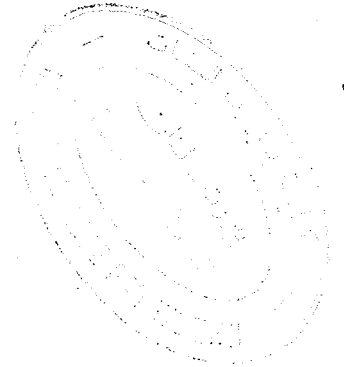


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CONTEXTUAL AND CULTURAL ORIENTATION  
IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING



A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Beirut College for Women  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of Bachelor of Arts

by

Maha Raja Howrani

(June 1959)

**DEDICATION**

**This Thesis is Affectionately Dedicated**

**To**

**My Father and Mother**

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The author was born in Damascus, on January 1, 1940. She attended Kew Forest school in New York, for her elementary school education. She joined the American School for Girls in Beirut in 1952, graduating in June, 1955.

She entered the Beirut College for Women in the fall of 1955 and received her Associate in Arts degree in the fall of 1957. She has continued her studies in the same College, working towards her Bachelor of Arts degree in Education - English.

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## CONTEXTUAL AND CULTURAL ORIENTATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

### TEACHING

#### INTRODUCTION

Very often when asked about language people say that it is a means of communication made up of word symbols which, when put together in a certain grammatical way have meaning. This would imply that to learn a foreign language one must master "all" the words of that language, and "all" the constructions in which all these words appear.

But is that all? What happens when a word has more than one meaning? or when the paragraph or story in which that word is found affects its meaning and changes it? Also what about the cultural background of that word? Don't words change depending upon the people who use them? Such background information for the words of our language are both contextual and cultural.

To attain complete and thorough understanding between speakers of different languages one must be orientated in the contextual and cultural areas of that language and its people. <sup>(1)</sup> Such an orientation in a foreign language will furnish a more objective basis for regarding own language and life. Its fundamental value is in the direction of "understanding" through the foreign language. <sup>(2)</sup>

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1. Charles C. Fries, Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, p. 52

2. Ibid., p. 61

The material for this study has been gathered from books, observations in classroom situations, and from the first stages in the author's teaching.

Chapter One deals with the elements which, when put together, make up the colossal work which is our language. It also discusses the function and importance of language and briefly reviews some of the more common problems that Arab students face when learning English as their second language.

Chapter Two discusses the importance and value of contextual and cultural orientation and gives various examples to illustrate this point. It also discusses what happens to the learner if given such information and what happens if he was not made conscious of the existence of these factors.

Chapter Three presents ways and means which will help teachers and students learn a foreign language. It brings out the importance of learning the components of a language together with their equivalents in behavior. It discusses different methods that teachers could use in bringing this about.

The Appendix consists of five sample lesson plans that might be useful and practical for teachers of English to Arab students.

It is hoped in these pages that the reader will regard language learning as much more complex and dynamic than words and grammar and will begin to think seriously of the significance of contextual and cultural orientation as a "must" in any language learning situation.

As Charles C. Fries says, <sup>(1)</sup> "A thorough mastery of a language

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1. Ibid., p. 57.

for practical communication with real understanding demands and systematic observation and reading of many features of the precise situations in which the varied sentences are used (or the context).<sup>1</sup> This observing and recording is for understanding, and feeling, and experiencing, as fully as possible, "The knowledge about the life, the customs, and the mores of the people <sup>(1)</sup> or the culture.

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1. Ibid.



## CHAPTER ONE

### LANGUAGE AND MEANING

"our language is an essential part of every portion of our experience." (1) Language gets its meaning from our experience and in turn we use it as a tool to grasp and understand experience. (2) Its function is primarily concrete. Let us view an act of language-utterance (3) under very simple circumstances.

A boy and a girl are taking a walk. The girl is hungry. She sees an apple tree. She utters a sound. The boy hears it, climbs the tree, and brings her the apple which she eats. A formula to represent this sequence would be

S ----- r ----- s ----- R

in which the "S" represents the practical situation that brought about the practical stimulus, or the speaker's stimulus. In this case the girl's stimulus is when she saw the tree, her hunger, and all other events (whether physical, psychological, mental, or social) which preceded her speech. The sounds she uttered in response to her hunger are represented by "r" the spoken sounds. This "r" acted as a stimulus when it hit the boy's ear. He heard the speech "r" and it stimulated him, "s", to get the apple and fulfil the practical response represented by "R" which has satisfied the initial "S". The practical

1. Charles C. Friess, Teaching and Learning English in a Foreign Language, p. 57.
2. Ibid.
3. "Language-utterance" will be used interchangeably with "Speech-utterance," because language is first and foremost an oral system. As Skardevant (An Introduction to Linguistic Science, p. 2) says, "a language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by which members of a social group cooperate and interact."

events are, therefore, "R" and "s" and there are in the realm of experience, whereas, "r - s" -- the language utterance is in the realm of language study. (1)

"Every member of the social group must upon suitable occasion utter the proper speech-sounds and, when he hears another utter these speech-sounds, must make the proper response." (2)

Man uses languages for his own ends; the different ways in which he profits by language are so obvious that I will mention only a few. One of the objects of speech and perhaps the major one, is that of communication. Language is a method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires. (3) Another use of language is aesthetic, manifested mostly in poetry and other cultivated styles. (4) In language also lies the value of thinking or talking to oneself. We "think in words." The use of numbers is the simplest and clearest case of the usefulness of talking to oneself; when we count or make an estimate of numbers of certain objects without using speech. (5) From all this it can be said that language is an oral system by which one can talk about his experiences. (6)

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1. Leonard Bloomfield, Language, pp. 22 - 23.

2. Ibid., p. 29.

3. Edward Sapir, Language, p. 7.

4. Joshua Whatmough, Language, p. 88

5. Bloomfield, op. cit., p. 28

6. Class Notes, in the course "The Teaching of English," 1958-59. The

word system is used in reference to language because language operates as a system of human behavior; this will be discussed further in chapter II

"The occurrence of a speech (and, as we shall see, the wording of it) and the whole course of practical events before and after it, depend upon the entire life-history of the speaker and of the hearer."<sup>(1)</sup>

This chapter discusses the "occurrence of speech" or the language utterance "r - s." To know what "r - s" is made of, the components of language must be discussed and their importance in relation to their meaning. Also to be discussed are the changes in meaning in "r - s" which will in turn bring about changes in the concrete "S - R." In connection to language and meaning the concept of "contrasts" or the comparative method will be explained and discussed. This method deals with the importance of comparing scientifically the foreign language to be learned with the native language. Also discussed are some of the difficulties and experiences an Arab student learning English will go through in connection with our formula. "S - r - s - R."

"Language as a system, functions in set patterns. These patterns exist on three closely related levels - phonology, vocabulary, and grammar."<sup>(2)</sup> "In learning a new language then, the chief problem is not at first that of learning vocabulary items. It is first the mastery of the sound system ... to understand the stream of speech, to hear the distinctive sound features and to approximate their production."<sup>(3)</sup>

The sound system or phonology of a language is divided into two

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1. Bloomfield, op. cit., p. 25.

2. Raja T. Naar, The Teaching of English to Arab Students, unpublished book.

3. Fries, op. cit., p. 3.

major groups, the segmental and the suprasegmental features. The segmental features include consonants, vowels, and diphthongs.

The consonants of the English language are twenty-four, the vowels are eleven, and the diphthongs (combination of vowel sounds) are three. (1)

We want first to find the formal characteristics by which to identify each functioning unit and structure and second to see the meanings that it signals. (2)

There are two kinds of differences in the sounds of a language, the phonetic and the phonemic. The phonetic sound exists without meaning and is not used to distinguish any two words; for example the (p) (8) in pin is "different" phonetically from the (p) in sugar; the difference is in the way it is produced in the mouth and vocal organs.

