

# NEWSLETTER

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Massachusetts Association Of Teachers Of English To Speakers Of Other Languages  
WINTER, 1984

## Linguistic Theory and Second Language Acquisition Research

by Suzanne Flynn

Recent developments in the linguistic study of natural languages (e.g., Chomsky, 1981; 1982; Hale, 1982; Comrie, 1981) as well as significant advances made in the study of L1 acquisition (e.g., Lust, 1983; Roesper 1981) have led to an explosive increase in the amount of research conducted in the field of L2 acquisition. The large body of L2 data that has resulted constitutes a complex corpus, the major parameters of which we are just beginning to understand (Rutherford, 1983; Felix, 1982).

From this large corpus of data, researchers have empirically established certain facts that all of us as educators and researchers already intuitively know. Some researchers (working within a Creative Constructive (CC) framework, see review in Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982) have established that L2 acquisition resembles L1 acquisition in that patterns of development in both cases are determined by the properties of the target language to be learned. Thus, for example, simple one predicate clauses are acquired before complex two predicate clausal structures by both L1 learners and adult L2 learners regardless of their L1 backgrounds. Other researchers (working within a Contrastive Analysis (CA) framework, see review in James, 1981) have established that L2 acquisition differs from L1 acquisition in that patterns of L2 acquisition are determined by the learner's experience with a previously known language, an impossible effect in L1 acquisition. Thus, for example, we know that Chinese speakers have significantly more difficulty with the English article system than Spanish speakers learning English. Although some recent attempts have been made to integrate these findings (e.g., Eckman, 1981; Zobel, 1982; Liceras, 1983), no principled theoretical framework has been established that can adequately deal with the range of acquisition factors for L2 acquisition emerging from these two frequently opposed theoretical perspectives. If we are to move beyond a simple descriptive level in our understanding of L2 acquisition, we need to construct a theory of L2 acquisition that both informs us *a priori* where problems will arise in acquisition, and also explains the nature of those problems. Such a theory should also be comprehensive enough to account for the majority of the L2 phenomena.

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Dr. Carlos Yorrio

Keynote Speaker

*MATSOL Spring  
Conference*

*Bunker Hill Community  
College*

*April 6-7*

## Tone Deaf

by Arthur Holmberg

Next to prepositions, helping students master tone is, perhaps, the most irksome task to befall us. Native speakers as well as advanced students of English as a Second Language need to be sensitized as to how words on a page capture the sound of the human voice. Unless students learn to "hear" written tone, they are doomed to remain clumsy readers and haphazard writers. Tone is not surface ornamentation: It is a crucial aspect of meaning. Anyone unable to manipulate tone writes and reads at his own peril.

Before attacking the problem of tone, it helps first to sensitize students to nuance and connotation—the emotional punch of a word. The best way I have found is working with synonyms, first in pairs of easily distinguishable differences (unintentional/inadvertent), later of more subtle gradations (proud, haughty, arrogant, supercilious, snooty). Then, I move on to longer series of synonyms such as overweight, fat, obese, well-fed, plump, portly, stout, corpulent, fleshy, flabby, endomorphic, chubby, stocky, big, husky, bulky, burly, chunky, dumpy, big-boned, large-framed, heavy, pudgy, of ample girth, roly-poly, tub of lard, fatso. How does the writer's attitude change toward the object described depending on the word selected? Level of diction and the relationship between writer and audience naturally enter into the discussion.

Next, I move on to poetry, D. H. Lawrence's "We've made a great mess of love/since we made an ideal of it," for example. I write the first two lines on the board but omit one crucial word. In place of "mess," I leave a space, explaining to the students as precisely as possible what Lawrence meant. Then, I give them a list of possible words (predicament, plight, perplexity, dilemma, confusion, chaos, problem, muddle, fuss, jam, mess, pickle, botch, stew, snafu, etc.), and ask them to fill in the blank.

Finally, we analyze why "mess" and no other possible word communicates Lawrence's meaning.

After having helped students understand how the choice and arrangement of words create tone and therefore meaning, they are ready to engage in a controlled experiment. I take a series of poems which deal with the same topic: falling in and out of love. Thomas Hardy's "The Voice," T. S. Eliot's "La Figlia che piange," Dorothy Parker's "The Red Dress," and Michael Drayton's "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part," all deal with the failure of love, and yet each author's response to the trauma is a study in contrasts. Is the writer sad, happy, angry, bitter, mocking? The sounds of the words are the key. Make sure students support all their observations with specific reference to the words themselves.

Not infrequently, this exercise leads into a cross-cultural free-for-all. The talk is non-stop.

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**MASSACHUSETTS  
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Mary Christie

MATSOL Newsletter

25-1/2 Grant Street

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Articles should be typed, double-spaced, set to 40 characters.

Next deadline: April 15, 1984.

**Letter From The President**

by Paul Krueger

From my discussions with leaders of other TESOL affiliates, I believe that MATSOL is one of the most outstanding and exciting units within the larger organization. We have excellent teachers here in Massachusetts engaged in a wide variety of innovative projects. As president of MATSOL for the last year, and as a member of the Board for two years before that, it has been my privilege to come to know many MATSOL members and learn a great deal from fellow teachers about their on-going work.

The basic reason for an organization like MATSOL is to provide means to facilitate the exchange of information and the sharing of experiences with other members of the profession. The conferences we have had and the newsletter stand as testimony to our commitment to that goal. Those conferences and newsletters have been successful because

MATSOL members have been willing to give their time to organize meetings, edit newsletters, stuff envelopes and do all the endless small jobs that are demanded by a volunteer organization. I want to express my appreciation to all the board members for their effort.

However, the board just provides the structure; the real test of our success is the content of what we produce. For that I want to express my deepest gratitude to the many hard-working teachers who have taken the time to develop a presentation, finish a paper, or write an article for the newsletter. I think the reputation of our affiliate outside of the area shows the high level of our professionalism. I want to thank you for the opportunity to share in your interests and enthusiasms.

**Notes From the Board**

Full-time students can now take advantage of a special student membership rate of \$5.00. Apply to: Claire Smith, MATSOL Treasurer, 16 Dewey Road, Lexington, MA.

MATSOL funds are still available for special ESL projects. Consult the Fall *MATSOL Newsletter* for proposal guidelines.

