

Minnesota Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages



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Information for contributors to the *MinneTESOL Journal*

- **Editorial policy**

The *MinneTESOL* seeks to publish articles of importance to the profession of English as a second language in the State of Minnesota. Articles in the following areas are considered for publication: instructional methods, techniques, and materials; research with implications for ESL; and issues in curriculum and program design. Book reviews and review articles are also welcome, as are short descriptions of work in progress on any aspect of theory or practice in our profession. Reports of work in the areas of curriculum and materials development, methodology, teaching, testing, teacher preparation and administration are encouraged, as are reports of research projects that focus on topics of special interest. Descriptions should summarize key concepts and results in a manner to make the information accessible to our readership. We also invite commentary on current trends and practices in the TESOL profession, and we encourage responses or rebuttals to any articles or remarks published in the *Journal*.

- **Manuscripts**

Manuscripts should conform to the style book followed by TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages), the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. They should include a brief (e.g., 100-word) abstract.

Submit two paper copies of the manuscript and abstract, accompanied by a labeled computer diskette. Please specify software.

Please use standard software.

Contributions to Volume 13 should be submitted to:

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Introduction

This volume of the MinneTESOL Journal, like those of the past, reflects the wide range of interests and concerns facing us as professionals, from innovative classroom teaching using film, to theoretical research on academic writing, to issues of gangs and academic preparedness among junior high LEP students. In all of this, the diversity of our profession and our concern for those we teach is clear.

In *Images of American Indians in an ESL Film Class: Teaching Content from Dances with Wolves*, Russell Arent presents a model for using popular films to teach culture. The article first discusses the Western film genre and then addresses ways to overcome the common stereotypes and themes so prevalent in films depicting American Indians. The paper suggests specific resources available as alternative sources of information about American Indians and includes a large annotated filmography. We feel that an additional strength of the article lies in its inclusion of practical teaching techniques which could be used in classes that incorporate the use of film.

On a more theoretical note, Andrew D. Cohen and Elaine Tarone present information on *The Effects of Training on Written Speech Act Behavior: Stating and Changing an Opinion*. Their study first compared the writing of non-native and native English speakers to determine the components of the written speech act of stating and then changing an opinion. Respondents in a "treatment group" were then given training in the techniques used when indicating a personal stance in academic writing. By using verbal report data from several respondents, the research offers insights into how non-native writers approach one of the more important academic writing tasks. In addition to enhancing our knowledge about written speech acts, this article, by two prominent second language researchers at the University of Minnesota, presents a model for classroom investigation.



The next two articles continue a discussion from volume 11 on issues of academic achievement and adjustment for LEP students in the state. In *Hmong Gangs: Preventing Lost Youth*, Shelly M Bertrand and Lisa MB Simons report on a survey given to 23 Hmong students at a junior high and middle school in St. Paul, asking for students' opinions on the motivation for joining gangs or, more importantly, for avoiding gang membership. (70% of those surveyed claimed to have friends who were in gangs.) The results of this survey point to the importance of success in school along with a personal sense of direction and hope for the future. The authors call for further work at building a multi-cultural curriculum, so that students can see themselves in what they are learning. They also call for increased mentoring for at-risk students. Since parent's level of education was seen as a potential success factor, the paper echoes the call from Jeff Dufresne's article in volume 11 for school programming targeting parents as well.

Looking at these issues of academic preparedness from a different perspective, Judith Strohl reports on her study involving test scores of junior high school students in Minneapolis. Her article, *Achievement Tests as Predictors of subsequent high school performance for LEP students*, offers a discussion of the historical issues behind assessment and the problems inherent in defining successful exit criteria for LEP programs. According to test scores and other data from this group of junior high students as they moved into high school, grades appeared to be near or above the desired norms; reading test scores were still significantly lower than the mainstream average, however, suggesting that academic English proficiency may still not be as high as desired.

In the *Student's Work* section of the journal, a human face is put on these issues. Two essays and a drawing from Bosnian immigrants, and a poem written by a Hmong student whose brother was killed by police in a robbery attempt speak vividly to the pain of displacement.



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The *Work in Progress* section presents Memory Link Flashcards, a technique for learning vocabulary which is based on findings from second language acquisition research. Finally, in the *Book Review* section, Wendy Desmonde reviews two ESL writing texts which are currently in use in community college and university programs.

Plans are in progress for the next volume of the MinneTESOL Journal to be a joint edition with WITESOL.

Robin Murie

Adele G. Hansen

Images of American Indians in an ESL Film Class: Teaching Content from *Dances with Wolves*

RUSSELL ARENT

University of Minnesota

This paper surveys the types of American Indian¹ imagery found in the motion picture industry and discusses some of the issues related to teaching the film *Dances with Wolves* to ESL students. Beginning with a brief description of the course, the students, and the history of the Western film genre, the paper moves on to consider some of the common stereotypes and themes prevalent in films depicting American Indians. The ways in which the ESL students enrolled in this course gained access to alternative sources of information to confront these stereotypes is described. A number of teaching suggestions are presented on the topics of American culture, American Indians, *Dances with Wolves*, and ESL through film. Throughout the paper numerous works are cited related to the above topics and the paper concludes with references and an annotated filmography.

INTRODUCING *DANCES WITH WOLVES* TO AN ESL FILM CLASS

One of the most popular films in recent years that focuses on American Indians is, of course, *Dances with Wolves*. This movie was nominated for twelve Oscars and won seven of those categories. It was also instrumental in reawakening interest in what had at that time become a genre in decline: the Hollywood Western. Although students of any language often respond well to high-interest materials such as feature films, how can a movie like *Dances with Wolves* be successfully incorporated into ESL curricula? What issues should an ESL teacher be aware of to maximize the value of this film for the students, while at the same time

remaining sensitive to stereotypical images of American Indians contained in the very material central to the course itself? A position is taken throughout this paper that *Dances with Wolves* is adaptable to an ESL context, but that teachers should be aware of the stereotypes present in the film and should attempt to help students activate their critical thinking skills by exposing them to alternative sources of information by which they can form their own conclusions on the various issues. This paper attempts to answer these questions in a format that assumes little previous experience with the subject matter and allows ESL teachers from many different teaching contexts to extract the most helpful ideas and adapt them to their particular teaching situation.

The particular situation that I faced, and from which this paper was developed, was to teach the course Listening and Speaking through Film (ESL 253) at the Minnesota English Center at the University of Minnesota during the Winter and Spring Quarters of 1994. Although I had no teaching materials for *Dances with Wolves* other than those which I developed on my own, I was determined to get the most that I could out of this award-winning film. I had the impression that the movie was immensely popular not only in the United States, but also around the world. This impression was confirmed when I learned that all but one of the international students enrolled in the class at the beginning of Winter Quarter had already seen the film in their home country, attesting to the international appeal of movies such as this one.

THE COURSE: LISTENING AND SPEAKING THROUGH FILM

The primary objective of this advanced listening and speaking course is to improve fluency and the comprehension of spoken discourse through movies produced for an audience of native speakers of English. Other important objectives of the course "Listening and Speaking through Film" focus on developing critical thinking skills, working together in small groups to complete specific tasks without an overabundance of help from the instructor, improving the ability to rely on visual and contextual cues when making educated guesses about sections of film that are difficult to comprehend, and developing an increased awareness of the rich language-learning opportunities available through the film media.

THE STUDENTS

A total of 22 international students enrolled in ESL 253 during Winter and Spring Quarters in 1994, and 7 countries were represented: Congo, the Czech Republic, France, Japan, Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela. Most of the students were concurrently enrolled in other ESL classes in the English Program for International Students (EPIS) and the majority were planning to enter an academic degree program at an American university, although none had a background in film criticism or had aspirations to pursue such a track in the future. As is typically the case for international students, most of these students had not had prior contact with American Indians and derived much of their knowledge about them from the film media. Without any consideration of the types of stereotypes commonly employed in the movies, students are often left to rely on their own (typically distorted) impressions of Indians drawn from the many late-night Westerns playing on TV screens around the world.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ON HOLLYWOOD WESTERNS

Sometimes when dealing with a particular cultural group, it is the teachers themselves who have to wrestle with the existence of stereotypes in order to create a teaching unit which is as bias-free as possible. Before an ESL teacher can adequately prepare relevant course materials from sources dealing with American Indians in the movies, it would be wise to consider how Indians have been portrayed in films historically. Building on this foundation, teachers and students will be in a better position to view films critically; it is this process of critical analysis which is one of the central objectives of Listening and Speaking through Film.

Perhaps no genre of film-making is as rigidly established as that of the Western. For nearly three-quarters of a century, Hollywood has been producing hundreds of movies that attempt to portray the drama and wonder associated with the American frontier, from the time of European 'discovery' (or invasion, depending on the perspective) in the late-fifteenth to early-sixteenth centuries to the Battle of Little Bighorn in the 1870's and the surrender of Geronimo and the last free band of Chiracahua Apache in the 1880's (when many close this chapter of history)². Did the American frontier really end at this time? What are the

perspectives on American history of the approximately two and a half million indigenous inhabitants of the United States, many of whom are direct descendants of those involved in the battles that have so captured the imaginations of Hollywood film producers and the general public?

