Articles	87%	8%	5%	—	90%	5%	5%
2. Prepositions	32%	6%	60%	2%	20%	75%	5%
3. Word order	—	—	—	100%	10%	80%	10%
4. Auxiliaries & modals	37%	3%	50%	10%	50%	30%	20%
5. Past tenses	15%	8%	65%	12%	85%	10%	5%
6. There is/are.	91%	—	5%	4%	15%	55%	30%
7. Question formation	12%	10%	3%	75%	90%	5%	5%
8. 3rd-pers. sing. "-s"	96%	2%	2%	—	80%	10%	10%
9. Infinitive/gerund	10%	4%	86%	—	40%	40%	20%
10. Lexical	—	—	100%	—	—	—	*
11. Plural/singular	10%	15%	75%	—	75%	15%	10%
12. Negation	2%	5%	70%	23%	50%	30%	20%
(d):	33%	5%	43%	19%	(e): 65%	35%	

* no L1 data available

in L2 learning. The final proportion, with only about a third of interference-caused errors occurring in the examined corpus, is in accordance with most research findings to be found in SLA literature (for a comprehensive specification see Ellis 1985:29).

Teachers carrying out their own error counts may obviously come up with somehow different results. Every ESL teacher, though, should be aware of the fact that certain errors are more likely to appear at some points of written L2 production rather than others. After an error study, on the foundation of its findings, "error-proof" techniques may be developed and methods of prevention worked out (examples see e.g. Chyb 1992:67-76). Areas of expected difficulty, if properly diagnosed, are unlikely to generate serious errors, or will at least enable minimizing their number in the future use of the learners' English. The priorities for possible remedial action can also be inferred from error statistics whenever certain types of errors become persistent, prevention-resistant and endangering the students' proper linguistic progress.

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Lech Zabor

The Role of Aptitudes in Instructional Learning

1. Introduction

At a time when foreign language learning has become so popular and widespread while the resources to conduct this training are becoming increasingly scarce, the accurate measurement of an individual's aptitude for learning languages is of primary concern to many teachers and educationists. Language aptitude assessment may play a significant role in selecting students to participate in language courses and in placing those participants at the appropriate level and targeting their training. For instance, if a teacher can group together students who have trouble with the existing methodology, an alternative teaching method can be found, reducing classroom stress and anxiety and enabling the teacher to individualize within a heterogenous group.

It has long been assumed in the language teaching field that some people have more of a language learning aptitude than others; they are able to learn languages quickly and without extreme expenditure of effort. One might say that they are able to benefit from good teaching and a well-designed curriculum. On the other hand, there are learners who do not profit from the teacher's efforts, or one might equally say that they are learners whose needs we do not yet know to meet, which is a more optimistic view of adult language learning capacity. In either case aptitude measurements need to be precise, valid and reliable. The aim of this article is to examine the role of aptitudes and aptitude processes as well as the two basic concepts of aptitude and achievement in instructional learning and aptitude testing.

2. Aptitudes and Aptitude Processes

One of the first exact definitions of "aptitude" was offered in Warren's (1934) *Dictionary of Psychology* where it was described as a condition or set of characteristics regarded as symptomatic of an individual's ability to acquire with training some specified knowledge or skill (in Carroll 1974:286). Some time later, in one of the first books on the theory of aptitude Bingham (1942) wrote:

> Aptitude is a condition symptomatic of a person's relative fitness, of which one essential aspect is his readiness to acquire proficiency (his potential ability) and another is his readiness to develop an interest in exercising that ability (*ibid.*).

In modern psychology the term "aptitudes" refers to a concept which is used to explain individual differences in complex, cognitive learning and thus to find ways of controlling, or erasing, or adapting to such differences for instructional improvement (Snow 1980:27). Carroll (1974:286) defines aptitude as a concept, or a construct, referring to

> some constellation of conditions, presumably residing in the individual, that predispose him to either success or failure (or some point along the continuum between the poles) in some future activity, in particular some activity requiring new learning.

Aptitudes are then psychological constructs about individual differences in learning or performance in specified situations. The situations of interest here are those in which human beings learn from instruction. To claim that a measure of some human performance characteristic represents aptitude here, one must show that the measure bears predictive relation to learning under instruction. Aptitude constructs are typically operationalised for this purpose as one or more score continua, the scores having been obtained systematically from some kind of test or task performance. The psychological differences displayed by an aptitude construct are assumed to be, or to have been, process based. When some aptitude measure shows relation to learning outcome, and particularly when this relation can be seen to vary under different experimental or instructional conditions, then there is the clear implication that that aptitude is in some way involved in learning processes, at least in that situation.

Having defined *aptitude*, the term "aptitude processes" also needs some attention. According to Snow (1980), *process* is usually taken to mean an active change or series of changes showing consistent direction in the ongoing psychological functioning of the organism. The changes

can refer to changes in a dynamic functional system as in some learning theories, or to changes in the information being processed by a static system as in some cognition theories, or to changes in both. Snow suggests that in research on instructional learning, we are dealing with the phenomena involving changes in both. He proposes a broad definition of aptitude processes that tries to cover all their aspects.

> Aptitude processes are those predictable, directed changes in the psychological functioning by which individual learners:
>   1. adapt or fail to adapt to the short-term and long-term performance demands of instructional conditions;
>   2. develop or fail to develop the expected organization of knowledge and skill through learning activities, and
>   3. differ from one another in the quality or quantity of learning outcome attained thereby (Snow 1980:29).