1. Near, op, cit.

The twenty-four consonants in example:

p - <u>pin</u>	f - <u>fun</u>	s - <u>shee</u>	n - <u>noon</u>
b - <u>back</u>	v - <u>voice</u>	z - <u>measure</u>	- <u>sing</u>
t - <u>tee</u>	- <u>thin</u>	- <u>church</u>	l - <u>lost</u>
d - <u>de</u>	- <u>the</u>	j - <u>judge</u>	r - <u>run</u>
k - <u>cake</u>	s - <u>sing</u>	h - <u>hat</u>	w - <u>wet</u>
g - <u>go</u>	z - <u>zoo</u>	m - <u>month</u>	y - <u>yes</u>

Vowel symbols in example:

iy - <u>seat</u>	ey - <u>fate</u>	- <u>fat</u>	a - <u>father</u>	u - <u>pull</u>
i - <u>lit</u>	e - <u>bet</u>	- <u>above</u>	uw - <u>cool</u>	ow - <u>know</u>

Diphthongs in examples:

ay - <u>I</u>	aw * <u>now</u>	- <u>boy</u>
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2. Charles C. Fries, The Structure of English, p. 175

3. "()" this sign is used for the phonetic symbol and "||" is used for the phonemic symbol, Class Notes, op, cit.

The "p" in pin is produced with a puff of air and the "p" in super is not. Phonemically, however, the two "p's" are the "same" because they are not used to distinguish words as in can and fan where the phonemes /k/ and /f/ are the sole distinguishing factors between these two words. (1)

In teaching a foreign language we must always bear in mind the contrast between the language taught and the native language. "The most efficient materials are those that are based upon the scientific description of the language learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner. (2) Such careful analysis is very valuable to the teacher because, a) she will be able to predict and anticipate the kinds of learning problems the students will have; whether phonological, grammatical, or lexical; b) it will help her know why students have made certain mistakes and how to correct them; and c) she will know what to emphasize and what not to emphasize. (3)

The second branch of phonology includes the suprasegmental features, which are, stress, intonation, pause, and rhythm. (4)

Stress is the relative force of breath produced in uttering sounds (or segmental features). (5) For example, in the word perfect the stress

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1. Lado, op. cit., p. 9

2. Charles C. Fries, Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, p. 9

3. Class Notes, op. cit.

4. Narr, op. cit.

5. Class Notes, op. cit.

can be applied either on the first syllable as in It is a perfect job where we would get one response, or with the stress on the second syllable as in You must perfect your handwriting, where you would get another response, thus completely changing the meaning of the word perfect. This is a big problem for Arab students because in English stress is unpredictable whereas in Arabic, stress is patterned. (1)

Sentence stress also changes the linguistic meaning. While uttering a sentence we tend to stress one word or words in the sentence which we want to emphasize. This sentence stress is contextually important (that is that the context would level meaning to the sentence depending on the word being stressed.) (2) For example, in this is my pencil if the sentence stress falls on "this" the sentence would imply that it is this (rather than any other) pencil that is mine; if the sentence stress falls on "my" the sentence would imply that this is mine (rather than anybody else); if the sentence stress falls on "pencil", the sentence would imply that it is a pencil (rather than a Pen). (3)

Intonation is the pitch of the voice while producing sounds. There are four pitch levels in English:

- No 1 — high
- No 2 — high mid.
- No 3 — low mid.
- No 4 — low. (4)

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1. Class Notes, op. cit.
  2. The "context" will be discussed in detail in chapter II.
  3. Raja T. Nasr, "The Predictability of Stress in Lebanese Arabic," unpublished article.
  4. Class Notes, op. cit.

There are two intonation patterns commonly used in English; the  $^{\circ}2 - 4$  pattern which means finality, or the end of a thought, and which comprises sentences of all kinds - statements, questions, and requests, example:

I went to the baker.<sup>(2)</sup>  
3 -                    $^{\circ}2 - 4$

The  $^{\circ}2 - 3$  intonation curve means nonfinality of an idea and usually used for a sense of objects, for example; I bought bananas, oranges, peaches ... If one stops with this sentence the hearer will respond with "and what else." Unless and vegetables is added to get a  $^{\circ}2 - 4$  or final idea it will not be understood.<sup>(3)</sup> A simple example now will illustrate how intonation changes the meaning of an utterance. One person may say to another on a rainy day Good morning merely as a greeting. The other, however taking the literal sense would respond by replying Good morning? This response would of course change the meaning of the intended utterance.

Rhythm is the combination of intonation, stress, and pause. Rhythm in English is different from rhythm in Arabic because the constituent elements of rhythm are different in both languages.<sup>(4)</sup> Rhythm can also change the meaning of a linguistic form; the most obvious example would be between prose and poetry. In both poetry and prose we have rhythm, but unless we beat each according to its

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1. "o" is the symbol used for intonation patterns.
  2. Charles C. Fries, The Structure of English, p. 27
  3. Class Notes, op. cit.
  4. Ibid.

special rhythm we would not convey the correct meaning.

After we have mastered (or nearly mastered) the phonology of the foreign language (and mastery is on the receptive and productive levels) second in our learning a new language is "The mastery of the features of arrangement that constitute the structure (grammar) of the language. These are the matters that the native speaker as a child has early acquired as unconscious habits.." (1)

In the total meaning of an utterance there are two kinds of meanings, (2) a) The meaning of the separate words as the dictionary would record them - lexical meanings. For example, in the sentence The boy gave the dog a bone, the dictionary would tell us something about boy and dog and bone and would tell us the kind of action indicated by the word gave. This is as far as the dictionary goes in meaning, and yet we get from this sentence a whole range of meanings that are not expressed in the lexical items themselves. From the sentence we know that it is the "boy" who performed the action, not the "dog"; we are told that the action has already taken place; the information is given to us as a statement of fact. Such meanings constitute the second type of meaning b) what we call structural meaning. (3) "The total meaning of any utterance consists of the lexical meanings of the separate words plus such structural meanings. No utterance is intelligible without both lexical meanings and structural meanings.

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1. Charles C. Fries Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, p. 3

2. Charles C. Fries, The Structure of English, p. 55

3. Ibid., pp. 55 - 56



How, then, are there structural meanings conveyed in English from the speaker to the hearer? Structural meanings are not just vague matters of the context, so called; they are fundamental and necessary meanings in every utterance and are signalled by specific and definite devices. It is the devices that signal structural meanings which constitute the grammar of a language." (1)

When learning a foreign language we tend very often to transfer the forms and meanings of the grammatical features of the native language to the foreign language. (2) As teachers we need, therefore, by contrasting, to see those structures in the foreign language that are similar to the ones in the native language and use them as a tool in learning for they will transfer easily; and those structures that are different, and will not transfer, we must teach as separate items, for the learner tends to transfer the habits of his native language structure to the foreign language. Here lies the major source of difficulty or ease in learning the structure of a foreign language. (3)

"... All the structural signals in English are strictly formal matters that could be described in physical terms of form and correlation of these forms and the arrangement of order." (4) The features of grammar that signal structural meaning include inflection (form of

- 
1. Ibid., p. 56.
  2. Lado, op. cit., p. 58
  3. Fries, op. cit., p. 58
  4. Class Notes, op. cit.

words), word order, and function words. (1)

Inflection deals with the changes in the form of a word; these changes make the lexical items grammatically important. There are two major inflections. (2) The inflection for tense as in play - played. In English there are two forms for number, singular and plural. Arabic distinguishes these forms for number, singular, dual, and plural. (3) Obviously, then, since Arabic and English signal their number expressions in two different ways, there will be definitely be problems as the students tend to transfer their native signals to the foreign language. In Arabic we also have two forms for the tense, the present and past, but in Arabic the verb is inflected differently with each person. (4) Here again if the inflections - for either number

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1. Class Notes, op. cit.

2. Charles C. Fries, American English Grammar, p. 72ff. In these pages Fries discusses "Two major live inflections and four minor inflections, remnants of older patterns." The four minor inflections that he discusses are the genitive, the dative - accusative, comparison and person, and mood forms. "These grammatical uses of the forms of words have been largely displaced by one of the other grammatical processes which Modern English employs - function words or word order."