The Western³ film genre has always been known to follow a narrow range of formulaic plots which are not often tampered with without risking a certain measure of box office success in the process (see Wright, 1975). Each Western typically has a "good guy" and a "bad guy"; the heroes are usually European-American settlers (or cowboys) and wear white and the villains are either corrupt European-American settlers who wear black or, more typically, one or more of the various American Indian tribes. Although some Westerns deviate slightly from this pattern, it is difficult to find many examples where the plot does not revolve around heroes and villains.

There are two things that every schoolboy knows about the genre. First, that the Western is a commercial formula with rules as fixed and immutable as the Kabuki Theatre. Second, that the events depicted have little to do with the real nineteenth-century American frontier life, that the rituals are enacted in a timeless world ... populated by children who refuse to grow up, fugitives from the urban nursery, *marauding Indians* and menacing bands of pirates. (French, 1973:12; italics mine)

The possibility that the actions of European-American settlers might have in many respects been more villainous than those of American Indians is rarely the focus of Hollywood films.

The Battle of Little Bighorn is one of the most famous examples from United States history of this need to create heroes and, not surprisingly, is one of the most frequently portrayed battles in Hollywood movies. It has been popularly described as "Custer's Last Stand" because none of the soldiers from General Custer's division, the Seventh Cavalry, survived the raid on an immense Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Lakota camp that took place in Montana in June of 1876. What actually happened during the

fighting has long been the subject of intense debate, because few U.S. citizens at the time were willing to believe the eyewitness accounts of the thousands of American Indian survivors, including the Cheyenne leader Two Moons and the Lakota leaders Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse (Brown, 1970:277-282), and because it was extremely embarrassing for the U.S. Army to experience such an overwhelming defeat to Plains Indian warriors armed with mostly hatchets, arrows and knives. The American public too often believed fictional accounts of the battle that were ultimately designed to portray Custer as a hero and the indigenous warriors as barbaric villains.

Overnight, newspapers transformed the utter defeat into a vision of heroic martyrdom. Reporters who had never been within a thousand miles of the Little Bighorn wrote of Custer making his gallant last stand. ... Many people who fought alongside Crazy Horse lived to pass their stories on, but whites wrote the history. The Little Bighorn quickly became Custer's story. Within months, four plays about Custer were being staged in New York city alone. (*Last Stand at Little Bighorn*, 1992: 49', 53')

Buffalo Bill's *Wild West Show* began only a few years after the Battle of Little Bighorn, and dramatized "Custer's last stand" to audiences around the country and around the world. By the time the motion picture started to become commonplace in the 1890's, Custer's legend was firmly in place and the portrayals of American Indians in films reinforced the historical inaccuracies and racial stereotypes believed by the American public.

One of the first movies ever made, *Sioux Ghost Dance* (1894), pioneered the trend toward exploitation of Indians which has continued to the present day.

There is no evidence that the dance filmed in 1894 was actually the Ghost Dance. But since Wounded Knee had occurred only four years before and the late Indian Wars were still very much news, we see the beginnings of motion picture ballyhoo ... [and] exploitation. (Friar and Friar, 1972:70)

This tendency to dismiss injustices done to American Indians and to glorify European-Americans who died in an effort to "tame" the American frontier has long been a standard theme in the majority of Hollywood Westerns.

Early motion picture ventures from the silent film era (i.e., 1894-1927) continued this glorification process which had been ongoing in theatrical works and other literature (esp. dime novels; see Friar and Friar, 1972:43-48) since the late 1800's. *Custer's Last Fight* from 1912 was enormously successful at the box office and was one of the first films to portray the legendary battle. *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch* from 1914 was an early D.W. Griffith film that featured plenty of wild "savages" terrorizing white settlers. In general, these early silent films employed many American Indian actors and extras, but when the "talkies" emerged in the late 1920's, Hollywood producers started to seek out white actors and actresses for the leading roles. This era was really the beginning of the "star syndrome", where authenticity was sacrificed in the interest of having a famous name attached to the film (see Friar and Friar, 1972; and Tuska, 1976).

During the World War II era, many films were simply viewed as propaganda tools that could shape public opinion about the coming war against the Axis powers. *Drums Along the Mohawk* (1939) was set in 1776 and portrayed the Mohawk Nation as evil allies of the British who enjoyed burning people alive. Another film from this era, *They Died With Their Boots On* (1941), shows Custer with legendary valor and reinforced the popular beliefs about the Battle of Little Bighorn that had been vigorously maintained for nearly three-quarters of a century. Although there were numerous historical inaccuracies in this film, they were overlooked by many who saw this manipulation of history as ultimately boosting the morale of the American public at a critical moment, and therefore excusable (Osborne, 1980:39-44).

Most of the Westerns produced before 1950 followed fairly rigid formulas in their portrayals of Indians, but in that year a film was made that showed Indians in a new light. The film was called *Broken Arrow* and was noteworthy for lengthy scenes of daily life in a tribal village. Although some of the props did not belong to the tribe portrayed in the movie, the Apache, the film was sympathetic

to an indigenous perspective in a way that dwarfed all previous ventures and signalled a new direction for future productions (Osborne, 1980:49-55). In this movie,

...Cochise, always previously portrayed as a blood-thirsty Moloch of the Apaches, emerges as a gifted leader whose intelligence and dignity are taxed by the hate-filled settlers in Arizona. Taking a white man as his blood brother, he tries to make peace with the Army. (White and Averson, 1972:152).

This production, though marred by large doses of patronization, was seen as the forerunner of a new generation of Western films.

Following a decade in which few Hollywood Westerns were produced, *Dances with Wolves* (1990) reawakened public interest in the Western genre as a whole. Like its predecessor, *Broken Arrow*, *Dances with Wolves* was praised for its sympathetic portrayal of an Indian tribe; in this case, the Lakota. (A more complete discussion of *Dances with Wolves* follows.).

Today, in response to more public pressure to present realistic and respectful films, Hollywood is beginning to develop the genre of Western films along the lines established by *Broken Arrow* and *Dances with Wolves*. These types of films are more culturally sensitive and do more justice to the perspectives of indigenous peoples, but are often still fraught with patronizing tendencies and blatant stereotypes. Although some believe that the Western genre is slowly changing for the better, others feel that the movie industry is not doing enough to rectify past wrongs.

A century after his death, Custer is no longer a hero to a nation troubled by its treatment of native people, yet our image of his last stand persists. Custer in his buckskins, with the flags, with his cavalrymen, the open range all around, and the Cheyenne and Lakota closing in. But for the Plains Indians who fought there, the memories were different. The fight with Custer was just one of many battles that led to the theft of their lands. Their own history told of warriors who died to defend their country. Through

the hard years that followed, their stories and songs kept the history alive. And they still remember. (*Last Stand at Little Bighorn*, 1992: 56'-57')

IMAGES AND MOTIFS OF AMERICAN INDIANS IN U.S. CULTURE

In addition to considering the history of the Western genre and particular films that have perpetuated a great deal of stereotyping, it is also important to look at the actual stereotypes which most frequently occur; appropriate course materials can then be developed that address the stereotypes which might exist in the content of the course itself. There are several major stereotypes that dominate the images of American Indians in contemporary media: **overgeneralization**, the **noble savage**, the **ignoble savage**, the **timeless Indian**, and the **doomed or vanishing Indian** (see Berkhofer, 1978; and Stedman, 1982). Hollywood movies, advertisers, schools, sports teams, and many other organizations have learned that they can use the image of an American Indian to make a point, to sell a product, or for any of a number of reasons which do not show respect and honor toward the rich legacy that American Indians have contributed to the present countries of the Americas (see Weatherford, 1991), and, ultimately, the world (see Weatherford, 1988).

There are three ways to overgeneralize: 1) when tribal distinctions in language and culture go unrecognized and different groups are lumped together under the general label "Indian" (e.g., equating the Mohawk Nation with the Pueblo Nation); 2) when characteristics of one tribe or region are extended to other groups that do not share them (e.g., expecting all tribes to wear feathered head dresses, when this custom is primarily associated with various tribes from the Great Plains); or 3) when characteristics of an individual are extended to a group (e.g., meeting a taxi driver in a major metropolitan area and assuming that the rest of the city's residents behave in the same manner; or assuming that all Apache are just like Geronimo)⁴. All of these overgeneralization types are common, especially in the movies, and have led many to overlook the characteristics and contributions of individuals and tribes from regions other than the Great Plains.