**Congratulations to . . .**

Kim Gerrould and Lisa Pred on the reprinting of their article, "Language Instruction in Cuba," in the *TESOL Newsletter*.

Sandra Francour on beginning her own business, Personal Color Analysis, and Jeff DiIuglio on his, Language Solutions.

Gloria Mason on entering a doctoral program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

**Subway Linguistics. . .**

On a Columbus Circle subway platform yesterday, a man stepped up to the door of a car and asked a passenger, "D train?" "C," the passenger replied.

The man got in.

"No, no," said the passenger. "I said 'C,' not 'si.'"

The man stepped back out.

Reprinted from *The N.Y. Times*.

Photo credit for the picture of Michael Caine in the Fall *MATSOL Newsletter*: Curtis Rindlaub.

**Pluralistics**

We'll begin with a box and the plural is boxes,

But the plural of ox should be oxen not oxes.

Then one fowl is a goose but two are called geese,

Yet the plural of mouse should never be meese.

You may find a lone mouse or a whole set of mice.

But the plural of house is houses not hice.

If the plural of man is always called men,

Shouldn't the plural of pan be called pen?

If I speak of a foot and you show me your feet,

And I give you a boot would a pair be called beet?

If one is a tooth and whole set are teeth,

Why should not the plural of booth be called beeth?

Then one may be that and three would be those,

Yet hat in the plural wouldn't be hose. And the plural of cat is cats and not cose.

We speak of a brother and also of brethren,

But though we say Mother we never say Methren,

Then the masculine pronouns are he, his, and him,

But imagine the feminine, she, shis, and shim.

So English I fancy, you all will agree, Is the funniest language you ever did see.

*Anonymous*

## The Teaching of English in Peru

by Selma Myers and Joe Attea

I have just returned from a 5 month Fulbright Lectureship in Peru, consulting and setting up seminars for ESL program administrators and teachers of English. While there, I had the opportunity of working not only in the capital city, Lima, but in five outlying cities. I lectured and gave workshops at Binational Centers, and to supervisors of English instruction in the public school system and in private English schools. At the social level, conversation flowed freely between English and Spanish and though very few of the educators were native English speakers, a number of them had visited and studied in the U.S. through Fulbright or American Field Service.

Peru is the third largest country in South America. It has a 1,400 mile coast line on the Pacific Ocean, but in fact there are three distinct geographical regions, the coast, the Andes mountains and the jungle. (I can only speak for the coastal and mountain cities.) Peru's history spans from pre-Incan civilization to the twelfth century Incans to the arrival of the Spaniards in the sixteenth century, bringing new culture and new language. Even now over 50% of the people speak an ancient Indian language, Quetchwa. Though in a city such as Lima, Spanish is the normal language, in many smaller cities you hear a combination of both Quetchwa and Spanish, while in the villages you will often hear only Quetchwa.

In this light it is interesting to note that at present there is an intense desire by Peruvians to learn English. Though there is still a strong Spanish influence, as well as a continuing attachment to Spain, the English language is nonetheless gaining in popularity. English is taught in all public secondary schools, and even at only a few hours a week, it is a required subject.

So why such importance placed on a language not used in government or rarely spoken to any degree within the country? Preparation for study in the USA is certainly one of the primary reasons and is indeed a strong motivating force. Other factors are not unlike those seen in comparable developing countries. University students need English for technical texts; secretaries hoping to be bilingual study English for their career advancement; the tourist industry requires people competent in English; English translators are needed to accommodate people who visit Peru for conferences or business; public officials need English to communicate with foreigners in the course of their work; and one will always find those who study English for the mere pleasure of it and the hope of advancing understanding between diverse cultures.

In the public schools, the required two or three hours are often taught without any plan and the curriculum may be developed in a

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## ESL Students in a Non-ESL Program

by Patricia Pruitt

My purpose in this article is twofold. First, I'd like to describe what I believe is an untenable situation for foreign students in two-year schools where no ESL program exists; and second, to offer some ideas for serving the non-native speaker in a non-ESL program. Hopefully this may elicit further suggestions from others with more experience with this situation.

As an instructor at one of the many two-year schools whose aim is to make their students marketable in various job areas, each semester I encounter in my English and Literature classes from 5 to 12 students from other countries, most prominently the Latin American nations and Haiti. Their ability to speak English varies from the most elementary greetings to a street fluency or survival level of English. Inevitably writing in English is a fearful undertaking which they are most hesitant to do. My school seems particularly remiss in its treatment of this group. Its attitude has changed over the years from one of "At-least-they-can-pay-the-tuition", to a more suspicious "We're-not-in-the-business-of-handing-out-greencards-to-foreigners." Neither position has lent itself to any ESL development to meet the enormous second-language needs of this group of students.

As a result, every semester there they sit, comprising one-fifth of a class of thirty. The instructor is then faced with trying to provide two classes in one or watching them become more discouraged as the semester goes on. While trying to avoid the latter, I have used several teaching strategies in composition and in literature.

In composition classes, which these days are divided between intensive reviews of grammar and short essay writing, I provide second-language students with supplementary exercises to work, for example, on tense formation and agreement. While doing in-class exercises I try to pair them up with a native student who can do some unofficial tutoring. In correcting their writing I concentrate on only one or two grammatical areas at a time and try to monitor their improvement from assignment to assignment. I try to direct reading comprehension questions on in-class reading to my foreign students and to expand vocabulary building exercises to include idioms and terms they are not likely to know. (This kind of work is also needed by my native speakers.) Since English acquisition is the key to all the work they do in school, the foreign student is more patient with sentence level work than his American counterparts.

For those students in literature class, I try to make small discussion groups with one native speaker and two ESL students so that the foreign student is not so overwhelmed in discussing what is read. Often a lackadaisical native student is inspired by the opportunity to explain the finer points of a story to a person from another culture. On exams I tend to

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weigh the questions which test comprehension more heavily for the non-native student so that he is not unduly penalized for his command of written English on the essay portion of the test. For extra reading assignments I attempt to give the foreign student an English translation of a work in his own language.

While all of these activities are useful, they seem inadequate and many students end the semester hoping that the teacher will pass them because they have tried. All in all the ESL student is hard-pressed to make significant progress under these conditions. As a result, many leave for schools with ESL programs while others hang on hoping to eventually improve their English while gaining job training.