3. Nasr, op. cit.

4. In both Arabic and English there is no future tense, that is that no word in itself indicates the future. We indicate the future usually by adding another word, example, shall build, (Class Notes, op. cit.)

or tense - have not become matters of habit with the student, he might not be able to understand (that is respond to) an utterance.

While inflection deals with changes within the words themselves, word order deals with the position of words in a language utterance. (1)

Word order changes the linguistic meaning of an utterance; for example:

The man hit the dog, is different in meaning than The dog hit the man.

One of the problems that confronts Arab students in word order is

apparent when they translate their language utterances into English.

In Arabic we do not have equivalents for a and an and we do not use

the verb to be in the present tense. It is not surprising, therefore,

to hear Arab students say:

It good for It is good

He fool for He is a fool (2)

Function words. This group of words is another structural device which signals grammatical meaning rather than lexical meaning. These words are nonsense words, which we used for grammatical purposes. (3)

For example: a has no content meaning, but a boy means one boy; shall,

another function word, has no content meaning, I shall go, however,

means the action will occur in the future. If an Arab student transfers

these function words into his own language as lexical items we get

such common mistakes as:

I am afraid from the dog.

I can to go, (4)

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1. Class Notes, op. cit.

2. Nasr, op. cit.

3. Ibid.

4. Nasr, op. cit.,

The function words make up one hundred and fifty four words and they must be taught as separate items.<sup>(1)</sup> The other words which contains the rest of vocabulary items are the parts of speech, which constitutes the third component of language - Vocabulary.

The sound system and structural patterns of language cannot be learned in a vacuum. "There must be sufficient vocabulary to operate the structure and represent the sound system in actual use."<sup>(2)</sup> One needs experience in a particular field to know the typical vocabulary for it. He can never know all the "words" of his language because they represent those areas of life with which he has had experience; mastery of words, therefore, is limited to ones experience which

can never be complete.<sup>(3)</sup> The same applies, of course, when one is learning a foreign language. The mastery of the words or vocabulary of a foreign language also depends on his actual experience, which as it expands, lends "meanings" to the growth in words. There are no short cuts to the learning of the vocabulary of a foreign language. One can, however, master a limited number of extremely useful items to be able to study the phonemics and the sound system, in a relatively short time.<sup>(4)</sup>

When the words of two languages are contrasted three aspects should born in mind: a) their form, b) their meaning, and c) their distribution.<sup>(5)</sup>

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1. Charles C. Fries, The Structure of English, p. 108
  2. Charles C. Fries, Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, p. 5
  3. Ibid., p. 1
  4. Ibid.,
  5. Lado, op. cit., p. 76

A word - lexical item - can have narrowed meaning and wide meaning. A narrowed meaning such as a glass is usually a drinking glass, or looking glass; glasses are usually eye-glasses. When we hear the command to call a doctor we take the meaning medical doctor. (1)

"Narrowed meanings are hard to define, because, after all, every occurrence of a form is prompted by some one practical situation which need not contain all the possibilities of meanings." (2) Table is used once as a round table once as a rectangular one and so on. Widened meanings are less common. For example: the widened meaning of cat would include lions, tigers, and so on. The word dog is not used ordinarily to include wolves and foxes. (3)

The coverage of meanings of lexical items between two languages is also quite different and varied. Often students not realizing this, transfer the content meaning to a word into the foreign language and as a result get an altogether different meaning from the one they had intended to bring about the desired response. For example: "class in English is translated as [ṣəf] in Arabic. But in social class the word [ṣəf.] is not used in Arabic; [ṣəf.] also means row." (4)

The range of meaning of a form class word though important is not enough; we must also take into consideration the distribution and correlation with other words. For example:

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1. Bloomfield, op. cit., p. 157
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid.
  4. Nasr, op. cit.

The Librarian gave the book to the student.

presented

The butcher tossed the bone to the dog.

We cannot say the butcher presented the bone to the dog, or the librarian tossed the book to the student. From this one can see how important it is to teach or learn words in a context and not as independent, separate items. (1)

To a linguistic form is attached supplementary values which we call connotations. (2) Linguistic forms communicate not only their denotative meanings but also the connotative suggestions in which we have heard a certain linguistic form and the way we have produced it in certain situations may deviate from the conventional use of the meaning. Usually a group of people who have shared an experience together attach these supplementary values to the linguistic forms, and in turn use these forms as a response to elicit that special meaning. For an illustration the author will use a personal experience that she has had during her college years.

One of her teachers had very unproportioned teeth; they varied greatly in length. Whenever she used to smile, she and a group of students resembled them to musical notes, which varied in pitch. Even after that whenever they spoke of music they would mention the word "notes" and the response would be that of laughter, followed

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1. Glass Notes, op. cit.

2. Charles C. Fries, The Structure of English, p. 5.

3. Bloomfield, op. cit., p. 152.

by a similar phrase to "Remember Miss X's do, re, mi, teeth?" Any other person outside this special group would not understand (respond to) the word "notes" in the same way they did and thus would not fulfil the original stimulus.

The pages just passed have shown the important linguistic role that the language utterance, "r -s," (in the original formula "S -- r - s -- R") and the wording of it, play in expressing and correlating the concrete, practical situations, "s -- R," which give it (the speech utterance) its meaning.

All these components of language operate together in such patterns and combinations as to render meaning. "The responses to the patterns marks a person's comprehension of the language, and the production of the patterns marks a person's expression in the language. Comprehension and production depend, then, on the mastery of the phonology of the language, the mastery of the grammar of the language and the meaningful association of lexical items and combinations of lexical items with actual life situations and experiences."<sup>(1)</sup>

To conclude this chapter the author would like to quote one of Fries' unpublished<sup>(2)</sup> definitions which to her mind summarizes the main theme of the preceding pages:

"Language is a system of recurring 'sames' of vocal sounds in patterns that correlate with recurring 'sames' of stimulus features and that elicit recurring 'sames' of response features."

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1. Nasr, op. cit.

2. Class Notes, op. cit.

## CHAPTER TWO

### EXTRA LINGUISTIC FACTORS AFFECTING MEANINGS

The linguistic factors of a language utterance - by virtue of their function - elicit linguistic meanings. Linguistic meaning, though important, constitutes only part of the total meaning of our utterances.

In connection with the formulas "S -- r - s -- R", Leonard Bloomfield says, <sup>(1)</sup> "The occurrence of a speech (and as we shall see, the wording of it) and the whole course of practical events before and after it, depend upon the entire life-history of the speaker and of the hearer." Chapter one discussed "the occurrence of speech" and "the wording" of it. This chapter, however, deals with the "practical events before and after" the speech utterance or the context, and "the life-history of the speaker and hearer," or the culture. It is these two extra linguistic factors plus the linguistic elements - lexical and structural - that yield the total meaning of our utterances.

"The linguistic forms of my language 'mean' the situations in which I use them. For me to be thoroughly understood, therefore, the hearer must in some way grasp completely the 'situation' /both contextual and cultural/ as they stimulate my utterance."<sup>(2)</sup>

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1. Leonard Bloomfield, Language, p. 23

2. Charles O. Fries, Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, p. 57



If the speaker is of our language we can on many occasions come to an understanding with such a speaker because:

- a) We use the "same" linguistic forms (forms we have both grown up with); or the Context.
- b) We have probably had much experiences in common in physical arrangements of life, customs, activities, attitudes, ideals, characteristics of the country we have lived in; or the Culture.<sup>(1)</sup>

If, however, a person is not a native speaker of our language and does not, therefore, have the above points in common with us, he may misunderstand and misinterpret the language utterances he is faced with. He must, in learning about the linguistic forms, associate them with the situations in which they occur to be able to grasp their meaning; thus enabling him to make more meaningful responses to them.