As a predominant feature in their way of life, most Indians did not regularly ride horses, hunt large game, wear tailored hide clothing, or wear feathers in their hair. By population, more Indians lived in agricultural chiefdoms and states than in the simple hunting tribes of the movie stereotypes. Instead they were fishermen and farmers. They wore robes of woven bark in the populous North Pacific Coast and of cotton cloth in the agricultural Southeast, Southwest, and in southern Mexico. This other rich and diverse North American cultural heritage should not be displaced or demeaned through such biased and narrow portrayals. (Price, 1973:153)

Hollywood has certainly played a major role in perpetuating the idea that all American Indians have the same cultural background and way of life.

The idea of a "noble savage"⁵ has its origin with the European explorers that entered the Americas during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries and brought back with them reports of a paradise filled with people that are "innocent, friendly, and naked" (Stedman, 1982:20-26, 253). Indians that are presented in this light can do no wrong: they are always patient, trusting and kind to all who approach them; and all of their motives are pure.

The "ignoble savage" is, of course, the complete opposite of the noble savage. This stereotype takes many forms, especially when Indians are shown as killers, scalpers, rapists, destructive vandals, drunkards, liars, swindlers, and godless people without faith. The ignoble savage stereotype is one of the easiest to identify and appears in the great majority of Hollywood Westerns involving Indians. One explanation for the frequency of these occurrences is to consider the role of film in shaping our perception of history.

Film is after all a very commercial medium. Indians are a part of an ongoing effort to make films that sell, that are box office. But at the same time they are part of the continuation of an even greater myth and that is the myth of the creation of America, the taking

from the wilderness of a land which was either empty or filled with antichrists. ... As a nation which prides itself on having a noble beginning, the theft of so much land must be rationalized. ... What you have worked out on film is the ritualized justification of what, at kindest, could be called the greatest land theft in history but more accurately would probably be called a genocide. (R. Strickland in *Imagining Indians*, 1992:45'-47')

In other words, films employing the ignoble savage stereotype attempt to assuage the guilt that many of us feel when considering the trail of broken treaties.

Another common blunder by Hollywood producers is that they are preoccupied with the "timeless" Indian: the Indian from the time of Columbus to the close of the nineteenth century. The majority of these films are set within the period of 1850 to 1890, as many of the armed conflicts between the U.S. Army and Indians occurred during these years. It is as if there have been few noteworthy events involving Indians or significant accomplishments by this segment of the population since that time. Some notable movies that go against this trend and which are set in the twentieth century include: *Jim Thorpe - All American* (1951), *Tell Them Willie Boy is Here* (1969), *Powwow Highway* (1988), *Incident at Oglala* (1992), *Thunderheart* (1992) and *Dark Wind* (1993).

The last major stereotype classification is that of the "doomed" or "vanishing" Indian; where the Indian struggles against the power of Western civilization and where the Indian in modern society is out of the picture entirely because s/he can't function successfully in today's world. This type of person is powerless, helpless, sick, and dying. Where are the American Indian professionals: doctors, lawyers, etc.? The answer (according to holders of this attitude): they can't do anything because they have no power, or (worse yet) there are none. Some of the first films to reinforce this stereotype were *The Vanishing American* (1925) and *Massacre* (1934).

Some of the major motifs that appear in Hollywood Westerns featuring Indians involve music, lighting, and liquor. It is often obvious when Indians are supposed to be lurking nearby

because the audience members hear the incessant, pulsating drum beats and wild chanting that are supposed to represent the “battle cry” of the featured tribe. In reality, no tribe has ever been shown to utilize such music; it was an invention of Hollywood. Patriotic music was used in these older films to represent the U.S. citizens and soldiers. Today, flute music is popular and often symbolizes an Indian presence, although the same instrument can signal the entry of U.S. soldiers into the picture as well (e.g., when the song “Gary Owen” is played, as in *Little Big Man*). Lighting themes often involved darkness (especially stormy weather) for Indians and brightness (i.e., sunny days) for the European-American settlers (e.g., *Drums along the Mohawk*). Many films showed Indians as helpless alcoholics who have no power against the effects of this chemical.

Clearly, the lives of indigenous peoples in the real world are far more complex than the way they are presented in Hollywood films. Any portrayal of Indians that fails to show them as real human beings (see Stedman, 1982:118-129) does, to some degree, reinforce stereotypes. What is needed now are movies that dramatize the more entwined aspects of human character and behavior and that make it clear that these qualities are found in indigenous people just as easily as they are in non-Indians.

DANCES WITH WOLVES

Filmed on location in South Dakota and Wyoming, *Dances with Wolves* is the fictional story set in 1863-1864 of a Union soldier, John Dunbar (played by Kevin Costner), and his experiences at an abandoned military post in the middle of Lakota territory. Starting from a position of curiosity about the American frontier and the plight of the Indians, John Dunbar moves to a point where he can no longer bear to be on the sidelines as various indigenous tribes are targeted for aggressive confrontation by the United States Army. As he has more personal contact with the Lakota people, John Dunbar comes to regard them as his neighbors and gradually spends more and more of his time in their village. When he falls in love with Stands With A Fist, a white woman who was raised by the Lakota medicine man, he knows that his future is with the tribe, so he abandons his military post, marries the woman he loves, and moves into the village permanently to live with the tribe (see

Costner, Blake, and Wilson, 1990).

There is much to admire in this film and it is not hard to figure out why it was commercially successful. It was well received for several reasons; it has: scenes of everyday life in a Lakota village (one of the most important Plains Indian tribes); authentic Lakota language; American Indian actors and actresses; breathtaking scenery (for an explanation of this film convention in Westerns, see Wright, 1975:189-190); an action-packed buffalo hunt; beautiful music; authentic costumes and props (Costner, Blake, and Wilson, 1990:82-83); and an interesting plot.

What is not always clear to the average viewer, however, are some of the negative aspects of the film. The plot, although interesting, is centered around the love story of a white man and a white woman in the middle of a Lakota society. When will we have a chance to see a love story from a Lakota perspective (or from the viewpoint of any other tribe, for that matter)? In addition to this, the white man in the film tells the story; his point-of-view is the only one really represented because we never hear the inner thoughts of any of the Lakota characters. The motif of a white man coming in and "saving" an Indian tribe from the advancement of civilization has been portrayed many times before in Hollywood Westerns (e.g., *Broken Arrow*, *Little Big Man*); movies with themes like this perpetuate the doomed Indian stereotype.

Several other Indian stereotypes can be found in this movie as well: the Lakota are clearly noble (i.e., they can do nothing wrong; e.g., Kicking Bird rides a white horse) and the Pawnee are ignoble (i.e., they can do nothing right and are full of destructive intentions; e.g., in every scene they appear they are trying to kill somebody; see Sarf, 1991). In addition, it is not surprising that the main tribes featured in the film are Plains Indian tribes (i.e., the Lakota and the Pawnee); this focus continues the tradition of overgeneralization that has existed from the very first days of the motion picture industry. Finally, the role of women in Lakota society is somewhat misrepresented. In reality they have always been highly regarded⁶, but the movie sometimes gives the opposite impression (e.g., when Wind In His Hair drags Stands With A Fist on the ground). (See Brunette, 1990).

The film is set during 1863-65, yet is not connected with any real people or events from that period. It would be interesting to

know why John Dunbar was willing to live alone on the South Dakota prairie so close in time and space to the Minnesota Massacre of 1862 and Red Cloud's War in 1864; common sense would seem to dictate that he would not be well-received by the Lakota at that point in time (see Sarf, 1991:63; and Seals, 1991:634). Is it possible for a film to be authentic, yet divorced from an historical context?

Another criticism of *Dances with Wolves* is that Indians did not have direct involvement in creating or directing the film and did not truly reap the profits that it generated. Other than the Lakota language coordinator, Doris Leader Charge, the writers, producers and directors of the film were primarily non-Indian. Although the film has grossed over \$300 million to date, very little of this money has been filtered back into the Lakota community.⁷

Perhaps it was this lack of involvement that precipitated a new organization of Indian producers to be formed: the Native American Producers Alliance. This move was done to help Indian producers become less dependent on Hollywood for the capital needed to make more culturally sensitive films. These producers intend to immediately pool their talents and money to start work on a biographical movie on Dull Knife, a famous Northern Cheyenne leader. Recent movies and documentaries that are known to have had strong Indian involvement in the writing, production, or direction phases are *Images of Indians* (1979), *Windwalker* (1980), *Powwow Highway* (1988), *The Dakota Conflict* (1991), *Imagining Indians* (1992), *Last Stand at Little Bighorn* (1992), and *Nokomis: Voices of Anishinabe Grandmothers* (1994).

AN ESL CLASS CONFRONTS THE STEREOTYPES

In an effort to bring out into the open some of the issues of imagery raised by the movie, several additional sources of information were made available to the students. Field trips were arranged to get the students out of the classroom and into the local American Indian community and guest speakers visited the class to share their perspectives on the film and foster critical thinking. The necessity of confronting movie stereotypes is addressed by Price (1973):

We cannot dismiss the stereotypes as unimportant

film portrayals because hundreds of millions of people the world over have acquired their beliefs about North American Indians through motion pictures. They were created as entertainment, but they cumulatively built a separate reality about Native cultures. The belief that there is an essence of general truth about Indians in these portrayals is pervasive and persistent in modern North America. They are, for example, difficult stereotypes to correct in university courses on American Indians. Even modern American Indians draw heavily from these films in constructing their own views of their cultural heritage (154).