I am interested in hearing if others are encountering this situation and, if so, how they are meeting it.

Patricia Pruitt teaches at Bay State Junior College. She formerly taught EFL in Japan.

## An Interview With Stephen Sadow

by Catherine Sadow and Edgar Sather



**C:** I'd like to begin by assuring our readers that in spite of our last names, we can't find a relative in common.

**E:** Now that that's over with, we're curious as to who besides ESL teachers uses this book.

**S:** What is very interesting that I've just discovered is that it's being used in American Sign Language classes. They love it. It's also used regularly in the languages most taught in the U.S.A.: Spanish, French and German. I've seen it used in Hebrew classes, and it's finding uses outside of language classes. It's being used for academically talented classes for sixth, seventh and eighth graders. It's being used in Special Ed classes, and in Bilingual Education classes.

**E:** Did you consider when you were writing it that it would have multi-uses?

**S:** I had hoped for that, yes. I see language teaching as one procedure, irrelevant of the language, and I had hoped that these activities would be applicable for use for any sort of language teaching, and so far they have been.

**C:** Because things are so nicely set up in context, I've been able to adapt some of it for a writing class, and it has helped me to generate some of my own ideas.

**S:** That's great. The whole thesis behind the book is that this material is not static. It's not just mine to be used my way. Nothing makes me happier than someone coming and saying, "I did this a different way, Steve."

**C:** I have a question. Did you get ideas from other sources, or, in fact, are most of these your own ideas?

**S:** Well, in a sense they're all my own ideas. But I have to be careful when I say that. I learned later that many of them are variations on classical creativity stimulating tactics. I didn't really know this when I started doing this in class at Harvard Sum-

mer school six years ago. But I've found that certain of them, like finding new uses for an object, have been used for many years to stimulate different sorts of creativity.

**E:** Did you get some of the related ideas from the theatre?

**S:** I had some theatre training of my own, but I came across things like Maley and Duff's book considerably after I'd figured things out myself. It's like minds working in a similar strain. In some cases the ideas were modified suggestions from other teachers. What I claim for myself is more the arrangement — the putting it in script form — that kind of thing.

**C:** You said you started using it in ESL classes rather than in Spanish classes. Is there something about ESL classes that generates this kind of exercise more?

**S:** No. It was just coincidence. I had a very good class one summer. I needed something to do. I had one idea. It worked, so I tried a series. I came back to Northeastern to teach Spanish and I thought I'd see what would happen if I tried them in Spanish. . . . There is an obvious difference though.

**E:** Which is . . . ???

**S:** The cultural mix in an ESL class causes a different kind of process to happen than happens in a class of American students learning Spanish. Each student brings his/her own cultural way of problem solving to the group. Certain students, Swiss, for example — and I don't like to generalize about nationalities — really find it very difficult to generalize in abstract terms; they like to deal with real problems. In my experience the Japanese have no problem with this at all, and do it very fluidly and easily. American students, and this is purely experiential, in my own view, American students here at Northeastern are not terribly sure of

themselves as creative individuals and need a good deal of support in order to believe that they can do it, and many times I've had the experience, "I'm not creative. I can't do this." . . . and then have had them go and do activities in a very creative manner.

**E:** And so in a general way foreign students are often more willing and more able to throw themselves into these kinds of creative activities than American students.

**S:** This has been my experience. But I'd hate to generalize. My experience has been with Harvard ESL Summer School students and also reports to me by teachers from places like Georgetown. I have never found resistance from foreign students in doing these. It could be because of the nationalities I've dealt with.

**C:** It's interesting that you say that. I would think it would be just the opposite — that you would have the greatest resistance to doing something that wasn't very "academic" from foreign students.

**S:** That hasn't been my experience. But one thing I make sure to do when I teach an ESL class of high achieving students is to also give them a lot of hard work. This material, and I always try to make this clear when I talk about it, was never intended to be the core of a course. It is a supplement, after they have done some grammar or cultural discussion or reading or writing. At that point I find no resistance.

**E:** I think that's a very important point. The introduction of material like this into the classroom, and how it's done is crucial because I do think that so many students used to a traditional grammar-oriented format resist this and say, "Oh, gosh. This isn't language learning. This is sort of easy and fun."

**S:** I have found that if they feel they're getting their money's worth on hard work, and whenever possible there's a thematic tie-in, that's enough of a justification. I also believe that you create a safe classroom. You don't necessarily throw this kind of thing at them the first day. Also, I urge variety. I believe in this technique very much, if not done to excess. I think that the right frequency is from once a week to once every week and a half.

**C:** Are you always inventing new situations. Do they pop up in your head all the time?

**S:** While I was writing this book, they were coming in landslides. Now that I'm working on other projects, they come sporadically. There is a formula, and the formula is clearly stated in the introduction of the book. It's a formula that anyone can use.

**E:** Do they bomb sometimes?

**S:** They never bomb in the sense that students don't talk. Sometimes their answers aren't particularly thrilling. Since the first purpose is the language practice and the second purpose the creativity stimulation, in my experience, it's very rare that purpose one is not there.

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## Open Sesame Picture Dictionary

Jill Wagner Schimpff  
Oxford University Press, New York  
1982 (83 pages).

A new resource which provides motivating scenes to help young children to acquire and incorporate new vocabulary is the *Open Sesame Picture Dictionary*.

This full-colored book features Jim Henson's Sesame Street Muppets. It covers vocabulary of everyday items at the beginner level, such as parts of the body, clothing, seasons, etc. But why do we need another picture dictionary for young students? The answer lies in the design. The vocabulary items are all illustrated in cartoon style by Tom Cooke. The pictures are invariably clear and attractive. The left-hand page of each two-page spread shows numbered illustrations of all of the vocabulary items related to a single topic. They are shown in the context of a scene which lends itself to motivating discussion. On the right-hand page the illustrations of each item reappear in numerical order with the word representing each picture next to it. There is an index listing the 550 covered vocabulary words with the page and word number for each. All print is in bold type, making it easily read by beginning readers.

Having used this tool for several months, I have found it to provide continuous high-level interest to students in grades K — 6. This is a terrifically versatile book. It's great, of course, for introducing and reinforcing vocabulary. Students can also acquire a tremendous eight-word vocabulary, thanks to the bold type. In addition, students can make their own context scenes including as many vocabulary items related to a topic as possible. They can use the index as a sight-word list. Structures at all levels can be practiced as well; for example, (Ernie has been shopping in the supermarket).