In the sentence The bear was killed, one needs to know the nature of the language utterance "r - s"; that is the meanings of the individual words in the sentence, and the meanings derived from the forms and the order of the words in the sentence. In addition, however, he needs to know the context or "situation" in which the utterance is made.<sup>(2)</sup> "Contextual facts ... are general situational factors that all persons (whatever their cultural background may be) will respond and react to in the same way."<sup>(3)</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 58

2. Raja T. Nasr, The Teaching of English to Arab Students, unpublished book. This is not yet the concrete "S - R", for those are in the world of experience in a special culture and will be discussed under "culture" in this chapter.

3. Ibid.

In the above mentioned sentence, The bear was killed, the context or situation in which the words are formed (i.e. the sum total of facts about the bear, the killing and maybe the community) and the student's knowledge about the situation will contribute a great deal to the understanding of the sentence and make it possible, therefore for him to react to it. Following are some examples of different situations that might affect the meaning of the statement in a different way; <sup>(1)</sup> that is, when "r + s" is produced in different "S" its meaning and as a result changes the meaning of the response, "R."

1. The bear is one of the best in the zoo, and is known for his numerous tricks which people from all over the country come to see. Here the sentence The bear was killed would fill the student with sorrow for having lost such a wonderful animal, and in most probability the reader would develop a negative attitude towards the killer (whoever it may be).

2. The bear had escaped from the zoo and had already killed a small child. Here the statement The bear was killed would make the student extremely happy and would bring security to the community. <sup>(2)</sup>

This shows the different reactions one can have towards a sentence after one knows the context in which it is uttered, and how each reaction changed the meaning of the "same" linguistic utterance. If a bystander heard such a statement as The bear was killed he might not be moved at all and this reaction would make the statement meaningless.

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

We cannot therefore divorce a sentence from its context and teach it as a separate sentence stressing only the linguistic factors affecting its meaning.

The same theory must be applied when teaching or learning the components of language. For what is the use of saying that /p/ vs. /b/ is problematic for Arab students, or that /p/ is a phonetic sound not a phonemic sound in Arabic, if we do not put it in its context which is the lexical item, as in pill and bill so that it will add in making the phonology more meaningful.

The context of a word - which is a sentence - is also important for it will help a person identify the new word by providing clues to its meaning. (1) When one reads or hears a word for the first time in an utterance where it is the only word he doesn't know, the rest of the lexical items determine its meaning. That is to say, that while listening to the use of a word in a sentence and its distribution in other sentences among other words and the correlation of these words together, one slowly arrives at its meaning in that context. Then slowly again as it is heard in other contexts one knows more of its meaning. For example, if one has never heard the word hockey before, and he overheard or read a conversation in which the following sentences occur:

He plays hockey very well ... when he learned how to play hockey he stopped practicing basket ball ... He's on the hockey team now.

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1. Klausmeier, et al, Teaching in the Elementary School, p. 190

After hearing the first sentence we know that hockey is "played," and therefore must be either a game or a musical instrument. With the second sentence it becomes clear that it is a game, and the meaning is narrowed down until we can get a clear idea of what is really meant. Although the word might have been unfamiliar, its meaning became clear as we listened or read. (1)

Since the context of a word determines its meaning and no two contexts are exactly the same, no two meanings can even be the same. The "one word, one meaning" idea, therefore, is false. No word ever has exactly the same meaning twice. (2) "How can we 'fix the meaning' even for as common an expression as 'to believe in' when it can be used in such sentences as the following?

I believe in you (I have confidence in you)

I believe in democracy (I accept the principles implied by the term democracy)

I believe in Santa Claus (It's my opinion that Santa Clause exists)" (3)

Very often we want people to use a word as we use it and have it mean the same, but how can they if their experiences are different. Thinking that "one word has only one meaning" or taking a word out of its context is the cause of so much misunderstanding in the world today. It would be startling indeed if the word justice for example, had the same meaning to the Security Council members in the United Nations;

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1. Ibid., at 25; Readings for Liberal Education, p. 151

2. Ibid., p. 154

3. Ibid.

we should get nothing but unanimous decision. (1)

We cannot, therefore, say that we know the meaning of a word before it is uttered. We can know approximately what it will mean. (2)  
To illustrate this point is a conversation from "Alice in Wonderland."  
Alice and Humpty Dumpty were having an argument at the end of which Humpty Dumpty made this statement:

Humpty Dumpty: ..."there's glory for you!"

Alice: "I don't know what you mean by glory,"

Humpty Dumpty: ..."Of course you don't - till I tell you. I meant 'There's a nice knock-down argument for you!'"

Alice: "But 'glory' doesn't mean 'a nice knock-down argument,'"

Humpty Dumpty: "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less." (3)

From all this, however, we cannot say we must discard the dictionary since context is so important." Any word in a sentence - any sentence in a paragraph, any paragraph in a larger unit - whose meaning is revealed by its context, is itself part of the context of the rest of the text. To look up a word in a dictionary, therefore, frequently explains not only that word itself, but the rest of the sentence, paragraph, conversation, or essay in which it is found. All words within a given

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1. Ibid., p. 156

2. Ibid., p. 155.

3. Lewis Carroll, The complete Works of, pp. 215 - 214.

context interact upon one another.<sup>(1)</sup>

If we ignore the context and take a word out of its contextual setting we create a misunderstanding. For example, "A reviewer maybe quoted on the jacket of a book as having said, 'a brilliant work', while reading of the context may reveal that what he really said was, 'It just falls short of being a brilliant work.'"<sup>(2)</sup> An interpretation must be based, therefore, on the totality of contexts. If it were otherwise, we should not be able to account for the fact that even if we fail to use the right (customary) words in some situations, people can very frequently understand us."<sup>(3)</sup> For example, a girl (A) was telling another (B) about a conversation she had with a man on the phone and she concluded by saying:

A. ... "and he saw what I meant."

B. "You mean he heard what you meant"

A. "Yes, that is what I mean. Didn't I say that?"

of course it was understood from the beginning what was meant because the man could not have possibly "seen" what she said or meant since the conversation was by phone. Just the opposite could be true, however, that the hearer interprets what he thought the words meant and what they customarily mean, and fails to take the meanings of the words as they are literally. For example:

Humpty Dumpty: "So here's a question for you. How old did you say you were?"

Alice: ... "Seven years and six months."

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1. Leake, et al's op. cit., p. 157

2. Ibid., p. 150 This was explained clearly under word order in Chapter One.

3. Ibid., p. 155

Humpty Dumpty: "Wrong!" ... "You never said a word like it."

Alice: "I thought you meant 'How old are you?'"

Humpty Dumpty: "If I'd meant that, I'd have said it." (1)

Words naturally mean different things to different people, but if we can always remember that no word ever has the same meaning twice, then we will develop the habit of examining contexts, and this enables us to have a better understanding of what others are trying to say. As it is, people are all too likely to have 'signal reactions to words or read into people's remarks meanings that were never intended.' We cannot expect people to use words like we use them specially if their background experiences have been different.<sup>(2)</sup>

In foreign language teaching and learning, contextual orientations cannot be escaped. In the beginning stages of language learning it may be important to emphasize language skills at the expense of extralinguistic meaning, specially if one of the aims is to make linguistic features matters of automatic habit; but once the basic phonology and grammatical features are mastered (or neatly mastered), there should be an attempt at the discussion of stories and other passages where there is a connection of thought between sentences.<sup>(3)</sup>

At the beginning of this chapter, culture was defined as the "life-history" of the people. People's cultural background then includes their heritages, customs, traditions, ways of thinking and behavioral mannerisms.<sup>(4)</sup> These very same "ways of a people" are the basis for

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1. Lewis Carroll, op. cit., p. 211

2. Locke, et al, op. cit., p. 156

3. Nasr, op. cit.

Chapter Three deals with the different ways one can bring this about.

4. Ibid.

the people's stimuli for, and responses to, their languages utterances. To obtain complete understanding of an utterance, therefore, the student must know about the background of it in order to derive complete meaning from it. An example from literature will serve as an example.