In addition, since few international students ever have direct contact with American Indians or enroll in a university course dealing with this subject, it is important to provide the film course students with more accurate information.

One of the ESL class sessions during Winter Quarter was held at the American Indian Student Cultural Center in an effort to show the international students some of the American Indian resources on the Minneapolis campus of the University of Minnesota. Another class session was devoted to visiting the Franklin Business Corporation in Minneapolis, a small business industrial complex with a number of American Indian owned-and-operated businesses, and the Minneapolis American Indian Center, a community center that houses a gym, a restaurant, and an ethnic crafts store.

During Spring Quarter, the second group of students received a guided tour of the Minnesota History Center by an American Indian executive of the Minnesota Historical Society. The Minnesota History Center has excellent displays that are accessible to ESL learners at all levels and highlights the three most important Indian tribes in Minnesota's most recent past: the Dakota (a.k.a. the Sioux), the Anishinabe (a.k.a. the Ojibwe), and the Hochung (a.k.a. the Winnebago).

Back in the classroom, several guest speakers shared their expertise with the students and gave them opportunities to ask questions. The two speakers that visited the class during Winter

Quarter each brought valuable insights that helped the international students see *Dances with Wolves* in a new light. The first speaker had lived most of his adult life in South Dakota and was familiar with the behind-the-scenes events that unfolded during the filming of the movie. He was also an American Indian Studies major and was well versed in Dakota language and culture. He was able to explain the historical background of the tribes in Minnesota and South Dakota (esp. the Dakota, Lakota, and Anishinabe) and some of the contemporary issues facing these tribes today. Students seemed to benefit from this session, as these unedited comments indicate:

His lecture was easy to understand and not boring. To invite other teacher is a good idea. ...in film "Dances with Wolves" we watched a kind of beautiful history of native Americans, but now their lives are completely destroyed and they live under some difficulties. So, I think it is important not only for native Americans but also for any species to know what the conquest without respect brought.

The second guest speaker in Winter Quarter was a Teaching Specialist in the American Indian Studies Department who focused on the types of imagery commonly associated with American Indians. He carefully explained the different categories of stereotypes (similar to those outlined in the previous section) and provided various pictures from advertisements and other sources that illustrated how those images are currently used in the media. Students had this to say about the presentation:

The image of indian in *Dances with Wolves* is only one of the stereotypes about indians.

The most interesting thing was the fact that images of native Americans were produced by white people, and sometimes native Americans had to use those images to protect their lives.

What was in the film, no matter how good it was,

might not be the truth.

During Spring Quarter, the second group of students was fortunate to get a behind-the-scenes view of what goes into the production of a major Hollywood Western, when an American Indian actor who appeared in *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992) related firsthand experiences on the making of this film and on growing up in a bilingual and bicultural environment in the United States. The actor passed around several photographs from the set of the movie and previewed a battle scene from the film, in which he contrasted the aspects of the film which were historically accurate from those which were not. Several students commented about what they learned from this speaker:

Actually, I think, international students don't know American Indian history a lot. The most important is students understand American Indian background and why Indian and white people couldn't live together. Which one broken the yield of the rule, and why?

I didn't think, that it is so difficult to live in a reservation and that the living standard is so low.

The most interesting things to me are not only that there exist many indian languages more than fifty languages, but also that he can speak some languages. For example, he said "Buffalo" using the same languages including the Sioux indian language.

The Indian of different places has a different language.

What a Indian speaks English is interesting. I've imagined that Indians is exact like what Indians are in movies.

These field trips and guest speakers provided the interna-

tional students with opportunities to interact with American Indians in several different settings and demonstrated that Indians have not “vanished”, but are alive and well and achieving academic and professional success in a society that continues to rely on Hollywood for too much of its information. Throughout these sessions, students were encouraged to form their own impressions of American Indian issues and relate them to their experiences as international students in U.S. society, where they often have to deal with being victims of stereotypes themselves.

TEACHING SUGGESTIONS ON AMERICAN CULTURE

Teaching about a topic such as American Indian imagery to international students raises issues related to teaching about American culture in general. There are a number of different methods that can facilitate the discussion and learning of cultural issues. Jorstad (1981) has developed a seven-step process of **hypothesis refinement** that allows students to state their own opinion on any cultural aspect of interest and gather data in an attempt to discover whether the initial hypothesis is supported by sources other than the student. Cross-cultural comparisons between the target and native cultures are then drawn, based on the information obtained about the particular aspect of focus. A similar eight-step process developed by Crawford-Lange and Lange (1984) was recently implemented for teaching Lakota culture to international students in South Dakota (Steinmetz, Busch, and Joseph-Goldfarb, 1994). Although the project appeared to be successful, it needs to be “more easily replicated” before widespread adoption of the eight-step process is advised (Steinmetz, et.al., 1994:14).

There are an increasing number of resources available to ESL instructors for teaching units on American culture or culture in general (see Althen, 1988; Banks, 1994; Burt, 1978; Crawford-Lange and Lange, 1984; Henly, 1993; Isler, 1977; Omaggio Hadley (1993), Robinson, 1981; Seelye, 1984; and Teachout, 1976). Although the complexities of U.S. culture and society may intimidate some ESL teachers from making major changes to their curricula in order to do justice to these issues, international students may greatly benefit from such programs, if they are carefully designed and checked for ethnocentric biases and are learner-centered. A teaching unit on American culture which is superficially con-

structed, however,

... usually results in the viewing of ethnic content from the perspectives of mainstream historians, writers, artists, and scientists because it does not involve a restructuring of the curriculum. ... When teaching a unit such as *The Westward Movement* in a fifth-grade U.S. History class, the teacher may integrate her unit by adding content about the Lakota (Sioux) Indians. However, the unit remains Mainstream Centric and focused because of its perspective and point of view. ... The unit might be called *The Invasion from the East* from the point of view of the Lakota. An objective title for the unit might be *Two Cultures Meet in the Americas*. (Banks, 1994:208).

Our own cultural biases sometimes come to the forefront when attempting to present historical topics in an objective fashion, but the process of removing those biases is often educational and enriching.

TEACHING SUGGESTIONS RELATED TO AMERICAN INDIANS

Several recommendations can be made for ESL teachers when dealing with American Indian themes in the classroom in general.

1. Examine past stereotypes and encourage the students to look at each indigenous tribe as a separate group with its own language⁸ and culture. If tribal names are known, instruct them to use these names and to avoid lumping tribes together in Hollywood-based generalizations.
2. Highlight recent accomplishments of various American Indian communities and individuals, so that students understand that Hollywood's obsession with the "timeless" Indian does not mean that Indians have disappeared from contemporary society.

3. Visit a local museum, powwow, school or cultural center where indigenous views and traditions are honored and where informal contact with American Indians is possible.

4. Invite an American Indian to speak to your class on a topic related to course content. Keep in mind that many American Indians are bombarded with these types of requests, since indigenous traditions have again become fashionable, and that there has been a long history of discrimination and exploitation. Your prospective guest speaker may want to know more about your motives first, before making a commitment.

5. Explain that many Indians are offended by the casual use of sacred objects (e.g., pipes, feathers) by those who are ignorant of indigenous traditions. The Peace Pipe is the most sacred object to Plains Indian tribes (e.g., Cheyenne, Lakota) and should not be handled in an irreverent manner. Eagle feathers were reserved for those who had distinguished themselves in battle or by some other heroic act, and a full, feathered head dress was worn only by tribal leaders. The recent controversy involving the baseball team, the Atlanta Braves, and the "tomahawk chop" is a good example of a situation where overly enthusiastic sports fans have carried out an act of cultural violence by showing disregard for the sacredness of these objects and by chanting a silly, monotonous melody which has its origins solely in Hollywood films.

TEACHING SUGGESTIONS RELATED TO DANCES WITH WOLVES

For those ESL teachers employing *Dances with Wolves* as part of their core curriculum, the following suggestions may help ESL students appreciate the place of this film in the western genre and help them understand the use of American Indian imagery in it as well.

1. After introducing the different American Indian stereo-

types, let the students discover the ones that are prevalent in this particular film (e.g., the Lakota as “noble” and the Pawnee as “ignoble”) and spend some class time discussing how those stereotypes affect student reactions to the film as a whole.

2. Show some film clips from other Westerns that visually illustrate the kinds of imagery that frequently occur in Hollywood films and discuss differences and similarities with *Dances with Wolves*. The documentaries *Images of Indians*, *Imagining Indians*, and *Last Stand at Little Bighorn* contain many excellent short clips that are well-suited for this purpose.

3. Provide a brief overview of U.S. History during the Civil War era, since the film features a Civil War battle during the opening scene and has other historical allusions that may not be adequately understood without some schemata activation; for those students who have no knowledge at all of this historical event, this lesson may prove to be crucial toward understanding the first part of the film.