If I had to teach E.S.L. with only one resource, this book would be it. Available at \$4.95 for soft-cover, or \$7.95 for hard-cover, it is an incredible value.

Suzanne Grossman teaches E.S.L. in the Newton Public Schools.

## Idea Bank

Stephen A. Sadow  
Newbury House  
1982

Foreign and second language teachers who are attempting to drop the role of "controlling parent" will find *Idea Bank* by Steve Sadow a useful resource and a further inspiration to take on the risk of providing non-threatening situations for students to practice language skills without teacher interference.

*Idea Bank* is designed as a teacher resource for use in all language classes, including beginning to advanced levels of ESL, Spanish, French and German. The task-oriented activities emphasize the use of language skills and role-play and a challenge to students and teachers alike to try out new combinations and to create unexpected answers.

The activities provide practice in four main types of problem-solving interaction: mind-bending, brainstorming, selling and impersonating. Presented as clear, concise lesson plans, each activity moves the students through several phases: presentation of the task, practice of vocabulary and grammar specific to the activity, small-group discussion and reporting of results. Further suggestions are provided for class discussions and follow-up writing topics.

In using the activities in both ESL and German classes, I have found students stimulated by the non-conventional presentation of the task. One of the "sell-sell-sell" activities, "soft soap — stronger than dirt", I have used both as a pre-writing exercise for high-beginning ESL writing students and as a follow-up to gambit practice in an intermediate German class. The writers found the intense competition between groups to be a challenge to produce truly persuasive writing. The conversation class realized that to keep within the time limit set for the task they could make use of the gambits to make their discussions more efficient.

For a high-intermediate ESL class the activity "Nostalgia", suggesting role-play of a class reunion, provided an end-of-term review of verb tenses, as well as a chance for role-switching: an older, quiet and formal student became the former drama class star; a younger, outspoken student took the role of the former English teacher. Following the event, the students found they had actually discovered new sides to classmates they had known for eight weeks.

In *Idea Bank* language teachers will find a clear and basic format which is easily incorporated into any classroom setting and which encourages us to go on to create our own variations.

Ellen W. Crocker is a Lecturer in German at M.I.T.

Please send book reviews to M. Stepler,  
ALA, Babson College, Wellesley Ave.,  
Wellesley, MA.

## Moving Up: Intermediate Functional English

John E. Lackstrom and Ronald V. White

Heinle and Heinle,  
1983 (169 pages).

What might make *Moving Up* useful to so many is the fact that, while it will be of obvious interest to those using a functional-notional approach, those teachers who follow a grammar-based curriculum need not be scared away by the sub-title of the book. The goal of this text is a balanced understanding of language functions and their related grammar structures. Indeed, according to the authors, a functional approach is the most realistic means of presenting and analyzing structure. In the notes to the text they write, "The problem is . . . that the [structural method] textbook writer has begun with a list of structures and then has tried to find a use for them. A functional approach begins with the use of the language and then looks at the structures which characterize that particular language function."

These two language components are here interwoven, giving the student an understanding of the means or tools with which to communicate and at the same time an immediate exposure to an appropriate application of these tools. The format used for this is, first, an introduction to the function in context, second, an analysis of the structures involved, and last, application of the structure in various functional contexts. Some of the manipulation exercises are based on realistic dialogues, while others require the students to complete charts, diagrams, or outlines, or elicit information from pictures, newspaper ads, maps, and so forth, thus providing a format other than a linear one from which to extract information and on which to base communication.

*Moving Up* focuses on all four skills. The listening component is attended to in various ways. First, there are useful teacher-initiated listening exercises based on the introductory material in some of the units (which can also be used as reading comprehension exercises). These give practice in such skills as extracting main ideas and (aurally) "scanning" material for specific information. The students are then involved in both the listening and speaking processes in the numerous pair and group activities in each unit. In keeping with the concern for practicing useful, realistic language, much of this communication does not take the form of complete sentences.

A helpful feature of the text is the presence of short cultural explanations intended to further ensure the appropriateness of the students' language. For example, included in the directions for an exercise which simulates "a conversation with someone you have

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## English in Peru

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haphazard way. There are private schools which use English as the only medium of instruction and the best are expensive, considered very desirable and usually have long waiting lists. The quality of English in these schools is understandably better than that of the public schools. Other private schools vary considerably, depending on the number of hours taught each week, the competence of the teachers and the motivation of the students. Several universities in Peru have well organized programs of English study: La Universidad Católica, La Universidad Nacional Agraria, Ricardo Palma, Villareal, El Instituto Pedagógico de Monterico, La Universidad del Pacifico, La Universidad del Sagrado Corazon, La Cantuta, to mention a few. "Academies" teaching English can be found throughout Peru. The Binational Centers, where both the Americans and the British are well represented, are among the most prominent. These institutes work in close coordination with their governments and the quality of teaching is relatively high. The Binational Centers can be found in all of the key cities of Peru and are quite active.

Besides the Binational Centers there are a large number of other independent academies. In Lima alone there are about fifty different "Institutes for English Study". Here, too, the quality differs greatly, depending on the organization of the programs and the training and abilities of the teachers. Many large companies in Peru have their own English teaching schools. They budget large sums to prepare their personnel to handle incoming English inquiries and documents, to communicate with overseas representatives and to represent adequately the companies in meetings and conferences in other countries. In addition, there are many Peruvians who seek out private classes in English and are willing to pay handsomely.

Other than *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Miami Herald*, and the weekly *Lima Times*, there are few English journals readily available. However, it is interesting to observe the pride and good feeling of a Peruvian when he has the opportunity to answer an American's question on the streets of Lima. Even when the question is asked in passable Spanish, if the native can answer in English, he has a real desire to show off and a great feeling of accomplishment for having communicated in English. Indeed, many of the successful entrepreneurs in Peru have been educated in English speaking countries. It would appear that the ability to speak English affords prestige and a sense of importance to the Peruvian and may sometimes be considered one of the keys to success.

Thus on any given day there are literally thousands of Peruvians studying English, because there is a genuine shortage of resources, the administrators and teachers sometimes feel very isolated. Even member-

ship in American national ESL organizations is beyond the reach of most educators.