After twenty years of sleep away from his town, Rip Van Winkle<sup>(1)</sup> returned to his village in the midst of an election. "With his long "grizzled beard," and "uncouth dress," and a dress on his shoulders ... "he soon attracted the attention of the town politicians," when they started to question him one of his utterances almost caused a riot:

"Alas! Gentlemen," said Rip, "I am a peace/quiet man, a native of this place, and a loyal subject of the King. God bless him!"

Here was a general bust from the bystanders. A tory! a tory! a spy! a refugee! hustle him! away with him! "It was with great difficulty that the self-important man with the cocked hat restored order ..."

The contextual setting for the utterance is the fact that twenty years had elapsed, information about his dress and manner, and that it attracted the attention of the people, but it was neither this nor the linguistic meaning that produced the response. It was the significance of the twenty years, from the historical-cultural point of view, that was the keynote to the behavior of the people. Twenty years before, such a statement would have been expected from Rip and would have been met with approval, making him a "good" citizen. But during those twenty years there had been history, including the Revolutionary War. The utterance still had the same linguistic meaning as it would have had

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1. Washington Irving, The Sketch Book, p. 26.



twenty years earlier but its cultural meaning has changed. For now it meant that Rip was an "enemy" of the newly established government. (1)

All this points to the importance of understanding the cultural background of our utterances, for as Fries (2) says "To grasp only the linguistic meaning is 'mere verbalism.'" (3)

The purpose of learning a foreign language is to communicate ideas and meanings in that language. Communication is a two-way process and in order to make this "give and take" meaningful, the student must know enough about the culture of the native speaker in order to understand (or respond to) it fully i.e. to attach complete and total meaning to its features. (8)

Cultural orientation means learning about the culture of the foreign language to be able to respond to it in the proper way. (4)

When learning about a foreign culture the student may transfer his native culture habits (as he is liable to do with linguistic forms) to the foreign culture; it would be obvious then that we teachers should compare the two cultural systems and then be able to predict what the trouble will be. (5)

"We constantly misinterpret each other across cultures." (6) One

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1. Ibid., p. 28ff.

2. Charles Fries, The Structure of English, p. 295.

3. Ibid.

4. Nasr, op. cit.

5. Lado, op. cit., p. 114.

6. Ibid., p. 8.

must not ignore the cultural differences of he will misjudge his cultural neighbor as he often does for a form of behavior that to one culture has one meaning may have another meaning to a second culture ; if the person does not know the difference in meaning he might ascribe to them the intention that the same behavior would imply to his cultural, and would pass on them the same judgement as on his fellow members in society. In fact, unfortunately, that is exactly what people do in most cases at present. (1) For example, in the American culture is a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals which is concerned with the feelings of dogs, cats, horses, and other domestic animals. (2) On this basis the Americans ascribe the meaning "cruel" to our game of hunting birds and eating them. In our culture this game is a sport which is part of the native culture of the people.

A certain form of behavior in a particular culture might be found in another culture but actually have two different meanings. For example, drinking milk at meals is a standard practice in the United States for all people, its primary meaning being that of food and standard drink at meal time. It does not have any special connotation of social class, national groups, age groups or economic status. (3) In Lebanon, however, milk at meal time is not a standard drink. Some children may drink it; some adults may drink it for some special reason; some individuals or families or groups may drink it because

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1. Ibid.

2. Lado, op. cit., p. 117

3. Ibid., p. 118

of special cultural contacts. Drinking milk at meals in Lebanon is not the standard drink; it is a special drink for a special people on a special occasion, (for example, when prescribed by the doctor).<sup>(1)</sup>

Language is not independent of behavior. Language is behavior. It follows, then, that the structures of language are the structures of behavior and should not be divorced from them.<sup>(2)</sup> "Verbal and non verbal activity is a unified whole."<sup>(3)</sup> When students are taught the language of a people they must also be taught its equivalent - behavior - that behavior which reflects, the culture from which the language sprang. To be able to get the total meaning of a society which is made up of the social behavior of its people and its language one must study both as one.<sup>(4)</sup>

One must never teach the speech utterance without its equivalent in behavior; because one exists for the other and is useful to it. Why do we say then Open the door, if it will not bring the correct behavioral pattern response. When teaching, therefore, the sentence Open the door in any context, we must demonstrate the responses it it might elicit in the different situations.<sup>(5)</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Kenneth Pike, Language, p. 2

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. The method for doing this successfully will be discussed in Chapter Three.

Much cooperation and communication between people of a culture is effected without language. For example: handling objects, as when we place an object into another's hand; using gestures, as when we point at something; contacts, as nodding and caressing; using non-linguistic sounds both non verbal, as snapping the fingers and applause, and vocal, as laughing and crying. (1)

It is not enough to know only the customary behavioral patterns in a culture but also the customary or correct, and the improper linguistic speech forms of that culture. The speech forms which are termed "improper" are usually those uttered only under restricted circumstances. If a speaker uttered them outside this restriction he is shamed or punished. Knowing about the circumstances as well is important. These improper forms belong usually to certain spheres of meaning, but often enough the forms with the same denotation exist side by side with the improper connotation. For example: prostitute by the side of the improper whore. (2) One can see from this how important this information can be to a foreign student, for if he were to look up the words in the dictionary he would see that they have the "same" meaning; not knowing the connotative significance of their meaning would probably prompt him to use them interchangeably.

Another type of "improper" connotation, due to the culture, is the avoidance of "ominous" speech-forms, which symbolize something

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1. Bloomfield, op. cit., p. 144.

2. Ibid., p. 115

(1) painful or dangerous. For example: When an Arab mentions the word death, some terrible accident or tragedy, he always follows his utterance with a phrase which literally translated means "Far from you." When he mentions excretory functions or something "dirty" like a shoe he always follows it with /ʔazallak/. "Without reflection on your dignity."

"Again in the realm of language rather than that of culture as such, the harm that we do our students by not teaching them a foreign language or by teaching it as if it were just different words from those of our own language lies in the false idea they will hold of what it means to learn a foreign language. They will never be ready to struggle to pronounce things in different sound units, different intonation, different rhythm and stress, different constructions, and even different units of meaning /in their contextual and cultural setting/ unless they realize that this is exactly what's involved in learning a foreign language, and that although learning these things will require effort, often dull, and uninteresting, the reward for the effort will be great." (2)

"Cultural orientation does not aim to superimpose one culture upon another; it aims, however, to do two things:

1. help students of a foreign language understand the language better by connecting its features with the significant cultural features of the native speakers of that language, and

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1. Ibid.

2. Lado, op. cit., p. 8

2. promote international and intercultural understanding, which is one of the more idealistic aims of foreign language teaching and learning." (1)

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1. Nasr, op. cit.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGE AND MEANING

The mastery of the components of a foreign language is quite essential on both the receptive and productive levels, but unless these components (phonology, vocabulary, and grammar) are learned simultaneously with the situations in which they appear and the behavioral patterns which they elicit they will not be meaningful. Furthermore, one cannot be said to have mastered a foreign language until the signalling devices of that foreign language have become matters of automatic habit.

The ideal method of teaching a language is to take the student right out into the situation and teach him the utterance he must say in order to get the responses he wants. For example, when a person is hungry and points to food he could be taught to say food or apple or whatever it is that will, when uttered, bring about the response which will satisfy his hunger.

In the classroom this method is quite obviously impossible. For this reason teachers are forced to use other methods in order to bridge the gap between the actual "S - R" and the learned "r - s". These methods help in bringing to the class the life situations which accompany language utterances. Some of these methods actually involve demonstrations of the "exact" behavioral pattern of the utterance; others supplement the words with pictures, stories, and other devices.

This chapter discusses some of the various methods used in teaching a language to students of another tongue.