Aptitude process differences exist before and operate through, but are also produced by instruction to account for individual differences in learning outcome. In research on this complex network, one needs analysis and measurement of aptitude processes, learning activities, and instructional task components operating in relation to criterion performance requirements.

3. The Aptitude-Achievement Distinction

The concepts of aptitude and achievement are hardly new. In many textbooks of psychological and educational measurement one finds statements about this distinction. For example, an aptitude test is a predictor of future performance while an achievement test is an assessment of past learning, or aptitude tests tend to be measures of abilities that have been developed over a long period of time, while achievement tests are measures of learning accomplished over a short period of time. With a definition of aptitude as a set of conditions that predispose an individual to either success or failure, we may wonder according to what criteria success might be evaluated. Typically, it would be evaluated in terms of adequacy of performance relative to an ideal standard or relative to the performance of others attempting the same activity. But it might also be evaluated in terms of the individual's persistence in the activity, his interest in it, the satisfaction he derives from pursuing it, or the kinds of external rewards he receives from engaging in it.

In the present work we identify aptitude, after Carroll (1974), with the *present* state of the individual as symptomatic of *future* performance while achievement with the individual's degree of mastery of some specified performance at any given time. It should be pointed out that information on past and present achievement might be an indicant of present state (aptitude), and as such, a predictor of future achievement. Particularly when present achievement with respect to some learning task is essentially zero, even though other kinds of achievement (used as aptitude indicants) are non-zero, there should be no difficulty in distinguishing aptitude for a particular learning task from achievement on that learning task. If aptitude for a learning task is measured prior to an individual engaging in that task, and if achievement on the task is measured after a given amount of exposure to the learning task, the concepts of aptitude and achievement are operationally distinguishable. The validity of the aptitude measurement is judged in terms of the degree to which it predicts the final measure of achievement.

Carroll (1974) provides six conditions that would be "ideal" for making a distinction between aptitude as he defines it and achievement. He indicates that some of them can be relaxed. The only requirement for an aptitude measure at time *t* to be a valid predictor for a learning task is that its contribution to the prediction be independent of that of an achievement measure, B that is also given at *t*. The validity of an aptitude test could be investigated by calculating the correlation coefficient between the aptitude measure at time one and the achievement measure at time one and the achievement measure at time two while holding achievement at time one constant. If the correlation coefficient is significantly different from zero, the conclusion is that the aptitude test is valid. Thus, if we assume that we have an aptitude indicant, A, and that aptitude A would be a predictor of achievement B, the conditions are:

Condition (1) must hold: there is reliable true score variance in the aptitude measure at the outset of instruction.

Condition (2) is relaxed to permit reliable truescore variance in achievement at the outset of instruction.

Condition (3) is relaxed to permit a non-zero correlation between aptitude and achievement at the outset of instruction.

Condition (4) is relaxed to permit at least the mean of A to be significantly different from that of A.

Condition (5) holds: achievement increases from grade *i* to grade *f*.

Condition (6) holds: the correlation between A and B is non-zero.

(Carroll 1974:288)

Let us further consider Carroll's six "ideal" conditions. Condition (1) requires that the measure of aptitude be reliable. Condition (2) requires that there is no achievement at time one, from which it necessarily follows that the correlation of aptitude at time one with achievement at time one has expectation zero, which is condition (3). If Carroll's first three conditions are met, then the correlation of aptitude at time one and achievement at time two, while controlling achievement at time one, is non-zero, which is condition (6). Condition (4) specifies that, within errors of measurement, aptitude at time one is identical with aptitude at time two. The utility of aptitude for prediction does not seem to suffer if one allows it to profit from instruction. Condition (5) requires that between time one and time two individuals have achieved and their achievement is reliably measured at time two.

Finally, it should be pointed out that we must carefully distinguish between aptitude as a construct and indicants of aptitude. An aptitude test is only one indicant of aptitude. Other indicants of aptitude could include scores on achievement tests, data on prior achievements in activities similar to those for which we wish to predict success, and information derived from procedures for assessing personality, interest, attitude, physiological state, etc. For example, the LAB directly reflects this broad definition of aptitude, for it includes not only a series of tests of cognitive abilities, but also indicants of previous academic success and of interest in studying modern foreign languages.

4. What Do Aptitude Tests Measure?

One of the earliest discussions of the nature of aptitudes is to be found in Hull's *Aptitude Testing* (1928:27). He stated that "a psychological test is the measurement of some phase of a carefully chosen sample of an individual's behaviour." He further pointed out that

aptitude tests may be divided into (1) those which attempt to duplicate all in one test the essential activities of the occupation, and (2) those which are designed to isolate and measure separately the component trails supposed to constitute the determiners of success in the aptitude in question (*ibid.*, p. 28).

The subtests of contemporary, foreign language aptitude tests represent both of these types, except that no one test could be expected to duplicate all the essential activities of foreign language learning. Some of those subtests are clearly tests of learning ability and in this

sense they are samples of foreign language learning activities as they might occur in actual training courses (e.g. tests of phonetic script, or tests of rote memory ability).