Teaching encompasses all methods and often there is a serious attempt at communicative competence which can prove to be extremely difficult, since some teachers themselves do not feel sufficiently comfortable or competent in English. Therefore most of the class work comes directly from texts and teachers are often hesitant to bring in creative and original material.

Along with my work in the ESL programs, I began a cross-cultural research project. With Marianna Pease of Lima, I explored the

perceptions Peruvians have of the North Americans and vice versa. I would be pleased to hear from anyone interested in this or similar projects. I would also be happy to answer any other questions about Peru and ESL teaching there, since this paper only touches on a country which covers about three times the area of California with about two-thirds of the population.

Selma Myers teaches at ALL, San Diego State University. She has also taught in the Harvard University Summer Program.

Joe Altea works for the Instituto Cultural Peruano Norte Americano, Lima.

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## A Confidence Building Motor Activity for the Advanced ESL Student

by Sister Catherine E. Murphy

ESL students arriving at college with a confidence "badge" of 500 or above in TOEFL are shocked often to discover that their learned skills are as varied as their cultures. Confidence building, therefore, becomes a priority. I have found that a motor activity related to the culture of each student, prepared by and presented to the class by the student, is not only a morale builder and a source of much fun, but also a distinct learning tool.

Initially, students are encouraged to think of a familiar native activity involving body movement. Native dance usually comes to mind at first. But, as ideas flow, such images emerge as eating with chop sticks; climbing the Swiss Alps; mounting and riding a camel; dodging traffic in Rome; shopping in an Egyptian market; dramatizing the graceful movements of a Zulu woman; engaging in Yoga or Karate; participating in a soccer match. Conversation flows uninhibitedly. All become enthusiastically involved. A fruitful class period comes to an end.

Then follows the task of composing an explanatory paragraph for class presentation. Each student is encouraged to select an appropriate activity which is to be described step-by-step, in detailed fashion, in a single paragraph. Writing instructions include beginning with an introduction about the selected activity, continuing with details which include the larger activity to which it belongs, its place within this activity, and its relationship to a particular culture, if any. Proofreading for errors is mandatory. It might be suggested that, as part of the editing process, a labelled body diagram should be found and used by each student in order to verify the correct names of the specific body parts involved.

I usually give this paragraph writing as a home assignment. To make the assignment very clear, I teach the class an activity using a model paragraph with clear and accurate directions. I include as many of the parts of the body as possible in order to review with the students some of the less familiar names and spellings such as PALM, THIGH, TRUNK, GROIN, NAPE.

Student presentation is confined to one class period of seventy-five minutes. Paragraphs may be read if done skillfully. Each student is instructed beforehand about timing and about the kinds of techniques useful for successful presentation. When all presentations are completed, the written paragraphs are given to me for evaluation and correction. Such assignments are always returned, with comments, in the next class period. Oral critiquing can be encouraged if

time permits or such could be the basis for another written assignment.

As is evident, numerous skills are advanced in a presentation of this nature. Among these are brainstorming, ordering, composing, leading, presenting, observing, listening, sharing. Success with the group becomes evident almost immediately, often to the surprise of the student leader. And nothing succeeds in confidence building like success.

*Sister Catherine E. Murphy teaches E.S.L. at Regis College, Weston.*

## The Question Game

by Susan Siegel

Do you need a new activity for your lesson on yes-no questions? If your answer is "yes", you owe me a dollar! If your answer is "no", then I owe you a dollar. That's all there is to the question game. The object of the game is to ask as many "yes" questions as possible (correctly) so that you end up with the highest number of dollars (preferably play money, hot off the ditto machine). You can play the game several times in 5-10 minute blocks to reinforce different verb tenses you have studied. All you do is give the class the rules, determine the verb tense in which all questions must be asked, and then monitor the action. If you hear a mistake, you receive a dollar! Give all students \$10-\$15 to start the game.

*(Continued on page 10.)*

# Tools from the ESL Specialists

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**March 29-31, 1984**  
**SYMPOSIUM ON CURRENT APPROACHES TO**  
**SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**  
**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN — Milwaukee**

by Barbara Wheatley (ed. by Rita Rutkowski)

The field of second language acquisition, in common with other branches of linguistics, has experienced an explosion of ideas since the 1960's which, while increasing and deepening our understanding of many facets of the subject, has led to a serious degree of fragmentation in the field. At this point in time it seems necessary to begin to draw together the divergent approaches, unifying them into a more coherent and comprehensive view of second language acquisition.

The UWM Linguistics Symposium is intended to perform a state-of-the-art analysis of the second language acquisition field. A wide variety of approaches to second language acquisition will be discussed, with the objective of elucidating the nature of each approach, clarifying its relationship to other current approaches, and evaluating its empirical validity.

The field of second language acquisition comprises two interrelated branches; the study of the second language learning process, and the development of methodologies for teaching second languages. The former involves discovering the means by which people learn second languages, and systematic characteristics of learners' approximations of a second language, and any neurological,

psychological, or social factors which affect the rate, sequence, and ultimate success of language learning. The latter involves designing pedagogical approaches which can be expected to be maximally effective given what is known about the learning process, and which prove to be usable and effective in actual classroom situations. These two aspects



of the field are interdependent in that any model of the learning process will have implications for pedagogy and any teaching methodology presupposes a certain view of the nature of learning.

The symposium will bring together leading proponents of models of the second language learning process and advocates of methodologies for second language teaching to discuss their approaches in a way which will facilitate comparison among them. The objective is to clarify the positions taken concern-

ing the nature of second language learning and effective second language pedagogy, to identify substantive differences among approaches, and to evaluate approaches in the light of currently available evidence. This clarification and comparison of approaches will help direct research in second language acquisition along fruitful lines, provide a basis for intelligent evaluation of competing methodologies, and lay the foundation for the development of a more unified view of second language acquisition.

Scheduled invited speakers include Earl Stevick, Bernard Spolsky, Harry Whitaker, Joshua Fishman, John Schumann, Evelyn Hatch, Christian Adjemian, Elaine Tarone, Robert Lado, Fred Eckman, Caleb Gattegno, Jennybelle Rardin, James Asher, and others.

For details, write: Barbara Wheatley, Linguistics Department, UWM, Milwaukee, WI. 53201.

The Symposium is made possible by an NSF grant.