The meaning of the words of a language ranges from concrete to abstract. The closer a word is to some possible presentation the easier it is to teach and learn. (1) An illustration of a concrete context would be, for example, the word blue put on a blue paper, the word hot or cold on the water faucet, the word milk on the milk bottle. Concreteness is also achieved by feeling or seeing the action conveyed by a word as in skip, hop, run; hearing the characteristics expressed by loud, pop, noisy; and experiencing the quality conveyed by such words as sweet and bitter. (2)

Another method for concrete presentation is the use of still pictures which when used as the context of a word aids the student in understanding its meaning. (3) Still pictures often clearly resemble the real thing, but the teacher should supplement the picture with verbal symbols. This means, of course, that the word and the picture go hand in hand, and must be presented together. It is not sufficient to present the picture alone and expect the student to get the full meaning of an utterance.

By means of a picture a new word or sentence may be presented. For example, dog may be introduced with a picture. The dog jumps may be presented by a picture or a drawing of a dog jumping. Another way of using pictures would be to draw the outline of a house and label door, window, roof, and other parts. (4)

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1. Edgar Dale, Audie Visual Methods in Teaching, p. 350.

2. Klaus Meier, et al, Teaching in the Elementary School, p. 189.

3. Dale, op. cit., p. 254.

4. Klausmeier, et al, op. cit., pp. 189 - 90.



In using pictures, however, teachers should make sure that the students do not interpret the picture in their own cultural terms, that is, if a picture portrays a special cultural pattern of the foreign language the teacher must explain it before using it as a context for a foreign linguistic utterance. (1) For example, if an Arab student sees a picture of some people walking on the street with shorts on, there is the danger he might make a generalization and think that everywhere in America people walk in the streets with shorts on. Making further investigations he might discover that the picture was taken near a tennis court or in a special setting or background. All this must be explained to the students so they will not misinterpret the cultural background of the picture. It is because of such misinterpretations that some Americans in the U.S.A. today still believe that we ride on camels for transportation.

The picture must be an aid only, not an end it must be a supplement to the context for further word identification. As Dr. Dale (2) says, "Pictures supplement reading by making the printed page more concrete and meaningful." Pictures can also be used as a context for a composition. For example, the teacher could show the class a picture of an automobile accident and tell the students to imagine the "S - r - s - R" of the whole situation and to write it down.

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1. Dale, op. cit., p. 254.

2. Ibid.

Another method of bringing to class actual life situations is to demonstrate the "actual" action or responses of the utterances. For example, in teaching the sentence I open the door, the teacher could actually go over to the door and open it as he utters the words; also in I am walking, he could demonstrate to the class the meaning responses of those words. In such cases the teachers or students have taken an utterance and created in class the "S - R" for its meaning. When a student participates meaningfully in dramatization the importance lies in that he uses the words as his own and fills them with personal meaning. This can be specially significant as an aid to the teacher in several ways. For example, in teaching "statement patterns" (or other grammatical devices), greetings and leave takings may be practiced in a role-playing situation. Two students could demonstrate the conversation that takes place between friends in the morning; the following could be part of this demonstration:

- A. Good morning, Mary.
- B. Good morning, Leila.
- A. How are you today?
- B. Fine, thank you, And you?
- A. Very well, thanks.

Dramatization is also significant in getting the "feelings" of some characters of a story or a play. In learning about a certain form of government, for example, the students could turn the class into a parliament and play the roles of the different members, using words,

gesture, behavioral patterns, and the cultural set up of the country and its people. This makes the lesson all the more meaningful and concrete since the students themselves have produced the "exact" situation in which the language utterances are used. A trip to the post office can be another topic for dramatization. Here the students will learn the vocabulary items involved in such an experience, and the wording of the utterances, and the responses they might get.

Dramatization as a group response is a very good teaching aid, for it teaches students to express themselves well and thus add to the meaning of the words they use the behavior that goes with words and that will help to define it. (1)

The use of stories is quite helpful to both teachers and Arab students since it provides, in itself, the context for the words used. As students listen to a story they will learn to associate the lexical items together and understand their relationship with what has been said and with what will come and slowly arrive at the total meaning.

One of the many ways to use a story is, to create the context by making up a story in a game form; that is, each student will say a sentence using one word, and then the next student will continue its meaning with another phrase and so on. Also, after a story has been read where the context is already given the students could choose the new words and discuss their use and the responses they produce. A discussion could then follow with the following questions as stimuli:

Which words created a pleasant or unpleasant feeling? Which words were descriptive? Why did the author use this word and for what purpose?

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1. Klausmaier, et al, op. cit., p. 216

A story could also be used for the practice of tenses or for training in the use of contrasted words. It can also be used to teach students to read with expression (intonation, stress, and other language components.) Though a story provides its own contextual setting and, therefore, could be used in teaching all the components of language, that should not prevent teachers from using with it other aids such as pictures, and recordings.

Whereas the context of a story is inherent in the story itself, the context for conversation is produced or created by the group who is conversing. Conversation can, therefore, be used in classroom in training the students to formulate communicative ideas which, when uttered, produce the "S - R" required for the context.

Discussion of activities, projects and problems is very active, for it brings about the context through everybody's cooperation. One of its aims could be, for example, developing habits in the use of inflection for tense and number, and on this basis introduce a problem or theme for conversation. Since conversations are oral, they can be used in training students to listen to their mistakes and the mistakes of others and the corrections. Mimicing the teacher in conversation is a very good device for learning intonation and other phonological elements as rhythm and stress. The use of conversation as a technique may also help students to master the use of contractions.

Conversation topics should always arise from the fairly immediate

experience of students; conversation can itself be an aim in teaching, for it is an art and should be developed in the student from the time they are in Kindergarten. (1)

Historical data are also important in teaching and must also be used as a contextual background for an utterance whether in conversation, a story, or a simple sentence structure. For example, "To say, 'there was no running water or electricity in the home' does not condemn an English house in 1570, but says a great deal against a home in Chicago in 1941." (2) Historical information should be used as a method in giving the backgroundsetting for a story, a personality, a play or other readings; it is especially important for cultural orientation.

Another device which is frequently used in teaching a foreign language is translation. Teachers should try in all cases to correlate situations with the language features of the foreign language without first going through the native language. Translating separate lexical items is harmful unless the student knows the range of meaning of that word in the foreign language. The student might, when put in a situation, "think" in his own language and then find himself translating the response into English and thus coming out with the "wrong" sentence. As was pointed out in Chapter One, a student might in say It nice for It is nice since the verb to be is not used in Arabic in the present tense. Or he might use the word /s f./ as row when he means class in English. (3)

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1. Khausmeier, et al, op. cit., p. 398

2. Locke, et al, Readings for Liberal Education, p. 156

3. Nass, op. cit.

In teaching a foreign language, however, translation may be helpful when it saves time, as in the use of technical items; in the explanation of abstract words such as beauty; where direct correlation between situation and language features proves difficult because of some cultural pattern; and when part of the aim is teaching interpretation. (1)

As a final word, it can be said of such methods that they are an added "S - R" used primarily to make the whole relationship of a language utterance ("r - s") and its meaning more understood and better like the "real" usage of the words in actual life situations. These methods have been discussed to help teachers in teaching a foreign language meaningfully, and to help students in mastering its features and the contextual and cultural set up in which these features are used.

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1. Ibid.

### CONCLUSION

It is hoped that now as the reader begins once more to utter "r's" and hear "a's" he is more conscious of his surrounding situations and responses. It is also hoped that he sees the significance and practicality of contextual and cultural orientation as it affects language and promotes understanding. These pages should now be a beginning for the reader as a means in teaching, learning, and understanding a foreign language.

"Only in so far as such contextual (and cultural) orientation is achieved is the foreign language really "mastered" and on no less terms can there be real "understanding" between those who speak different tongues."<sup>(1)</sup>

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1. Charles C. Fries, Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, p. 61

## APPENDIX

### FIVE SAMPLE LESSON PLANS

#### I

Class: Fourth Secondary.

Time: Fifty minutes.

Subject: English Literature.

Aim: Punctuation in Composition

Objectives: a) The use of the period, comma and question mark.

b) The ability to formulate words from a concrete context-still picture.

Aids: a) Still picture to give context and stimulate students to use appropriate words.

b) Chalkboard; an aid in visual identification of words and other symbols.