As one looks through the accounts of aptitude test construction, a common feature can be discerned: to construct an aptitude battery for predicting success in a particular activity one must make an analysis of the components of the activity; what sensory and perceptual sensitivities, motor ordinations, learnings, dispositions, attitudes, etc., are prerequisite for success in the activity, or at least, if possessed, make success more likely? For example, we may assume that some of the components of successful musical performance include ability to discriminate musical pitches, intensities, rhythms, and timbres, ability to imagine and remember tone sequences, and so forth.

In its early phase, the research in foreign language aptitude was based to some extent on broad-scale empiricism. Psychologists were not immediately concerned with how people acquired certain abilities—what was important was the present capacity of the individual and its implications for future success. Soon, however, random experimentation in prediction studies was given up. Carroll (1962:94-95) writes:

The primary consideration in selecting and devising the tests of the initial trial batteries was to include a variety of test, each of which promised to measure some aspect of the complex of trails deemed requisite for success in the criterion performance. [..] In the case of each of these factors, it was hypothesized that the behaviours measured by the corresponding tests had certain elements in common with behaviours involved in foreign language learning. [...] Other tests were developed and included in the initial try-out battery because they were believed to measure certain specific abilities required in second language learning.

Obviously, there would be numerous differences between the behaviours observed in a student taking an aptitude test and the behaviours observable when he is actually learning a foreign language. Yet, Carroll seems to be right when he says that both in the test and in the learning situation there might be common elements such as an ability to hold in memory certain types of associations between sounds and meanings, to notice certain grammatical attributes of a sentence, or to identify and recognize certain sounds. Thus, the task chosen for the aptitude tests are largely those which are regarded, in Carroll's terms, as having "process structures" similar to, or even identical with, the process structures exemplified in actual learning tasks, even though the contents might be different. They are therefore measures of the individual's ability to perform the psychological functions embedded in the criterion learning

task, or in other words, the ability to perform the information processing behaviours characteristic of the criterion learning task.

The weak point of this approach and at the same time the major difficulty in aptitude testing seems to be the theoretical basis for assuming similarities between aptitude tasks and criterion tasks, which often relies on the empirical confirmation of one's intuitions by standard test validation procedures. An important aspect of this approach, however, is the assumption that there are stable individual differences in ability to perform specified information processing tasks, an assumption supported by the extensive literature.

In the light of second language acquisition findings one can say there is a need for a systematic research focusing on improving language aptitude measures and for new instrumentations that will assess language learning aptitude more accurately and more completely than those currently in use, which do not take into account new insights revealed by cognitive psychologists into the language learning process.

In order to rethink the whole notion of what constitutes an "aptitude" to learn foreign languages, researches need to examine variables such as learning strategies and individual learning styles. It seems that further study of the cognitive operations involved in second language learning could result in the construction of test items that would reflect those operations that actually take place in the process of learning a second language.

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Second Language Acquisition Research and Foreign Language Teaching: An Interface Position

Introduction

For the last two decades the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been used in one form or another by teachers worldwide. It has been popularized, interpreted and misunderstood in recent years. It has also attracted much of the bad press, partly due to myths which have been built around it, and partly because of the changing views of language teaching and learning. In the critical evaluation of the Communicative Approach Michael Swan (1985) said that:

> Along with its many virtues, the Communicative Approach unfortunately has most f the typical vices of an intellectual revolution: it over-generalizes valid but limited insights until they become virtually meaningless; it makes exaggerated claims for the power and novelty of its doctrines: it misrepresents the currents of thought it has replaced; it is often characterized by serious intellectual confusion; it is choked with jargon.

In the conclusion to his article Swan claims that the Communicative Approach "is not really in any sense a revolution. In retrospect, it is likely to be seen as little more than an interesting ripple on the surface of twentieth-century teaching" (*ibid.*).

Much of the criticism of the CLT concerned the notions such as "communication" and "communicative competence," which have been so abused that they have lost all precise meaning and almost became a buzzwords within applied linguistics (cf. Canale 1983; Taylor 1988). O'Neill (1991), for example, asks what teachers are supposed to do when

the "communication" going on in the classroom can be called "communication" only if we accept the shallowest definition of the word (mouths moving, words are coming out, even if all the lights inside the students' minds have been turned off). Similarly, the term "communicative" has often been associated with selected group activities in which oral communication is practised ("communicative" equals group work, "communicative" equals oral practice, "communicative" equals getting rid of the teacher as the major focus in the classroom).

Such criticism has provoked us to take a closer look at the contemporary teaching methods, and the CLT in particular. We do not intend, however, to examine its linguistic background or methodology in order to confirm or reject the validity of the criticism. Instead, we would like to look at language teaching from the viewpoint of the learner, rather than the teacher, and draw the reader's attention to some aspects of learning a second language (L2) that should be, in our view, taken into consideration in any critical evaluation of language teaching.

We realize the fact that it is not easy to arrive at firm conclusions concerning the effectiveness of a foreign language teaching method on the basis of the second language acquisition (SLA) research. Teaching is not the same as learning, and in devising a teaching programme we must not only take into consideration how learners learn, but also consider non-learner factors. Brumfit (1984), for example, points out that teachers should work from a syllabus which they find logically acceptable rather than follow a fixed route along which foreign language learners are supposed to progress, and Hughes (1983) makes it quite clear by saying that "it is not at all certain at the present time there are any clear implications for language teaching to be drawn from the study of second language learning." On the other hand, most researchers and teachers would rather agree with the widely held view that success in foreign language teaching is by no means certain unless account is taken of the structural properties of SLA.