### U. MASS Colloquium Series

U. Mass- Harbor Campus will continue its colloquium series during the Spring semester.

Upcoming speakers are:

March 21: Jodi Crandall

April 2: Shirley Brice Heath (an ethnographer of writing in the classroom).

The talks will be held in the Faculty Lounge on the eleventh floor of the Library.

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# Cross Cultural Activities

*Two educators here describe local cultural exchange programs which have been mutually beneficial to Americans and international students.*

## The Friendship Network

by **Pixie Martin-Sharifzadeh**

The Friendship Network is a program designed to mutually serve its two participant groups — the English language students at Boston University's Center for English Language and Orientation Programs (CELOP) and Boston Area Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (BARPCVs). Students are matched to a returned volunteer who served in the student's home country, region of the world, or with whom the student shares professional or personal interests.

Students see the program as an opportunity to meet Americans from outside the university environment with whom they may practice their English and from whom they can learn about life in the United States. RPCVs, on the other hand, are able to maintain contact with individuals from the countries/regions important to them and to keep an international dimension in their lives. Each participant agrees to meet at least three times in one semester. The meetings range in content from extended phone conversations to home visits or excursions throughout Boston. Each semester has begun with an orientation for the students, many of whom had no idea what the Peace Corps was, and two potlucks have been held to solidify the Network.

From the program's inception one year ago, 113 volunteers and students have participated. A Cooperative Projects Grant from the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA), awarded to Pixie Martin-Sharifzadeh at B.U.'s Center for English language, enabled CELOP to hire a graduate assistant to implement the program. Initially, Patricia Devereaux, and then, David Eddy, promoted the program among students and RPCVs and worked to keep enthusiasm for the program high among both groups.

Students and volunteers evaluated their experiences in exit interviews at the end of each semester. One volunteer felt that, "the program was particularly good for him because his world view had expanded during his Peace Corps service and not many of his present day friends shared the same breadth of vision." He tried to "talk up the program with as many people as possible, because he felt that foreign students were a valuable asset to anyone's understanding of current world problems." Another volunteer described the meeting she had with her 'friend'. "They spoke English all the time, even though Mary Ellen is fluent in Spanish. She gave (the stu-

dent) suggestions about different problems — shopping, housing, etc. — and she was always receptive to the help."

One student especially appreciated her volunteer's habit of speaking slowly and clearly, "like a teacher". The success of one relationship was attributed to the fact that they shared, "the same perspective on many things."

Not all matches were as successful as these. Some volunteers were too busy to meet regularly and some students found that taking initiative to cultivate the friendship was difficult. The unsuccessful ones were in the minority, however, and CELOP and the BARPCVs are committed to continuing their Network.

This type of program can and should be expanded to many other schools and to include other organized groups of U.S. citizens who have 'returned' from experiences abroad.

*Pixie Martin-Sharifzadeh, Counselor and Coordinator of Admissions at CELOP, is currently President of BARPCV.*

## An Anthropological "Field Experience" in the Classroom

by **Joan Laxson, Ph.D.**

Meeting other cultures is what anthropology is all about, but in the short space of one semester, it is not possible to have a "typical" anthropological field experience. Most anthropologists spend at least two years immersing themselves in the language and life of another society. Here at Pine Manor College, we are fortunate in having a relatively large and diverse group of students from other cultures. In my Cultural Anthropology class, students are given the name of an ESL or other foreign student to interview, and are asked to write a short paper which evaluates the culture of their informant by using material from their interviews, and to compare the culture to their own culture for similarities and contrasts.

I get the names of potential informants by working with the foreign student advisor who compiles names, addresses, and phone numbers; and with the director of our ESL program who indicates which students would be best suited for the project in terms of their availability and English ability.

Students are given some suggested guidelines of specific questions to ask, but they are also encouraged to allow their own curiosity free rein. One this past semester asked her student-informant, "If you were doing this project, what would you like to ask me about my country?" They are also given a summary of some of the ethical principles that were adopted by the American Anthropological Association to remind them that informants

are people whose feelings and privacy should be protected.

Students nearly always conclude their papers with a remark about how much they have enjoyed the project and how much they have learned. I admit to learning from the project, too, and anytime I learn from my students, I feel that I have gained something as well.

*Dr. Laxson teaches Anthropology and Sociology at Pine Manor College.*

## New Films

**GOING INTERNATIONAL**, a series of four films designed to help organizations and individuals perform better abroad, is now available.

**GOING INTERNATIONAL** is rich in international action. In scenes from countries around the world, well-intentioned Americans are shown running into problems because behavior that is rewarded in the USA may not be acceptable abroad. Host nationals from countries as different as Mexico, Saudi Arabia, India, Japan, and England describe the mistakes that Americans make in their countries. Families who have lived abroad share their experiences, especially how they got beyond culture shock and the unexpected trauma they felt coming home.

The films were produced by SIETAR International member Lennie Copeland, who grew up overseas (Egypt, Lebanon, England), and feature cross-cultural experts Clifford Clarke, Price Cobbs, Nessa Lowenthal, George Renwick, Tom Rohlen, and Fanchon Silberstein.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT COPELAND GRIGGS PRODUCTIONS at 3454 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, California 94118 USA or call (415) 921-4410.

## Tone Deaf

*(Continued from page 1.)*

How do you handle this situation in your own country? What do you say to say goodbye? You'll be surprised by the different strategies. The Latins, of course, have the last word. "You don't say anything," a Venezuelan playboy counselled. "Send two dozen red roses and disappear."

*Arthur Holmberg teaches literature and drama at Harvard, and writes frequently about the arts for several national publications, including THE NEW YORK TIMES, THE WASHINGTON POST, THE INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, OPERA NEWS, and DRAMA. He has contributed to such scholarly journals as COMPARATIVE LITERATURE, THE HISPANIC REVIEW, THE FRENCH REVIEW, THE ANTI-OTIUM REVIEW, THEATRE JOURNAL, SHAKESPEARE QUARTERLY, PERFORMING ARTS JOURNAL, and CAHIERS FRANCOIS MAURIAC (Paris). During the summer he teaches an advanced ESL class at Harvard, as well as a comparative literature course, Studies in Love.*

## The Question Game

(Continued from page 7.)