(The picture to be used is a coloured still picture of a few girls enjoying a picnic. Any other example would do just as well. The questions about the picture are only some of the various examples questions, that could be raised as one is looking at such a view).

Procedure:

I. Review in discussion form the uses of the comma, period, and question mark.



A. The Question Mark.

1. What is the symbol for a question mark? (Write it on the board).

2. When is it used?

a. At the end of a question. (Write question on board).

b. Demonstrate a conversation with a student and write it on the board; For example,

Hello (Does it need "?")

Hello

How are you? (Does it need "?")

I am fine. (Does it need "?")

Why is your name? (Does it need "?")

Mary.

c. Two students will now converse together and their conversation could be written on the board while a student punctuates it.

B. The Period.

1. What is the symbol for a period? (Write it on board)

2. When is it used?

a. End of greetings, for example; good morning.

b. End of a statement, for example; I went to school.

c. End of a command, for example; Close the door.

d. End of an abbreviation, for example; etc. Co. Mr. Jones.

e. After initials, for example; A.S.G., U.N., B.C.W.

C. The Comma.

1. What is the symbol? (Write it on the board)
2. When is it used?
  - a. After Yes and No. Give examples.
    1. Yes, thank you.
    2. No, thank you.
  - b. After each item in a series. Give examples.
    1. I ate bananas, apples, oranges, and cakes.
    2. I like horses, dogs, and cats.

D. Any question about these?

II. Show colored picture (as context).

A. When all have seen it, stimulate the discussion with such questions as:

1. What is the theme of this picture? "A Picnic".
2. Have you ever been on a picnic? What in this picture reminds you of your picnic?
3. Do you think the girls are students? How do you know?
4. What time of the year is it? How do you know?
5. How does color help us know the meaning of this picture?
6. How do you think the girls planned this picnic?
7. What time of day is it?
8. What will they do at the close of the day? Will they go home or to school?

B. Take out your composition copy books and write the story of these young girls; before the picture, during the picture and after the picture. Pay attention especially to ", " . " ? " .

C. Hang up the picture in front of class so all could see it as they write.

III. Assignment: Read in your books the chapter on the other punctuation marks and their uses.

II

Class: Fourth Secondary

Time: Fifty minutes.

Subject: English Literature

Aim: Reading with expression.

Objection: The effect of intonation and stress on meaning.

Aids: a) The use of a story (given as a reading assignment) as a context for character analysis of both actions and utterances.

b) Use of chalk board as a visual aid.

Story:

THE SAMPLER

I.V. Morris

In a certain store where they sell plum puddings, a number of these delicious articles are laid out in a row during the Christmas season. Here you may select the one which is most to your taste, and you are even allowed to sample the various qualities before coming to a decision.

I have often wondered whether this privilege was not imposed on by people who had no intention of making a purchase, and one day when my curiosity drove me to ask this question of the shop girl, I learned it was indeed the case.

"Now there's one old gentleman, for instance," she told me, "who comes here almost every week and samples each one of the puddings, though he never buys anything and I suspect he never will. I remember

him from last year and the year before that too. Well, let him come if he wants it that bad, say I, and welcome it. And what's more, I hope there are a lot more stores where he can go and get his share. He looks as if he needed it all right, and I suppose they can afford it."

She was still speaking when an elderly gentleman limped up to the counter and began scrutinizing the row of puddings with great interest.

"Why there's the very party I've been telling you about," whispered the shop girl. "Just you watch him now." And then turning to him: "Would you like to sample them, sir? Here's spoon for you to use."

The elderly gentleman, who, as the novelist says, was poorly but neatly dressed, accepted the spoon and began eagerly to sample one after another of the puddings, only breaking off occasionally to wipe his red eyes with a large torn handkerchief which he drew from the breast pocket of his shoddy overcoat.

"This is quite good," he declared of one variety, and when he came to the next, "This is not bad either, but a trifle too heavy." All the time it was quite evident that he sincerely believed that he might eventually buy one of these puddings, and I am positive that he did not for a moment feel that he was in any way cheating the store. Poor old chap! Probably he had come down in the world and this sampling was all that was left him from the time when he could afford to come and select his favorite pudding, which he would later carry home under his arm.

Amidst the throng of happy, prosperous looking Christmas shoppers, the little black figure of the old man seemed incongruous and pathetic, and in a burst of benevolence, one of those bursts which so often bring pain instead of joy, I went up to him and said:

"Pardon me, sir, will you do me a favor? Let me purchase you one of these puddings. It would give me such pleasure."

"Excuse me," he said, with more dignity than I would have thought possible considering his appearance, "I do not believe I have the pleasure of knowing you. Undoubtedly you have mistaken me for someone else." And with a quick decision he turned to the shop girl and said in a loud voice: "Kindly pack me up this one here. I will take it with me." He pointed at one of the largest and most expensive of the puddings.

In surprise, the girl took down the pudding from its stand and proceeded to make a parcel of it, while he extracted a worn little black pocketbook and began counting out shillings and sixpenny pieces on to the counter. To save his "honour" he had been forced into a purchase which he could not possibly afford and which probably meant many bitter privations in other things. How I longed for the power to unsay my tactless words! It was too late though, and I felt that the kindest thing I could do now would be to walk away.

"You pay at the desk," the shop girl was telling him, but he did not seem to understand and kept trying to put the coins into her hand. And that was the last I saw or heard of the old man. Now he can never come there to sample plum puddings any more.

### Procedure:

I. Review in discussion form the various meanings of the story.

A. Contextual meaning.

1. During what time of the year does this story take place?

2. Why do you think the author wanted it to be Christmas?

What does Christmas time usually mean?

a. A time of joy when you want everyone to be happy.

b. A time of gifts and sharing.

c. In general a busy, happy, time for all.

3. With these facts in mind how does paragraph eight affect you now?

4. What was your reaction as you first read this paragraph?

a. What do you feel for the old man?

b. What words has the author used to bring about your feelings?

i. Happy

ii. Black (sad color)

iii. Old man

iv. Pathetic

v. Incongruous

vi. Benevolence

5. If we remove the word "Christmas" what would happen to the meaning of the paragraph? Do the words effect you in the same way?

B. Cultural meaning.

1. What does the title of the story mean?

2. Do we have such a custom in Lebanon?

3. Can this story, therefore, have taken place in Lebanon?

a. What do you think of such a custom?

- b. Do you really think it helps the poor?
  - c. Do you think it was good habit or a bad one for this old man in the story.
  - d. What do you think he will do now? Find work or look for another shop and sample out food?
  - e. Do you think it is hygienic to sample out food?
4. In what country did this story take place? How did you know? - (shillings and pence).
  5. What, then, in summary are the two main points which are important for our understanding of the characters of this story and their actions?
    - a. The fact that it is Christmas.
    - b. The fact that there is sampling in England.

## II. Character Analysis.

### A. The Narrator.

1. If you were the narrator what would be your actions and words? (Answer this in the light of the above two facts.)  
(As the girls speak up for the characters, correct intonation and stress should be indicated and demonstrated and the student should repeat the response.)
  - a. Would you have done what he did? Why?
  - b. Would you have walked away? Why?
2. Does paragraph eight justify the words of the narrator?
3. Who would like to read all his lives and interpret them for us. (Here the class goes over the lines and special discussion is carried as to their intonational patterns).



4. Who would like to be the narrator? (From all the readings in class of to this part the "best" is chosen).

B. The Old Man.

1. Do you agree or disagree with his words and actioning? Why?  
Read them.
2. What would you have done or said? Would you have accepted the favor?
3. Should you pride and honor always be greater than your need?  
(Discuss)
4. Who would like to read the old man's part? (Have several read and let class evaluate on the basis of intonation and stress. Choose the one who gets across the correct meaning).

C. The shop Girl.

1. What is important about her? Why did the author put her in?
2. How would you say her lines and how would you show surprise?
3. Who would like to try out her part? (Follow same procedure as the previous one, in choosing the right actor).