Before we discuss some aspects of second language acquisition in relation to language teaching we must consider a number of components of this process. These are: (1) the linguistic input, (2) situational factors, (3) learner factors, (4) learner processes, and (5) L2 output (Ellis 1986). Figure 1 shows the interrelationship between the components.
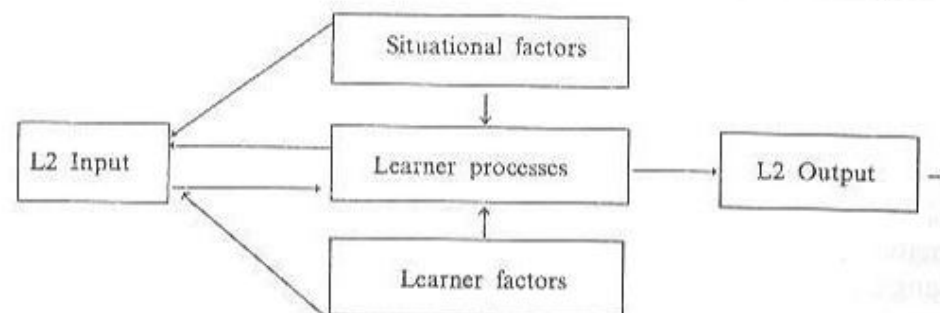
Figure 1. A framework for examining the components of SLA (after Ellis 1986).

In the next part of this article we shall concentrate on the two components of the SLA process: (1) the role of input (and partly interactions in L2 learning, and (2) the role of affective learner factors in relation to L2 input and learner processes.

The Role of Input in Learning a Second Language

It is evident that language learning can take place only when learner has access to some L2 data available as input. It is the language that is addressed to the learner by the teacher, textbook writer, another L2 learner, or just any native or non-native user of the language. It may be spoken or written, it may be in the form of exposure to natural settings or formal instruction. A real issue in any theory of second language learning is what role the input plays.

There are three different views regarding the role of input in language development: (1) behaviourist, (2) nativist, and (3) interactionist (Ellis 1986). The behaviourist view emphasizes the importance of the linguistic environment. In this model of learning, input comprises the language made available to the learner in the form of stimuli as well as that which occurs as feedback. The learner's interlocutor produces specific forms and patterns which are internalized by imitating them. Learning a second language consists of building up chains of stimulus-response links which are controlled and shaped by reinforcement. Behaviourist theories emphasize the need to model the stimuli by grading the input into a series of steps according to the level of difficulty for the learner.

The nativist view, unlike the behaviourist view, minimizes the role of the input and explains language development mainly in terms of learner's internal processing. Chomsky (1965) claimed that the imperfect, or "degenerate" input in the first language acquisition made it unlikely that any child could successfully internalize the system of rules if he worked on the input alone. It was pointed out that there was no match between the kind of language to be observed in the input and the language that children (and L2 learners) produced. The nativist view precludes, then, the possibility that the learner's output could be explained in terms of the characteristics of the input. First and second language acquisition is explained in terms of mental processes which are responsible for working on the input and converting it into a form that the learner could store and handle for production. This view is represented in the form of a model: "primary linguistic data" (i.e. input) → "language acquisition device" containing "Universal Grammar"→ grammar (i.e. the system of rules of a particular language code; Chomsky 1965). In this model the role of the linguistic environment is played down, and input serves merely as a trigger to activate language acquisition device.

The interactionist view sees language development as the result both of input factors and of innate mechanisms. Language learning is the result of an interaction between the learner's mental abilities and the linguistic environment. The quality of the input affects and is affected by the nature of the internal mechanisms. Similarly, the learner's processing mechanisms both determine and are determined by the characteristics of the input. Language acquisition derives from the joint efforts of the learner and his interlocutor participating in the actual verbal interactions.

The role of input in the process of second language acquisition, then, regardless of the premises upon which a theory of SLA rests, remains one of the most crucial issues in current research. It may facilitate understanding the nature of language learning and, we may think, improve language teaching by answering the question about what constitutes an optimal input. The controversy in language teaching, however, is whether input should be selected and graded according to formal and logical criteria suggested by teacher or linguists (see e.g. Brumfit 1984) or whether it should be just "comprehensible," providing learner with language they understand, and that is little beyond the current level of their competence, i.e. the i+1 level (Krashen 1981). It

seems now that mere exposure to the L2 is not sufficient, and learners need some L2 data that are specially suited to the stage development they are at (Long 1983).

We would also think that language teaching should aim at matching the learning process with the type of instruction, which must consider the specific goals of the learner and attempt to provide the appropriate form of knowledge to achieve those goals (see e.g. Bialystok 1982). If the goal is to participate in natural conversation, the learner will need to develop his L2 knowledge that is automatic and unanalyzed. This can be achieved by means of language teaching methodology that relies on communication in the classroom (e.g. role-play, simulations, problem solving tasks). If, on the other hand, the learner's goal is to participate in discourse that requires conscious planning, he will need to develop L2 knowledge that is automatic and analyzed, which can be best accomplished by formal teaching that focuses on the linguistic code. The forms of contemporary language teaching methods, and the Communicative Approach in particular, seem to be more and more diversified and can include, among other things, cognitive teaching of grammar, rather than being limited to group activities in which oral communication is practised. They also appear to pay more attention to situational factors and individual learner factors. In the next part of the article we will concentrate on how these factors contribute to obtaining and processing L2 input.