It's important to give students plenty of time to simply enjoy the film, but they may not fully appreciate it if they lack the background necessary to understand the historical and motif-based generalizations. More teaching materials for *Dances with Wolves* which are appropriate for ESL students may be found in Arent (1994:34-45) and Mejia and O'Connor (1994:29-50, 147-152).

TEACHING SUGGESTIONS ON ESL THROUGH FILM

Finally, several suggestions related to teaching ESL through the film media can be made as well.

1. Try showing a film in reasonable “chunks” or segments. A 15 to 25-minute segment followed by 10 to 15 minutes of discussion or related activities seems to strike a nice balance between the contrasting global and analytical learning styles which are likely to be represented in a diverse group of ESL students.

2. Experiment with different ways to introduce the segments (see Cooper, Lavery, and Rinvoluceri, 1991; Lonergan, 1984; and Stempleski and Tomalin, 1990). One possibility, which works especially well in a language lab, is to allow half the class to hear the sound from a particular segment without the picture and the other half to see the picture without sound. Each student from one half of the class can then be paired up with a student from the other half in an attempt to orally reconstruct the visual and audio elements of the original scene. This activity creates a true information gap and usually results in intense and prolonged conversations (adapted from Stempleski and Tomalin, 1990:24-25).

3. Select films based on interest level and aesthetic factors; in addition to the obvious variable of difficulty level of spoken discourse. No one likes to watch a boring film; no matter how appropriate the language might be for a student's level of proficiency.

4. Let the students critique the good and bad points of the movie and give them plenty of opportunities to develop their critical thinking skills and express their opinions. Students in ESL 253 selected two of the four films shown each quarter and completed a 3-to-5-minute taped movie review. In addition to individual assignments, each student participated in a group presentation which also critiqued one of the films, only to a greater degree of depth than the taped reviews. For both of these assignments, students were required to clearly state their opinions about specific aspects of the movie (and about the film as a whole) and provide examples and details from the film that supported their views.

For a more complete discussion of what is involved in designing a successful ESL film course see Johnson (1990). Of course, the most effective techniques are the ones that work best for your particular class, so keep in mind that proficiency levels, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, learning styles, and amount of exposure to

Hollywood movies are other factors that may strongly influence the teaching methods that produce desirable results.

STUDENT REACTIONS

Because the time allowed for the completion of the entire teaching unit for *Dances with Wolves* was only four weeks⁹, there was not a lot of time available for following up on the issues raised by the movie. Students from both quarters did indicate, however, that the field trips and guest speakers enriched their learning experience and helped them to better understand the issues raised by the film.

Students were asked to evaluate the course at the end of each quarter and to rank each film on a scale of 0 to 10. *Dances with Wolves* received an average score of 8.2, which was tied for the highest of any of the three core films shown in both quarters¹⁰. Students also gave the most votes to *Dances with Wolves* for best picture and best music.

CONCLUSION

The American public has long been fascinated with images of its indigenous inhabitants and has frequently depicted them in the film media. What is the underlying cause of this fascination? Perhaps it is because

...the whole psychological posture of American society is toward perpetual youth. Everyone believes that he or she must be eternally young. No one wants to believe that he or she is getting or will ever get old. Somehow only Indians get old because the coffee table books are filled with pictures of old Indians but hardly a book exists that has pictures of old whites. A strange thing, perhaps, for a vanishing race - having one's pictures on display everywhere - but therein lies the meaning of the white's fantasy about Indians - the problem of the Indian image. (Bataille and Silet, 1981:xv-xvi)

Whatever the case, the time has long since arrived for these destructive images to cease and for the American public to stop

supporting Hollywood films that show blatant disregard for such abuses. ESL teachers can do their part by handling this topic with sensitivity and tact and by educating international students on the aforementioned issues.

Perhaps many of us need to take a look deep within ourselves to examine our current perceptions and attitudes regarding American Indians; to take a closer inventory of our motives.

And so what often is the case is outsiders seeking information about us come here with preconceived notions of what they want. And they don't really want the Indian to tell them true information about ourselves. But they, in fact, want us simply to support the ideas they have about us. And unfortunately, many of those ideas come right out of a scriptwriter's distorted definition of who Indian people are. ... So, I think if, when outsiders want information about tribes, they must ... be willing to accept how the tribe truly defines itself if, in fact, that is the knowledge they seek. Now, if they simply want the tribe to support many of these very negative stereotypes that are presented in the media ... I think Indian people are smarter than that.

(D. Kipp in *Imagining Indians*, 1992:47,49)

In searching for true communication and understanding, such definitions can serve as a crucial starting point.

Feature films such as *Dances with Wolves* have great potential for stimulating language learning and critical thinking skills, because they are sometimes permeated with explicit and implicit stereotypes. Although this paper may serve as a prototype (not the definitive word) for dealing with difficult issues such as media stereotypes, it is hoped that ESL teachers will find ideas here that will enrich their own understanding and that some of the teaching suggestions outlined will apply to their particular teaching context.

THE AUTHOR

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CHRONOLOGICAL AMERICAN INDIAN FILMOGRAPHY OF SELECTED WORKS

Hollywood Feature Films and Other Commercial Productions

<u>Year</u>	<u>Title (Production Company)</u>	<u>Director</u>
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1894	<i>Sioux Ghost Dance</i> (Edison)	
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Shown on the Kinetoscope, a "peephole box" invented by Thomas Edison, this short work purported to document the famous dance that was being performed at Wounded Knee just four years earlier. Although no evidence exists to confirm that this dance was actually the Ghost Dance, viewers lined up nevertheless to take a peek (Friar and Friar, 1972:69,70).

- 1911 *Fighting Blood* (Biograph) Griffith, D.W.
 "A Civil War veteran and his family settle in the Dakota Territory. Bobby Harron quarrels with his father and leaves home. Riding in the hills, he spies a band of Sioux attacking a homestead. ... He takes [his fiancée] to his father's cabin where several settlers congregate. The Indians attack en masse, Griffith positioning his camera on a hill high above the action." (Tuska, 1976:38) This film also features an interesting portrayal of a Navajo rug salesman wearing a Plains Indian war bonnet (Bataille and Silet, 1981:119).
- 1912 *Custer's Last Fight* (IMP) Ince, T.
 Portrays the events leading up to the Battle of Little Bighorn and depicts many battle scenes as well.
- 1912 *The Massacre* (Biograph) Griffith, D.W.
 One of the first films sympathetic to indigenous people which "...showed them as hapless victims of an unprovoked cavalry raid..." (French, 1973:78)
- 1913 *The Squaw Man* DeMille, C.B.
 One of the earlier films that employs a common motif: Indian maiden falls in love with white man, but has to die one way or the other because the relationship cannot succeed in white society.
- 1914 *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch* Griffith, D.W.
 Features Indians as ignoble savages that attack settlers trapped in a cabin and subsequently take the family dog and use it as the main ingredient for a feast.
- 1923 *Covered Wagon* Cruze, J.
 One of the most famous films of the Western genre which depicts the covered wagon journey of pioneers and their struggle against harsh natural conditions and Indian attacks. This film "...made clear that [the Indians] were motivated by a reasonable desire to protect their hunting grounds..." (French, 1973:79; see also Tuska, 1976:87-97).

1924 *America* Griffith, D.W.

“...shows the Indians of New York’s Mohawk Valley and the unprincipled Tories (those still loyal to the king) who egged them on as the most vicious enemies of the colonists’ cause in the American Revolution. Dozens of patriotic groups and local historical societies pressured Griffith to be sure that the film presented their special interests sympathetically, but no one looked out for the Indian. ... As a result ... the worst possible image of the Indian comes across in *America*.” (Osborne, 1980:15)

1925 *The Vanishing American* (Paramount)

A panoramic view of the big picture; this silent film “...sketched a history of the American Indian from early cliff-dwelling days up to the ignominious death of a World War I Indian hero (Richard Dix) back on his neglected reservation.” (French, 1973:79)

1934 *Massacre* (Warner Bros.)

“The leading character of Joe Thunderhorse (Richard Barthelmess) has made it in modern-day, white America. Having accepted the white man’s way, he has become well-educated, financially successful and self-assured. In contrast, his Indian brothers on the reservation are society’s victims, desperately poor and suffering the results of deep-rooted corruption in the administration of Indian affairs. More important, they are weak and powerless, apparently unable to act on their own behalf to remedy their situation. ... In the end it took Thunderhorse ... to champion the Indian’s cause...” (Osborne, 1980:27)

1939 *Drums Along the Mohawk* (20th Cent.) Ford, J.

Portrays several Mohawk attacks on European-American settlers and caters to the ignoble savage stereotype.

1939 *Stagecoach* Ford, J.

John Ford’s first Western of the sound era starring John Wayne as the Ringo Kid, who is pitted against Apache raiders in the Southwest that are terrorizing stagecoach passengers (Friar and Friar, 1972:162).