- D. The "author" or real narrator. We need a student for this part who will read all the story excluding the dialogues.  
(Choose one on the basis of previous reading of the story: a student with a good, clear, voice.

E. The characters now chosen will study their lines well.

For next time you will read them to the class and we will record the story.

1. Choose one to be responsible for the recorder.
  2. Another student to "set the style."
- F. The rest of the class will be the critical audience.

### III

Class: Fourth Secondary

Time: Fifty minutes.

Subject: English Literature

Aim: Reading with expression.

Objectives: The effect of intonation and stress on meaning.

- Methods:
- a) Dramatization of words and actions of the characters already analysed.
  - b) Recording of the voices as a means for evaluating intonation and stress.

Procedure:

#### I. Setting the "Stage".

##### A. Fixing up acting space.

1. Fix place of recorder and microphones.
2. What will we use as counter?
3. We need puddings and a spoon?
4. Other props?

##### B. Explain procedure of play.

1. The old man and narrator leave room or acting space.
2. The shop girl is dusting the counter and chairs.
3. The "author" comes from the audience and begins to read in front of microphone.
4. Ready? Any questions?
5. Audience listens and watches carefully.

II. Acting and recording of "The Sampler as explained.

III. Evaluation.

A. Reviewed recorder and listen to the reading. While listening the audience, and teacher, and each should take down notes.

B. Constructive criticism should follow stimulated by such questions as:

1. Did the meaning of the story come across well?
2. According to the previous analysis did each character portray the proper emotions in their voices and actions? How? How not?
3. Give examples when you think other expressions would have been better for the meaning.
4. What are some of the best sentences said: Why?
5. How was the authors voice? Could it be improved? How?
6. Did you enjoy this dramatization?
7. Did it help you in understanding the words and actions better? How? What new insight did you gain from it?

IV. Assignment: Read the next short story for home work.

IV

Class: Fourth Secondary

Time: Fifty minutes.

Subject: English Literature

Aim: Appreciation and understanding of poetry.

- Objectives:
- a) Get the "picture" of the images in the story.
  - b) Mastery of the different lexical items in their contexts and in other contexts.

Aids: Chalkboard and mimeographed sheets. (The mimeographed sheets contain a poem which the students have prepared for home-work. It is "The Rhodora" by Ralph Waldo Emerson.)

THE RHODORA

On Being asked, whence is the flower?

In May, when sea-winds pierced our solitudes,  
I found the fresh Rhodora in the woods,  
Spreading its leafless blooms in damp nook,  
To please the desert and the sluggish brook.  
The purple petals, fallen in the pool,  
Made the black water with their beauty gay;  
Here might the red-bird come his plumes to cool,  
And court the flower that cheapens his array.

Rhodora! if sages ask thee why  
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,  
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,  
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being:  
Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!  
I never thought to ask, I never knew!  
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose  
The self-same Power that brought me there brought you.

(1839)

Procedure:

I. Recitation.

- A. Who is the author of the poem you have studied?
  1. Nationality?
  2. Century?
- B. What is "The Rhodora"?
- C. On what occasion or for what reason was it written?
- D. What does "when" mean?
- E. What do the words of the first line tell us? Why are they important?
  1. They set the mood.
  2. What does solitude here mean?
- F. What do the next few lines tell us?
  1. Describe the flower.
  2. What are the words that serve the purpose?

- a. Fresh
- b. Leafless
- c. Damp
- d. Nook

3. Have you ever seen a flower in the nook of a rock?
4. What is the meaning of the following words and use them in sentences:

- a. Fresh
- b. Damp
- c. Sluggish
- d. Brook

G. How does he describe the beauty of the flower?

- 1. Read the sixth line and explain.
- 2. What negative reaction do they produce?

H. In what lines does Emerson answer the question "from where is the flower"?

I. Read last eight lines.

- 1. Who are the sages? Sages are also plants. How do we know which meaning is the right one? Can we substitute one meaning for the other and still have the same over all meaning?
- 2. How in these lines is Emerson treating the flower?
- 3. What is the philosophic thought in line eleven, and twelve?
- 4. What is the meaning of:

- a. wert
- b. selfsame

5. Why is "Power" in capital letters?
  6. Are you satisfied with Emerson's answer?
  - J. The philosophic questions in this poem.
    1. God's work is superhuman as he is.
    2. Being human, we cannot explain his work, but we try.
    3. Emerson has tried in a poem.
  - K. Any further questions? Have a student read the poem and tell class to listen to flow of meaning and rhythm.
- III. Let students take out sheets of paper and answer the following questions: (write them on board).
- A. State in a few lines the main philosophic idea in this poem.
  - B. Can the meaning from this poem be applied to other works of creation, or only to a flower? Explain. In other words, is the "Rhodora" symbolical? of what?
- III. Assignment: (write it on board) The next poem on sheets.





Class: Fourth Secondary

Time: Fifty minutes.

Subject: English Literature

Aim: Appreciation and understanding of poetry

Objectives: a) Mastery of the different meanings of the lexical items,  
in their context and outside this context.

b) Understanding the different images in the poem and  
purpose for poem.

Aids: Chalkboard and mimeographed sheets. (The mimeographed sheets  
contain a poem which the students leave prepared for home - work.  
It is "If..." by Rudyard Kipling).

IF -----

If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream -- and not make dreams your master;

If you can think -- and not make thoughts your aim,

If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster

And treat those two imposters just the same;

If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken

Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,

Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,

And stoop and build'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings

And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,

And lose, and start again at your beginnings

And never breathe a word about your loss;

If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew

To serve your turn long after they are gone,

And so hold on when there is nothing in you

Except the will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,

Or walk with Kings -- nor lose the common touch,

If neither fees nor loving friends can hurt you,

If all men count with you, but none too much;

If you can fill the unforgiving minute

With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,

Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,

And -- which is more -- you'll be a Man, my son!

Rudyard Kipling

Procedure:

I. Recitation

- A. Did you enjoy reading this poem? Why?
- B. Would any of you like to try and do the things it mentions?  
Do you know anyone that "Rudyard Kipling would call "a man"?"
- C. Why do you think Kipling wrote this poem? What was his purpose?
- D. What do you know about the author? (write them on board)

- 1. Nationality
- 2. Other works

E. What are the main thoughts in the first stanza?

- 1. What do the following expressions mean?
  - a. Keep one's head.
  - b. Lose one's head.
  - c. Make allowance.
    - i. How else do we use the word allowance?
    - ii. Use it in sentence.
- 2. What word describes the man in the last line of this stanza?

F. What are the main thoughts of the second stanza?

- 1. What does it mean to "make dreams your master"?
- 2. Could we use "Don't count your chickens before they hatch" as an explanation of the second line of this stanza?
- 3. Why are the words "Triumph" and "Disaster" capitalized?
- 4. What are the meanings of the following words: Use them in sentences. (write sentences on board)

- a. Imposter
- b. Twisted
- c. Knaves

5. Give an example (from your experience or someone you know) of the meaning of the last four lines on this stanza.

G. What are the meanings of the following words. Use them in sentences. (Write them on the board.)

1. Heap

2. Pitch-and-toss

3. Sinew

H. What are the main ideas of this third stanza?

1. What different pictures do you get from these lines?

2. Why is "WILL" capitalized?

3. Who does the author mean by "them" in the last line?

I. How do we know that this poem is not a monologue?

1. Did the author have a son?

2. Can this poem be said to anyone?

J. What are the main ideas in the last stanza?

1. What are the meaning of the following words?

a. Virtue

b. Common touch

c. Unforgiving

2. What is the meaning of the last two lines?

a. Is it so important to be a "man"?

b. Can we say what is "everything" in the world?

II. Let a student read the poem through, and then let different students read each stanza alone.

III. A ten minute test. Use each of the following words in sentences; one to explain the meaning of the words in the poem and the other from your own experience.

A. Allowance

B. Imposter

C. Knave

D. Unforgiving

IV. Assignment: Read next poem.

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