Learner Factors in Foreign Language Learning

The starting point for our discussion on some of the learner factors in a second language learning is an interesting study of classroom participation and second language proficiency by Ely (1986). It is hypothesized that classroom participation influences proficiency of such affective factors as sociability (measured, for example, in terms of extrovertism-introvertism continuum), language class discomfort (indicated by the level of anxiety) or different communication strategies (e.g. risk-taking versus risk-avoiding). So at one level classroom participation is a dependent variable, predicted by other variables in turn, while at another level it is an independent variable, hypothesized to be predictive of proficiency.
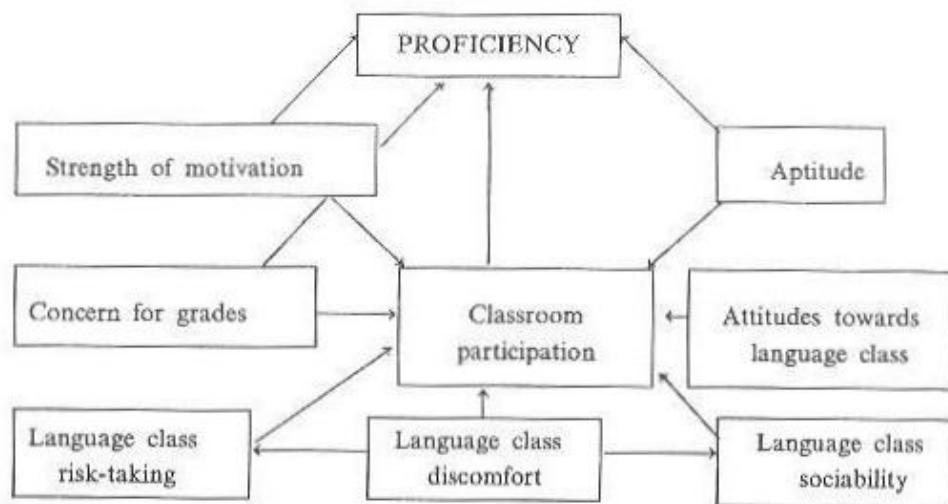
Figure 2. The model of proficiency development (after Ely 1986)

In the final part of the article we shall discuss the role of risk-taking, extroversion/introversion and anxiety in classroom learning.

Risk-taking has been seen as generally facilitating language learning. First of all, in situations containing social interactions it has been seen as likely to increase opportunities to hear a foreign language (and obtain input), and speak a language (and produce output engaging in functional practice). This view of risk-taking relates nicely to the Good Language Learner research (cf. Naiman et al. 1978). Ely (1986) assessed classroom risk-taking and classroom participation examining such components as (1) a lack of hesitancy about a new language form, (2) a willingness to use complex linguistic elements, (3) a tolerance of possible incorrectness in using the language, (4) an inclination to rehearse a new element silently before using it aloud. Ely reports two important results. There was a moderate correlation between risk-taking and classroom participation (0.40); there was a similar correlation between classroom participation and proficiency.

The second area where it might be important is in the actual language that is used. If development involves the growth of a structured linguistic system, and this can only proceed through hypothesis formation and hypothesis testing (cf. Chomsky 1966), then the successful learner is more likely to be the one who takes his existing language system "to the limit," and tries out risky hypotheses where feedback will be most revealing. One imagines adventurous learners being more likely to change (progressing along the interlanguage continuum), and also

more resistant to fossilization. From this point of view the CLT, for example, provides good opportunities to obtain and process input, encouraging hypothesis formation and testing.

There are, however, problems when we try to relate general psychological constructs to the field of second language learning. First of all, we are not sure as to how stable a risk-taking propensity is. It is possible that situational factors may influence the learner's behaviour to a large extent. We need to know how people vary in their social risk-taking from situation to situation. Is the shy learner in one situation likely to be quite adventurous in another? Do people vary from day to day, from mood to mood in terms of hypothesis formation and hypothesis testing? Perhaps other personality variables such as extroversion/introversion or inhibition are the dominant factors (cf. Beebe 1983). It is hypothesized that defensiveness associated with inhibition discourages risk-taking necessary for progress in a L2. It also induces egocentrism, which leads to increased self-consciousness and risk-avoiding. Krashen (1981) explains this in terms of the effects of age and the onset of Formal Operations. Thus adult learners tend to obtain less input and make less effective use of it (turn it into intake) than younger learners.

Another interesting aspect of Ely's research concerns the extroversion-introversion continuum. Many investigators (e.g. Naiman et al. 1978; McDonaugh 1981) have suggested that more sociable learners will be more inclined to talk, join groups, participate in class, volunteer and engage in practice activities, and finally to maximize language use opportunities outside the classroom by using language for communication. Thus extroverts would benefit both inside and outside classroom by having the appropriate personality trait for language learning. Extroverts are said to be likely to maximize contact and quantity of input received (cf. Krashen 1981). They are also more likely to maximize interaction, which is crucial in negotiating meaning (Long 1985) and maximize language output, which is important as the process of using the language is relevant for its development (Swain 1985).