**Object:** Ask a correct question which will elicit a "yes" answer from as many people as possible.

**Example:** For 5 minutes all questions must be in the present tense. Students might ask questions like "Do you brush your teeth every day?" or "Do you live in a dorm?", etc.

**Rules:**

- 1) You must ask the question in the correct form. Otherwise, you pay \$1.
- 2) You must answer all questions honestly.
- 3) If you ask a question and get a "no" answer, you pay \$1. If you get a "yes" answer, you receive \$1.
- 4) If you answer "yes" to a question, you must pay \$1 to the questioner.
- 5) You may not ask the same question twice in the same game.
- 6) You must go to a different person after getting a "yes" answer and receiving your money.
- 7) If the questioner asks the question incorrectly, you may correct him/her and receive \$1.
- 8) If the teacher hears an incorrect question, s/he receives \$1.

\* A word of warning: Depending upon how entrepreneurial your students are, this game can get fairly loud the poorer your students

become! You may want to make sure you close the door behind you!

*Sue Siegel is currently teaching ESL at Boston University and the University of Massachusetts/Boston. She has also taught in the Harvard University EFL program.*

## Professional Development

(Continued from page 8.)

### WORKING WITH NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS HOW? WHY? WHAT?

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**Faculty:** Florence Wiener, Ed.D.  
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## Moving Up

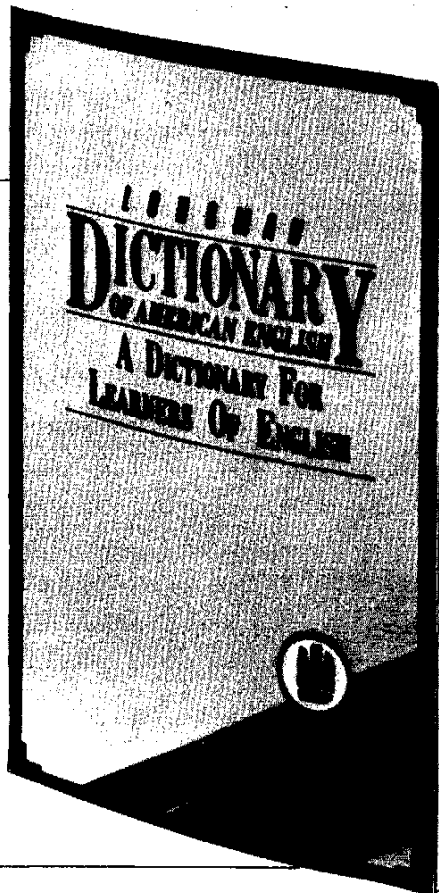
(Continued from page 5.)

recently met" is the following note: "Questions about where a person works and where he or she lives are acceptable. Questions about age and earnings (income) are not."

It might be added that some of the instructions and/or exercises are unnecessarily elaborate or confusing. It will of course be up to the teacher to clarify these or, in fact, decide whether or not the individual exercise is useful. Many teachers will, no doubt, find *Moving Up* more suitable as a supplementary rather than as a principal text, and extract material relevant to the course and in keeping with their own teaching styles.

According to the authors, their book is intended as a "move up to the communicative use of language structures that the students already know" and as an aid "to help remedy some of these areas of English with which students . . . have difficulty." It would seem, however, perfectly logical to include this type of practice in the initial exposure of the material (perhaps, as mentioned, as a supplement) in the hope of avoiding some of these problems. It is, certainly, desirable to expose students to these types of appropriate contexts.

*Linda Darman teaches E.S.L. at Chamberlayne Junior College.*



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*Combining teaching and parenting can at times be a difficult balancing act. Here the authors describe their imaginative solution to the problem.*

## ESL for Parents and Tots

by Linda Moussouris Rosenberg and Susan Sklan Shagrin

A unique English conversation program began this fall for foreign-born mothers and their babies and toddlers. The class is part of a parenting program offered by the Brookline Early Childhood Resource Center, housed in the Pierce School, Brookline; it is designed to interest and entertain children and simultaneously provide time and space for parents to participate in workshops and discussions. Developed by Linda Moussouris Rosenberg and Susan Sklan Shagrin, the program caters to the needs of students by offering them ESL instruction, child care and an opportunity to socialize with other parents.

Having spent several years teaching ESL and composition at Boston-area universities, Linda experienced difficulties in trying to find good and reliable childcare in order to continue teaching after her son Joshua was born in 1982. Was there a more child-centered setting that would allow her to continue teaching and also integrate her child into her professional life? She became heavily involved in setting up a parenting center and developing an ESL component for it. An ESL teacher from Australia, Susan moved to the Boston area four years ago. Although she didn't have to cope with learning a new

language, she has experienced firsthand the difficulties of settling into a foreign city with two young children.

Their own experiences made the two instructors very conscious of how demanding and isolating the parenting of young children can be for families recently arrived in the U.S.; they also quickly realized that childcare must often be an impediment to attending class. Thus was born their program design. Focus the course content, they reasoned, on an orientation to Boston-Brookline resources for families — cultural, educational, medical and human service agencies. Invite outside speakers to discuss child development, health and safety issues, parenting and children's literature. Finally, talk about American social and family life and the whole process of parenting within the context of a foreign culture. Each topic is announced the week before and some assignment is given to the students (to prepare a speech, share a recipe, read an article) to prepare them for the session. The actual class is informal. There is a resource table with books, maps, schedules, programs and catalogues for students to browse through or take home to study. By providing much interesting, useful and/or controversial material, conversation is easily initiated and developed. Interest does not have to be artificially contrived as the subject matter is important to the individual students. The children are also occupied with suitable art activities and many books and toys. Song sessions close the agenda for parents and children together.

What kinds of students have been drawn to these classes? Mostly full-time mothers with one or more small children, they have accompanied their working or student husbands to the U.S. within the last year. They need to focus on improving their language skills in order to integrate into the larger community and to orient themselves to Boston's many resources for families. One nice aspect of the program that facilitates this process is a drop-in component that the

students are encouraged to attend frequently; here they have an opportunity to mingle with other parents who utilize the Center on a regular basis.

Despite intensive efforts at outreach, it has nonetheless been difficult to reach newcomers during the critical early months of their stay in Boston. Consequently, we are appealing to our fellows in ESL to refer suitable students to the program. We would also like to hear from teachers who have worked in similar settings. Please contact us at Brookline Early Childhood Resource Center, c/o Brookline Adult Education, Room 101, Brookline High School, 115 Greenough Street, Brookline, 02146, 734-1111, X234.