1941 *They Died With Their Boots On* Walsh, R.
Details the life and times of Gen. George A. Custer, from his introduction to the military at West Point to the famous Battle of Little Bighorn. The film, with Errol Flynn as Custer, was historically inaccurate in many ways, but was really designed to awaken patriotic pride in the general public, which knew that the country's entry into WWII was inevitable.

1949 *Devil's Doorway* (MGM)
"The leading character is Broken Lance (Robert Taylor), a Shoshone Indian who returns home as a Civil War Congressional Medal of Honor recipient only to learn that Wyoming has been opened to 'homesteaders' and that Sweet Meadows, the tract of land that his family has called home for generations, is about to be taken from him. ... As Lance dies defending his home, the victim of his neighbors' complacency, the message conveyed to the audience is an earnest plea for racial tolerance." (Osborne, 1980:45)

1950 *Broken Arrow*
One of the first films that portrayed scenes in an Indian village; in this case, Apache. This movie is a forerunner of *Dances with Wolves*, as it uses a similar motif: white man comes into tribe, learns their ways, marries one of their members, and becomes a savior and protector.

1951 *Jim Thorpe - All American*
Details the life of one of America's greatest athletes: from his childhood in Oklahoma, to the Olympic years and professional sports, and finishing with the latter years of his life.

1956 *The Searchers* Ford, J.
A white girl (Natalie Wood) is taken captive by the Comanches after her family is brutally killed and her sister is raped. She lives many years with the Comanches and witnesses one cruel act after another. She is finally rescued by John Wayne, who brings her back to "civilization". This film may perhaps be the most racist of all of John Ford's films (Friar and Friar, 1972:165-166).

1964 *Cheyenne Autumn* Ford, J.

Based on the novel by M. Sandoz, this film depicts the 1878-1879 journey of the Northern Cheyenne from Fort Reno, Oklahoma to the Dakota Territory, a distance of nearly 1500 miles. The Cheyenne braved starvation and exposure, but were eventually recaptured by U.S. troops; some were only twenty-five miles from the Dakota border. The film's focus strays somewhat from the Cheyenne's epic journey to the perspectives of the U.S. soldiers and a Hollywood-designed love story.

1969 *Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here* Polansky, A.
 "...based on the true story of a young Paiute Indian who became the subject of an exciting cross-country chase in southern California in 1909. ... [Willie Boy] shoots and kills the father of the girl he wants to marry, then flees with her into the desert. In the course of a manhunt that covers over 500 miles of arid landscape, the girl is shot to death and, eventually Willie Boy dies as well." (Osborne, 1980:63)

1970 *Little Big Man* (National General) Penn, A.
 A comedy that portrays the Cheyenne perspective on history. Dustin Hoffman stars as Jack Crabb, a white man who claims to be 121 years old and an eyewitness to the Battle of Little Bighorn. Jack was adopted by Old Lodge Skins (a.k.a., Chief Dan George) after his parents were killed by a group of Pawnee. This film was made as an allegory to the Vietnam War and was commercially successful with young audiences at the time (O'Connor, 1980:67-70).

1970 *Soldier Blue*
 Another film which was an allegory of the Vietnam War, although this film was far more serious and graphic.

1972 *Ulzana's Raid*
 An Apache warrior leaves the reservation and goes on a bloody rampage. Most of the film centers on the strategic aspects of how he will be recaptured.

1976 *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (Warner) Eastwood, C.
 A confederate outlaw (Clint Eastwood) seeks revenge on Union soldiers who killed his family, and forms a friendship with others who are also outcasts from society, including an Indian (Chief Dan George).

- 1980 *Windwalker* (Windwalker Prod.) Merrill, K.
 This Canadian release was the first film to showcase American Indian languages with English subtitles; the Crow and Cheyenne languages are featured and there is very little spoken English throughout the movie. The story takes place in 1795 and is a fictional account of the life of a Cheyenne man, Windwalker. Windwalker falls in love with a beautiful Cheyenne maiden, Tashina, whom he later marries. A jealous tribesman, Crooked Leg, who had also sought Tashina as a wife, vows to wreak havoc and succeeds in kidnapping one of the couple's twin sons with the help of the Cheyenne's mortal enemies, the Crow. Many years later, as an old man, Windwalker has an opportunity to close this chapter of his life.
- 1988 *Powwow Highway* (Homemade) Wacks, J.
 Two unlikely companions from a Cheyenne reservation in Wyoming set off to rescue an imprisoned sister from a Santa Fe jail. Their journey is full of mystical detours in an interesting mix of adventure, action and Indian humor.
- 1990 *Dances with Wolves* (Orion) Costner, K.
 Fictional account of a white Union soldier's encounters with the South Dakota wilderness and a Lakota tribe. He gradually realizes that his true home is with them and abandons his military position to marry a white member of the tribe.
- 1992 *Incident at Oglala* Redford, R.
 A docu-drama which focuses on the events surrounding the 1973 shooting of two FBI agents in South Dakota and the subsequent conviction of Leonard Peltier.
- 1992 *The Last of His Tribe*
 Portrays the final years of Ishi, the last Yahi Indian, from his discovery in 1911 to his death several years later and his relationship with the UC-Berkeley anthropologist that tried to understand his language and culture.

1992 *The Last of the Mohicans*
Based on the James Fenimore Cooper novel of the same name, this film portrays the Mohicans as superhero warriors that come to the aid of victims of aggression. The movie, like the book, feeds on the noble savage concept.

1992 *Thunderheart*
A man investigating a murder (Val Kilmer) rediscovers his true Indian roots; imagery and ritual abound in this production.

1993 *Dark Wind* (Carolco Prod.) Morris, E.
A young sheriff becomes involved in a murder mystery when a Navajo man's mutilated body is found on a Hopi reservation.

1993 *Geronimo: An American Legend*
Details the events surrounding the capture, escape, and recapture of Geronimo (Wes Studi) by the U.S. Army in 1885 and 1886. The film follows the lead of *Dances with Wolves* in featuring an American Indian language with English subtitles; in this case, Apache.

1993 *Where the Rivers Flow North* (Caledonia)
A white man named Nel (Rip Torn) and an Indian woman named Bangor (Tantoo Cardinal) refuse to accept a lucrative offer to give up their rights to a lifetime lease on land in Vermont in order for a \$30 million dam to be built. Filled with beautiful scenery and simple, yet effective acting.

Documentaries

<u>Year</u>	<u>Title (Production Company)</u>
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1922	<i>Nanook of the North</i> (Pathétique)	Flaherty, R.
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One of the first full-length documentaries that also became a successful box office draw. Robert Flaherty visited the Inuit along Hudson Bay and filmed their daily activities. It was later revealed that many of the portrayed events were staged.

1979 *Images of Indians* (Univ. of Washington) Hagopian, R. and Lucas, P.

A five-part series which contains many excellent examples of the noble and ignoble savage stereotype in Hollywood films. The titles of each segment are: The Great Movie Massacre, Heathen Injuns and the Hollywood Gospel, How Hollywood Wins the War, The Movie Reel Indians, and Warpaint and Wigs. Narrated by Will Sampson.

1992 *Imagining Indians* (Masayesva), Masayesva, V.

Illustrates the way American Indians have been portrayed in the film media and American popular culture and combines Hollywood film footage with personal interviews. The film was produced and directed by a member of the Hopi Nation and contains numerous interviews with American Indians who had firsthand experience with Hollywood westerns.

1992 *Last Stand at Little Bighorn* (PBS: The American Experience)

Documents different perspectives on the various conflicts between American Indians, the U.S. Army, and European-American settlers; with special focus on the Battle of Little Bighorn. Presents journal excerpts and interviews with those from both sides of the conflict. Finishes with Hollywood portrayals of "Custer's last stand".

1993 *The Dakota Conflict* (Twin Cities Public TV)

Details both sides of the 1862 war in southern Minnesota between the European-American settlers and the Dakota, which culminated in the order by Abraham Lincoln to hang 38 Dakota men simultaneously in Mankato: the largest mass execution in U.S. history. Narrated by Garrison Keillor and Floyd Red Crow Westerman.

1994 *Ishi: The Last Yahi Indian* (PBS: The American Experience)

Relates the story of the last known indigenous inhabitant of North America who lived completely isolated from the modern world. Ishi, a Yahi who lived in the mountains of northern California, was discovered by the modern world in 1911 and was

indigenous peoples and various groups of settlers (typically European-American) who are all vying for control over the land and natural resources in the surrounding region and often come into conflict with one another. Although Westerns may also feature intragroup struggles instead of the intergroup ones most commonly portrayed, the setting is usually in a region that is sparsely inhabited by European-Americans and is typically located in the western portion of the lower 48 states.

⁴ I am indebted to Eric Nelson for suggesting the third category, which is also described in Omaggio Hadley (1993:401).

⁵ The term "savage" certainly reveals ethnocentric biases on the part of the Europeans and conjures up images of barbarity, which suggest that many of the European impressions of indigenous peoples may have been founded upon cross-cultural misunderstandings.