However, empirical research does not always confirm these assumptions. On the one hand, Rossier (1976) found a positive relationship between extroversion and oral fluency, on the other hand Swain and Burnaby (1976) failed to find any positive relationship between personality variables and achievement. It seems that we also need to take into account contextual factors, such as age. Wankowski (1973), for example, found that below puberty extroversion tends to have a positive

relationship with achievement, whereas after puberty introverts are more successful. He explains the change by the nature of the learning task involved. Prior to puberty classes are often organized on a group basis. In case of older students individual work is more important. As a result, the "achieving personality" may change, depending on the type of instruction and the learning environment. This is quite relevant for language teaching. If extroversion is more concerned with group activities, especially where the Communicative Approach is used, we should expect, therefore, that language learning and teaching should show a more effect for extroversion. However, as we have argued before, there are aspects of language learning that go beyond the "learning-by-doing" principle, and it is now difficult to defend the view that communicative teaching methods should just make the students talk to each other because L2 learning grows out of communication (cf. Cook 1991).

The analytic capacities from the aptitude studies as well as learner strategies studies support the claim that even in naturalistic environments we do not learn a language exclusively by talking. There are such aspects of language as self-awareness on the part of the learner, planning and monitoring, which would seem to relate more easily to the introvert. Thus, we may need to accept that extroversion and introversion each have positive features, and it is better for a language learner to have rather variable personality qualities, so that he can adapt effective to meet different learning tasks, language teaching methods that rely activities favouring just one, extreme type of learner personality may work against some aspects of target-language development.

A problem with the interpretation of anxiety, as well as with other personality traits, is that different people handle it in different ways. Even if we assume that anxiety causes stress and language class discomfort, and that all learners will then do things to reduce stress, there is no guarantee that they will do it in desirable ways. Rather than engage in activities which are a source of worry, some students may avoid situations causing stress or even give up language learning. Bailey (1983) in her analysis of competitiveness in different language learners distinguishes the two types of anxiety: debilitating and facilitating. In the case of the former, learners may temporarily or permanently avoid contacts with the source of perceived failure, and, as a result, L2 learning is impaired or abandoned. In the case of the latter, learners increase their efforts to compare more favourably with other learners, they become more competitive, and, as a result, L2 is enhanced.

Another difficulty in analyzing anxiety relates to a distinctions between a general anxiety trait, which affects anxiety in all domains, and anxiety states which result from exposure to specific situations. More recently, investigators have tended to use measures of anxiety which are situation-specific, with particular reference to the foreign language class. Bailey (1983) enumerates possible sources of anxiety: (1) comparison of oneself with other students, (2) comparison with oneself, and one's own personal standards and goals, (3) one's relationship with the teacher, (4) tests. She also mentions competitiveness as a factor increasing the influence of any of the above factors, and one's feelings of solidarity and friendship with one's classmates as a factor reducing anxiety.

The result of anxiety studies suggests that there is a moderate relationship between anxiety and learning. Spielberg (1962) reports a tendency for anxiety to be facilitating in high-ability students, but for low-ability and average-ability students anxiety was associated with poor performance (the possibility that anxiety may be partly the result of low achievement). Similarly, Scorel (1978) claims that anxiety has different effects at different stages of learning, being more facilitating at higher levels, but debilitating at more beginning stages (higher-proficiency learners have a wider range of behaviours which enable them to cope with difficult situations more flexibly). Finally, in some theories of SLA affective factors such as anxiety or self-evaluation are considered to play an extremely important role in obtaining L2 Input (see e.g. Krashen's 1981 Monitor Model and the notion of the Affective Filter proposed by Dulay and Burt 1977).

Conclusions

The purpose of this article was to show the relationship between language learning and language teaching. Secondly, we suggest that in planning and evaluating language teaching activities we should take into consideration factors related to the learner and the components of the process of SLA. As language teachers do not teach in a psychological or social vacuum and psychologists do not carry out their experiments in sterile laboratories, the real progress in understanding ways in which people learn languages and improving teaching methodology can be achieved through a joint effort of the two sides. SLA research, we believe, has a lot to offer the language teacher, and researchers can learn a lot from a language class. In any case, teaching and learning are just the two sides of the same coin.

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Reviews

Peter Skehan: **Individual Differences in Second-Language Learning**. London: Edward Arnold, 1989, pp. 168. Second Language Acquisition Series.

Understanding the ways in which learners differ from one another is a fundamental concern to those involved in second language acquisition (SLA), either as researchers or teachers, yet the main thrust of the SLA research has been towards establishing how learners are similar, and what processes of learning are universal. Studies of universal grammar, error types, or of acquisitional sequences are good examples of this. Although the contrast between the study of common processes and the study of individual differences (IDs) is well established in other disciplines, such as psychology, this is not the case in second language learning. In his book, *Individual differences in second-language learning*, Peter Skehan of the Institute of Education, University of London, tries to set out the major areas in which language learners differ, covering areas such as language aptitude, motivation, personality, cognitive style and learner strategies as well as interactions between learner characteristics and types of instruction. He also attempts to integrate the empirical research with theories of SLA and considers the extent to which theorizing can assist in accounting for language learning success or failure. He focuses on second language learning in classroom settings and offers a rich overview of the research including empirical findings as well as methodologies.