Linda Moussouris Rosenberg  
Susan Sklan Shagrin

## CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

The TESOL program at Teachers College, Columbia University is soliciting proposals for its 1984 ABC Summer Weekend COLLOQUIUM (July 6 & 7) on topics related to models, practices, and issues of language teacher preparation, supervision, and second language acquisition research, including classroom observation. Proposals for presentations including demonstrations (all fifty minutes) are welcomed in English, French, and Spanish. Limit the proposal to a 350 word abstract and include a summary of 100 words. Send two copies with your name, address, and telephone number, no later than March 30, 1984 to:

John F. Fanselow  
ABC Colloquium Director  
Box 631 Teachers College  
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New York, NY 10027

## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The Foreign Service Institute's (FSI) School of Language Studies is seeking applications for several Language Training Supervisor positions. FSI is especially interested in applications from persons with expertise in Romance languages, Germanic languages, Turkish, Russian, Arabic, and Japanese. Some appointments will be available in 1984; others in 1985.

The position requires a thorough academic grounding in contemporary applied linguistics and/or ESL, with a proficiency-based orientation to the development of sophisticated language skills in adults. Also required is proficiency in the target language and near-native proficiency in English.

Desirable qualifications include doctoral level work in linguistics, ESL, or foreign language teaching; supervisory and/or management experience; extensive cross-cultural experience or residence abroad.

Applicants must be US citizens and eligible for a security clearance. Send resume and other supporting documentation to Jack Mendelsohn, Dean, School of Language Studies, Foreign Service Institute, 1400 Key Blvd., Room 900, Arlington, VA 22209.



## Linguistic Research

(Continued from page 1.)

In my research program (Flynn, e.g. 1981, 1983a, 1983b, in press), I have attempted to establish such a framework while working within the theoretical perspective of Universal Grammar (UG) proposed by Chomsky (e.g., 1980; 1981; 1982). Toward this end I have formulated a set of hypotheses in terms of a theory of UG for L2 acquisition. By doing this, a framework already established for L1 acquisition is extended to L2 acquisition, an important bridge between the two domains empirically and theoretically. As an empirical test of these hypotheses I have chosen an area of investigation for which a large body of crosslinguistic L1 acquisition data already exists, an area which is common to all languages, and one which is theoretically central to a UG framework. The area in question is L2 acquisition of grammatical anaphora. In general terms, I want to determine, for example, how L2 learners of English come to understand that in English, in sentence 1, she and Mary can refer to the same person; that the gap or null anaphor in sentence 2 must refer to Mary, and that she and Mary cannot refer to the same person in sentence 3.

1. Mary understood the theory when she read the book.
2. Mary understood the theory when ∅ reading the book.
3. She understood the theory when Mary read the book.

The rules that underlie regularities such as these, which hold across a range of complex sentence structures, are not explicitly taught to L2 learners of English; nonetheless, all successful speakers of the language come to know them.

In my experimental work thus far, I have investigated the acquisition of anaphora in complex sentences, such as in 1-3, by Spanish, Japanese and Chinese adult speakers learning ESL. Results of this research program have shown that, regardless of the learner's L1, L2 learners use the same abstract structural principles in L2 acquisition that L1 learners use in L1 acquisition; this aspect is consistent with the sense of a CC theory. However, the extent to which L2 learners consult these principles is dependent upon the match/mismatch between the L1 and the L2 in values of the structural parameter in question; this finding is consistent with the sense of a CA theory.

Results such as these have a wide set of implications. For example, they specify how, in spite of differences in maturation and cognition between adults and children, adults still access some of the same linguistic principles in L2 acquisition as children do in L1 acquisition. They also provide us with a way in which to explain the role of the L1 experience in subsequent L2 acquisition.

Pedagogically, these findings provide us with one way in which to understand differences in patterns of acquisition between various language groups in a principled manner. These results also enable us to develop precise ESL curricula consistent with the needs of our students and testing instruments commensurate with our findings.

In summary, the results, briefly outlined here, provide initial empirical support for a theoretical framework which promises to provide significant breakthroughs in our understanding of the adult L2 acquisition process.

*Dr. Suzanne Flynn is an Assistant Professor of ESL at MIT.*

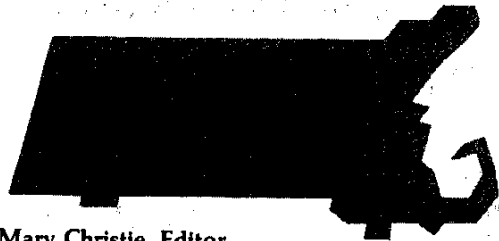
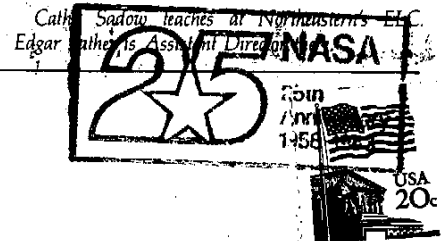
## Interview

(Continued from page 4.)

**E:** Can you tell us a little bit about the value of creativity in language learning?

**S:** I'm a great believer in what is called divergent thinking — thinking about things in ways other than systematic ways — thinking about any problem from a different angle. I'm glad that I have any chance to teach that sort of process. It seems to work well with role playing and with language learning. Students, when they're speaking in another language are often, but not always, freer to express ideas that they might not if they had to take themselves seriously. The act of being in a sort of magic place where another language is spoken seems to conjoin well with the act of speaking in another way, and that's my purpose for all of this. They seem to supplement each other. It seems to stimulate their thinking, and it seems to stimulate their tongues. I have heard pupils say things which I know they would not be able to produce if I asked them directly. There is something going on that seems to tap the passive knowledge of the language.

**E:** I'm sorry to interrupt all this, but it's time for class and time to use *Idea Bank*. I'm going to trot out my favorite lesson on "Flagging — long may it wave." Goodbye, Sadows, C. and S. I still don't really believe the two of you aren't related. Undoubtedly you both have the same long lost great-great-great-great somebody or other from the Republic of Bartonian. Don't you think?



Mary Christie, Editor  
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Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138