⁶ One indication of this is that the women actually owned the tepees in each village (Pond, 1986:38; Walker, 1982:40).

⁷ Kevin Costner has profited tremendously from the movie and was even able to persuade governmental authorities in South Dakota to grant him permission to build a casino, against the objections of many Lakota leaders who view the casino as a threat to their economic livelihood.

⁸ Not all tribes had a unique language or dialect, but it is estimated that at least 200 "mutually unintelligible languages" existed north of Mexico at the time of the first contacts with Europeans (Josephy, 1991:12).

⁹ Four films are normally shown in ESL 253 within a 10-week period, which constitutes one academic quarter.

¹⁰ *Witness* also received an average score of 8.2, while *Stand and Deliver* received a score of 6.8. A total of 19 students ranked each of the three core films.

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The Effects of Training on Written Speech Act Behavior: Stating and Changing an Opinion *

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A study is presented which compared the effects of training on the written speech act of stating and changing an opinion among nonnative and native speakers of English. A small-scale experiment was conducted to determine if skills could be taught to a nonnative Treatment Group, using another group of nonnatives as a Control Group and a group of native English speakers as a baseline to determine the components of the speech act. The Treatment and Control groups were comprised of graduate students in an advanced reading and writing summer course in the ESL program at the University of Minnesota. Persons in all three groups read two opposed articles on differences on the male and female human brain, then were instructed to role play a professor taking one of the two positions in the articles. Respondents then had to change their stance in favor of the other position, as presented in the articles, and write an essay for a journal or professional newsletter about their change of opinion. After five weeks, respondents in the Treatment and Control Groups underwent a similar procedure with articles that took sides on the greenhouse effect. Additional data on the process was obtained from verbal protocols with three nonnative participants in their native language. Overall, training did have a positive effect, with some differences in the kinds of strategies employed by nonnatives versus natives and in the use of logical connections indicating concession. Verbal report data provided retrospective insights into how respondents approached the task, as well as into the basis for their decisions during the process.

INTRODUCTION

Rod Ellis (1994:187-88) recently concluded a chapter on the pragmatics of language acquisition with this observation on speech act research:¹

Finally, it should be pointed out that the study of interlanguage pragmatics acts in L2 acquisition has focused on the spoken medium and has paid little attention to writing. This is particularly the case with illocutionary acts. In effect, therefore, although we know something about how 'contextualized' acts such [as] requests, apologies, and refusals are acquired, we know little about how learners acquire the ability to perform speech acts found in decontextualized, written language.

Ellis goes on to say that speech act performance in written discourse may differ considerably from that in oral production, and asserts that pragmatic research on language learning needs to consider written interlanguage.

This study presents the results of an experiment which investigated the process of stating and changing an opinion as it is conducted by nonnative learners of English in a written task. The experiment established a comparative baseline of native-speaker data and imitated a common situation in written academic thought (e.g., in journal articles or professional newsletters): changing one's mind about an issue. In light of Ellis's observation, the study brings together two strands of usually unrelated research: (1) learners' performance of speech acts in a second language (a branch of second-language acquisition research), and (2) the way in which functions are expressed by skilled writers of Scientific and Technical English (a branch of research on English for Specific Purposes). The central question for us here concerns the differences between native speakers when they state and change an opinion and non-native speakers performing the same illocutionary act.²

Myers (1989) suggests that politeness strategies³ are used

to mitigate two central impositions expressed in scientific writing: claims made by the writer and denials of claims made by others. To express an opinion is to make a claim (particularly central in "establishing a niche," in Swales' (1990:141) terms) and to make a claim is to impose one's opinion on others. The centrality of these two functions, and their impositional nature, require the sophisticated use of politeness strategies, which in turn result in the use of the variety of speech acts and stylistic features characteristic of scientific writing. The complexity of those features is still being described by researchers, and certainly remains to be taught explicitly to nonnative speakers of English.

An additional problem is that the task of performing a critical review of the work of others with the intent of offering one's own view may be culturally difficult for nonnative speakers. We have observed many such learners who, when confronted with such a task, simply report views without interpretation and without taking a stand on the matter. The responses of such learners, when asked about their difficulties, suggest to us that they are often quite aware of the impositional nature of the speech acts they are being asked to perform, and simply opt out of performing them (Bonikowska, 1988).

Part of the problem is that, in stating an opinion in writing, a writer is performing a speech act, acceptable performance of which in an American academic context may not be overtly clear to nonnatives. In fact, nonnatives may have no idea as to how to perform this speech act acceptably in such a context. For example, skilled academic writers may be apologizing for an earlier view, but may do it through a speech act strategy that seems more like a displacement of responsibility onto the scientific community than an individual acceptance of responsibility (a positive politeness strategy, as explained by Myers [1989:7-8] and Ellis [1994:161]). Instead of acknowledging responsibility for previous views, skilled writers make it appear that they were victims of circumstance--that "the field" imposed this view upon them. Myers cites Blake (1983), who dismisses all earlier viewpoints, including his own, this way: "Thus none of the current ideas on the relation of coding sequences to protein function and structure seems fully correct" (Blake, 1983, cited in Myers, 1989:8).

Nonnatives may not even realize that the writer in this

example is changing a position and offering an apology, however covertly, for having taken a previously erroneous position. It may also be the case that the speech act is stated by means of language forms that nonnatives have trouble interpreting. For example, the writer may use a negative politeness strategy, employing a hedge in order to play down the discrepancy between what s/he had claimed in the past and what s/he ascribes to at the present moment. This hedge may be in the form of a modal with impersonal subject, e.g., "one might now construe that..." or even a passive, "it could now be surmised that..."

What nonnative writers, their English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) instructors, and their instructors in academic courses have come to realize is that the fact that nonnative writers of English are good writers in their native language does not imply that they will be effective writers in English. As Kaplan (1988) and others have pointed out, the nonnative writers may not be aware of the frequency and distribution of given written functions, nor may they be aware of the structural conventions used for expressing these functions. Certainly, as we have already pointed out, the work of Myers (1989), Swales (1990) and others indicates that these features, as used by skilled writers in various academic fields, may be quite complex.

The job of the ESL student in interpreting and then presenting conflicting views in the academic literature, then, is complex. While reading text in order to comprehend opposing views, ESL students need to identify the functions performed by the speech acts involved (e.g., making a claim, disagreeing with a colleague's opinion, apologizing for an error in one's own earlier claim, suggesting further research). They may also need to identify sometimes subtle language forms that writers use to express these functions (e.g., mitigation to tone down a statement--"a somewhat helpful view").

In their academic course work, ESL students are frequently called upon to provide a critical review of the work of others and to offer their own view. This act, often incorporated into a "review of the literature," is basic to academic writing, particularly writing for publication. On the face of it, a critical review of the literature would seem straightforward. However, research on the grammar and rhetoric of Scientific and Technical English has shown that a

literature review can be deceptively complex: the frequency and distribution of the functions expressed, and the structural conventions used to express those functions may be far from obvious, even to non-specialist native speakers (e.g., Swales [1990:137-166] provides an excellent review of research on Scientific and Technical English article introductions).

In stating their opinions in writing (in term papers, theses, journal submissions, and the like), ESL students are faced with choosing speech acts that are socioculturally appropriate—for example, knowing if and when to apologize for a previous opinion. If they deem it appropriate to apologize, they need to know which strategies or semantic formulas within the apology speech act set to use (see Olshtain & Cohen, 1983). For example, they might use expression of apology (“I am sorry”) and acknowledgment of responsibility (“I misjudged the importance of...”), but would be unlikely to include the strategy of *promise of non-recurrence* (“I will never do that again”). In addition, the students need to have at least some control over the language forms that are considered sociolinguistically appropriate at the given level of formality. Whereas ESL students may be aware of the proper speech act to use (e.g., an apology) and the semantic formulas appropriate for realizing the given speech act in the given context (e.g., an expression of regret and an acknowledgment of responsibility), they may still fail to select the appropriate language forms to convey the speech act (e.g., “excuse me,” when “really sorry” would be a better indication of genuine regret).

It has been suggested that Asian students are taught to represent text meticulously and to respect each text, but not to take sides or to criticize them, i.e., “the criticism of a neophyte” (Ballard & Clanchy, 1991). Ballard and Clanchy suggest that Japanese students may justify the bases for differing interpretations of source material but will not test or evaluate these interpretations, as the intention is to achieve harmony. While these students may develop arguments through implication, these arguments are likely to go unrecognized by American readers of their university essays (1991:33). The concern for harmony apparently has deep roots in the Eastern approach to communication, more so than in that of the West.