The book consists of eight chapters. In Chapter 1 Skehan briefly describes a few models of second language learning, including Krashen's Monitor Model, the "Good Language Learner" model proposed by Naiman, Frohlich, Todesco and Stern, and Carroll's model of school learning. He examines different models in terms of the contrast between hierarchical and concatenated approaches to theory construction, concluding that the concatenated approach is more appropriate for IDs research because of the need to try to quantify the influence of many variables that may affect language learning success. Consequently, he

argues that the research-then-theory approach would guarantee a more objective way of investigating this field, which is, in our view, a rather controversial position.

Chapter 2 sets the methodological backgroud for the following chapters by providing the reader with an introduction to bivariate and multivariate statistics.

In Chapters 3, 4, and 6, Skehan tries to identify a set of dimensions along which individual differences in language learning can be measured. He focuses on psychological variables such as aptitude, motivation, attitude, intelligence, cognitive style, personality, and affect. On the basis of his careful review of previous research, he demonstrates that none of these main variables is sufficient for predicting learner success or failure, as measured through proficiency tests. This leads to the main thrust of his thesis, expressed in Chapter 7, the case for studying interactions between the ID variables and other sets of variables such as syllabus, teaching materials, various aspects of teacher–student relationship, and other classroom factors. Skehan is here concerned with the effects of a particular type of instruction (explicitness of instruction, feedback provision) on particular types of learners (high versus low aptitude or motivation). He identifies individualized instruction and the degree of control a learner can exert over the rate of learning as factors that seem to be associated with successful learning.

In Chapter 5 Skehan presents an overview of research on social and cognitive strategies in second language learning and their relationship to other learner factors.

The final chapter (8) is mainly devoted to theoretical considerations. It also offers a number of interesting suggestions for further research. In the remaining part of the review we shall discuss some of those suggestions and make a few critical reflections in relation to Skehan's book.

As to the first group of suggestions, Skehan provides the reader with a perspective on data collection procedures, types of data, types of learners, and procedures of analysis employed by different scholars. He claims that there is the need for better research designs, the need for replication, the need for more longitudinal studies, and the need for more interaction studies. Ideally, he says, one would like a "theory of situations" to help one predict how different ID traits vary in their influence. But from the range of research which has been completed, we are able to see some systematicity in variation, and develop some idea of the variables which need to be controlled. According to Skehan they

include: (1) the nature of the criterion measure; especially communicative versus language-like performance, (2) the age of the learners; especially young children versus adolescents and adults, (3) the setting, foreign language versus naturalistic, (4) data sources on ID variables; especially test and questionnaire based versus observational and self-report, and (5) language status relationships; majority versus minority, official versus non-official, unicultural versus multicultural. Of course, not all these factors are important for all ID variables, however, they need to be taken into account. The basic issue, as Skehan claims, is that of external validity, i.e. how generalizable are the results of a particular study.

The second group of suggestions concerns some generalizations from individual difference studies.

1. Some people are endowed with better cognitive/linguistic abilities for language learning than others. This generalization is simply that people vary in their language aptitude, and that such variation has considerable significance for language learning success. Aptitude is multi-componential, i.e. people can have strengths and weaknesses. This implies that two people with the same overall aptitude may have different component abilities. The pedagogic implication is that instructional efficiency could be improved by taking these strengths and weaknesses into account, and designing instruction accordingly.

2. Learning orientations influence motivational patterns, and therefore language learning success. One should not study motivation in isolation from other aspects of the learning situation, and one needs to take into account the motivating agents working on the learner (e.g. type of instruction, materials, teacher, examinations, etc.) to get a full picture within which motivational orientation may play a part.

3. Cognitive style and personality variables account for very little of the variance in language achievement tests. The evidence for cognitive style suggests that there is a weak relationship between field dependence and language learning success. There is also a problem of deciding how separate cognitive style is different from related learner characteristics, e.g. language aptitude and intelligence. With personality, significant results are hard to obtain. There are suggestions, for example, that both extroversion and introversion have positive and negative features, and that simple relationship cannot be found.

4. Language learners use a variety of strategies. The most useful classification of strategies at present is between metacognitive/cognitive and social strategies. One of the main motives for the study of strategies

is the hope that they are causative and that they can be trained. Discovering what the most effective strategies are could allow them to be taught to language learners, enabling them to progress more quickly.

Finally, we would like to make two critical reflections. The first one, as we have said earlier, concerns the distinction between the research-then-theory versus theory-then-research approaches. We think that both of them can be useful in SLA research as theory and research are not mutually exclusive concepts. The other reflection refers to constructs such as "ability," "aptitude," "capacity," and "competence." They are used frequently, but the reader may feel confused and a bit ignorant of what they mean and how they relate to each other.

In summary, this book is important reading for students and researchers in the SLA field. By examining IDs in detail and from various angles, it allows for a new look at the role of such differences in second language learning. An enhanced understanding of the forms of individual variation, and the forms that govern it could lead to an improved pedagogy adapted more efficiently to the individual learner.

Reviewed by Lech Zabor

The Oxford University Press Resource Books For Teachers Series

According to OUP catalogue for 1993, the resource Books for Teachers series consists of the following books: *Class Readers, Project Work, Self Access, Classroom Dynamics, Music & Song, Grammar Dictation, CALL, Vocabulary, Literature, Newspapers, Short Activities, Learner-based Teaching, Video, Translation, Conversation, Writing, Role Play, Drama, Cultural Awareness* and *Young Learners*. This is an impressive list, which covers a wide range of aspects and techniques of language teaching. What is more, further books from this series are still being published.

Before, however, having a closer look at its particular components, let us say a few words about the series in general. Although every one of these books is an autonomous whole, they all share the same layout and organization, and are intended to be used in the same way.

In most cases the table of contents contains information about the activity description/type, level, topic, language focus, approximate time, extra preparation or materials needed, which means that the teacher can find the activity he needs virtually at a glance. The activities are, in many cases, ready for immediate use — there are photocopiable sections, clues how to manage the activity most effectively, suggestions of warm-up and follow-up exercises. The books are generally intended to be sources of ideas and materials to supplement language courses of various types and levels. They can be also "life-savers" in situations where a teacher has to think quickly of something to do during a lesson e.g. when substituting for an absent colleague.

One can also treat the series in a more systematic way, e.g. as the main basis of a more specific course, like writing or conversation classes. Another possibility is using Resource Books to study, with the help of the theoretical component of the book, one aspect or technique of language teaching, like Computer Aided Language Learning (CALL), or using classroom readers.

A good example of this is *CALL* by David Hardistry and Scott Windeatt. The introduction starts with information about what a teacher has to know about computers in general: basic computer operating skills (to her relief the teacher learns that she needs only four), how to choose the most suitable type of computer, how many machines are needed (but also how to solve some of the problems posed by an insufficient number of machines), and how to organize the computer room. Then the teacher can learn something about CALL methodology, e.g. that a computer should not be used in a vacuum, but should be integrated with the whole course and in a CALL lesson computer activities should be combined with other techniques. The book gives also basic information about types and examples of software most often used for CALL (with special emphasis on word-processing) and about the most popular CALL activity and exercise types. There is also an extensive bibliography and a list of organizations that might be contacted for help. Generally speaking, the book contains everything a teacher has to know to start using computers in the language classroom. Moreover, all this is very clear and easy to understand, as the authors managed to avoid using specialized computer jargon.

Another interesting example of the series is *Translation* by Alan Duff, who has the courage to write a book about a technique which has recently been very unpopular with "progressive" language teachers, namely using translation as a language learning activity. Duff defends translation by pointing out, for example, that "translation helps us to understand better the influence of the one language on the other, and to correct errors of habit that creep in unnoticed." Moreover, translation is a real life activity and something that students will certainly have to use, e.g. in their work. According to Duff "Translation also develops accuracy, clarity, and flexibility. It trains the learner to search (flexibly) for the most appropriate words (accuracy, and also tuning the learners to fine differences between 'similar' words) to convey what is meant (clarity)." Another thing that the author points out is that by selecting for translation material which illustrates particular aspects of language and structure (e.g. prepositions, articles, the passive, but also context and register, word order and reference, concepts and notions or elements of cultural contrast) we make it an extremely versatile teaching activity.

Perhaps what is the most impressive about this book is how it makes translation a truly communicative exercise type. This is achieved, first of all, by the choice of material—Duff uses authentic materials

only. Text types include: instructions on medicine bottles, acknowledgements from books, tourist brochures, advertisements, reviews, sports sections from newspapers, short stories, blurbs, political articles, food recipes, notes on a record sleeve, fragments of dictionary entries, and many others; so the range of language for study is just incredible.

An important point is the way the activities are managed in class — Duff suggests that they should be mostly done in groups or pairs and involve warm-up activities and discussion. In many cases he recommends just oral translation combined with discussion, instead of written translation, which involves little interaction between students, and is time-consuming.

Another communicative aspect of the book is that it puts a lot of emphasis on the register of the texts. A considerable part of the exercises is devoted to sensitizing the learners to how important a part in what we say and write register plays.

Generally speaking, the greatest merit of the book is that it takes a very old and traditional technique and then demonstrates how it can be used innovatively. Maybe this could inspire the reader to revaluate a few other "old fashioned" techniques.

Another part of the series, *Learner-based Teaching* by Coollin Campbell and Hanna Kryszewska is especially interesting for Polish teachers. This is so because it is particularly useful for what may be called "teaching English with limited resources"—a situation that a lot of teachers in our country still complain about. For most of the activities from this book you do not need books, xerox machines, or any technical equipment. It is enough to have a piece of paper and a blackboard.

The most important aspect of the activities is that the main resource they are based on are the learners themselves, their knowledge, opinions, and experience. This is particularly suitable for adult learners, who are often skilled professionals with a lot to share with other students and the teacher. By allowing them to do this, we make the lesson more motivating and relevant for the learners needs. I have tried this approach with my students and was surprised with the number of interesting things we learned from each other. The learners also found it much easier to talk about topics they are familiar with. Sometimes students have difficulties speaking not because they have problems with their English, but because they know little about or are not interested in the subject matter.

Generally speaking, the advantages of Resource Books for Teachers are that they cover a wide range of topics, are extremely easy and quick to use, a source of new ideas and inspiration, as well as excellent material for studying issues and techniques in language teaching. I would recommend them to all of my colleagues, as they can really make the teachers' life easier.

Reviewed by Anna Lewoc

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