According to Cushman and Kincaid, “The Western per-

spective is seen by the East as that of preserving political, social, and economic freedom for the individual" (Cushman & Kincaid, 1987). Myers' (1989) research indicates that this view about how Eastern and Western perspectives differ may not apply so simply to the subculture of Western science:

I will assume in the subculture of science: (1) that the social distance between individuals--D--must be treated as very great; (2) that the relative differences in power between individuals--P--are supposed to be small, but (3) that the community as a whole is supposed to be vastly more powerful than any individual in it. Thus ... one researcher must always humble himself or herself before the community as a whole. Of course in reality scientists have a network of informal contacts, collaborations and long-standing personal commitments that do not require great social distance. But none of this is to emerge in print ...everyone must present themselves as equally the humble servants of the discipline. (1989:4)

Thus, for Western academics, the complex task is to present themselves in print as humble servants of the scientific community, while at the same time asserting individuality: expressing their unique opinion, making claims, and discounting the claims of others. The use of politeness strategies which involve hedging, use of the passive, modals and other structural conventions described by Myers (1989) permits Western academics to make claims while simultaneously presenting themselves as servants of the scientific community.

This article reports the results of an experiment aimed at determining the manner in which ESL students express and change opinions in their academic writing, and the extent to which the skills associated with expressing and changing an opinion in this context can be taught. The study examined the intersection of learner performance of speech acts (again noting the bias toward oral production) and the deployment of such acts in academic writing. The research questions investigated in the current study

were as follows:

1. How can the written speech act of stating an opinion and then changing it be characterized amongst natives?
2. How can the speech act of changing an opinion be characterized amongst nonnatives? What similarities and differences are there between native and nonnative respondents?
3. What are the effects of training in speech act production on the written speech act of changing an opinion?
4. What are the processes that respondents go through in performing such a task?

The study is interdisciplinary in nature in that it combines reading comprehension, writing skills, and sociolinguistic awareness as well. The study has scholarly value in that the field of literacy is currently looking at the relationship between reading and writing in academic settings. It has even been suggested that at times it is difficult to draw the line between reading and writing. Furthermore, there has been a keen interest over the last decade in the role of speech acts in discourse, especially regarding the more complex speech acts such as apologizing, complaining, and requesting, since considerable language proficiency is called for in order to understand and to execute them effectively.

At the more applied level, the importance of such research for the training of nonnative English-speaking academics cannot be overemphasized. There is a need to better understand the sources of difficulty for nonnatives in preparing reviews of the literature, and there is a commensurate need to generate training materials that would help to rectify the situation by dealing with such issues in the ESL courses that these students take.

DESIGN

Sample

Twenty-five students in the two most advanced reading/composition classes of the 1992 Summer Intensive English Language and Orientation Program (SIELOP) at the University of

Minnesota participated in the study, one class of thirteen as a treatment group and another class of twelve as the control group. The Treatment Group was comprised of six German speakers, four Japanese speakers, and one speaker each of Korean, Chinese, and Italian. The Control Group also consisted of six German speakers, two Japanese speakers, and one each of Korean, Thai, Croatian, and Arabic. There was also a baseline group of ten native speakers, all teachers at the Minnesota English Center, who provided data for comparison.

Instrumentation and Data Collection Procedures

All three groups received a pretest in which they were given two brief articles with conflicting views on an academic theme--namely, research comparing the male and female brain. The first, "Brain Structure Explains Male/Female Differences," was excerpted from an article appearing in the New York Times (Goleman, 1989), and the second, "Brain Structure Does Not Explain Male/Female Differences," was excerpted from a book dealing with biological theories about women and men (Fausto-Sterling, 1985). The texts were both about 1,300 words long.

The ESL students were told to role-play a professor who had taken a public stand in favor of the views expressed in one article, but who now had found irrefutable evidence to favor the views expressed in the second article. The students could choose which article would represent their initial position and which their current position. Hence, the student as "professor" was given the task of writing a brief article for an academic journal or newsletter, summarizing both views (approximately 80 words per summary), noting that he or she had changed his/her opinion and now ascribed to the second view, and apologizing for having previously ascribed to the first view. The task took them approximately 1 hour.

Given the complex nature of the task, the students were given their papers back for the purpose of revision if they did not complete the task as requested--i.e., if they took a position but did not indicate that this was a change of opinion. This procedure was utilized to reinforce the notion that academic writing is usually accomplished through the writing of various drafts, in a process-oriented manner. Thus, one of the investigators read all

papers and supplied the students with a brief critique, indicating what portion of the task was misinterpreted or omitted and requesting that the student revise the task.⁴

The Treatment class of ESL students then received training from their regular classroom teacher in how to prepare such reviews of the literature and how to take a stand in such cases. Parts of five class sessions were devoted to the training, and the students did some of the work out of class. Among their training materials was Leki's (1989) chapter on "Responding to Written Arguments," which presents two brief texts with conflicting views and then guides students through the summarizing of both positions and the formulation of a personal stance on the issue. The students were also trained in the use of appropriate speech acts in their written literature reviews, based on a content analysis of the responses collected from the ten native-speaking ESL teachers/teacher trainees performing the same task.⁵ The control group received the regular summer course.

Five weeks later, the students were once again asked to perform the same task. This time the two articles with conflicting views were, "The Greenhouse Effect is Potentially Disastrous," excerpted from an article in *The Nation* (Steel, 1984) and from *USA Today* (Anonymous, 1986), and "The Greenhouse Effect is Exaggerated," excerpted from an article by Landsberg (1984).⁶

Three of the Japanese ESL learners, one from the Treatment Group and two from the Control Group, met with the native Japanese-speaking research assistant who had them provide retrospective self-observation in Japanese shortly after performing the posttest task. Among other things, the respondents were asked how they selected the texts that would represent their first and second positions and how they actually constructed their responses (e.g., choice of vocabulary and grammatical structures).

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

a. Rating of the responses: Two raters rated the responses on the written tasks in scrambled order so that the raters were unaware of whether the response was from the Treatment or the Control group. The order of pretest and posttest tasks was also scrambled and the raters were told not to pay attention to the content of the responses. They focused on the language in the

responses that could be used to identify the respondent's position. They rated the responses on a scale of from 4 to 1 for their performance on the task:

4 = good - a position is stated and then a change of position is stated.

3 = fair - the two positions are there and include a shift in opinion, but one or both may have to be inferred.

2 = poor - just one opinion was stated and no change of opinion.

1 = very poor - the respondents did not perform the task. For example, all they did was to summarize one or both of the texts.

b. Verbal report: The Japanese research assistant transcribed in Japanese the retrospective verbal report protocols from the three Japanese ESL students, translated the transcriptions, and prepared responses to four research questions: the two noted above (i.e., matching opinions with texts, and actually composing the written task) and two others relating to the processes involved in reading the two texts and in summarizing them (Itaba, 1992).

RESULTS

1. How can the written speech act of stating an opinion and then changing it be characterized amongst natives?

Although the sample of native writers was limited to ten, there did emerge a structure for stating and then changing a position. There tended to be some indication as to the duration of the previously held opinion and as to the time when the new view took effect. Then there was a brief statement of the original opinion. Next, there was usually a logical connector of concession, followed by a statement of the new opinion and an explanation or justification for it, occasionally with a time frame for the new opinion. On occasion there would be a comment or apology for having held the previous opinion and once or twice an indication of collective or individual responsibility for the previously-held opinion.⁷ The semantic formulas (speech act strategies) were as follows, although their order varied slightly:

a. **a time frame for the first position:** "as recently as one year ago," "in 1984," "until reading...," "originally."

b. **a statement of the first position:** "I held that...," "many, including this researcher, argued that...," "in the past, I supported the view that..."

c. **a logical connector of concession:** "however," "despite," "in spite of."

d. **a time frame for the new position:** "just recently."

e. **an expression of a change of opinion:**

1) **direct expression of change of opinion:** "I would like to retract my previous position that...and state that I now feel...," "now, however, after years of examining research findings, I am not convinced that. . . I no longer feel that..."

2) **indirect expression of change of opinion:** "that have/has prompted me to reconsider my stance...," "this leads me to believe more that..."

3) **focus on current opinion:** "the position I now hold is that there is irrefutable evidence that...," "I now tend to agree more with the argument that..."

f. **an explanation, justification, or cause for the change of opinion:**

1) **the writer as agent in the change of opinion:** "further research on my part leads me to doubt these claims and pushed me to investigate...," "a deeper investigation has led me to reconsider..."

2) **lack of evidence for the prior stance prompts the change of opinion:** "indeed, with no hard data to support the claims...," "due largely to the lack of existing evidence..."

3) **new evidence causing the change of opinion:** “compelling results,” “more plausible evidence for my new position...”

g. **a comment:** “we can’t go on insisting that there are no differences... anymore than we could try to cling to the idea that the earth is flat...”

h. **collective or individual responsibility:** “it has become clear that many of us in the scientific community erred when we rejected those early explanations for...,”⁸ “what can we do?”

2. How can the speech act of changing an opinion be characterized amongst nonnatives? What similarities and differences were there between native and nonnative respondents?

a. **A Comparison of Semantic Formula or Strategy Use**

For the most part, the nonnatives used the same semantic formulas or discourse strategies as did the natives. This is not so surprising since the basic moves were specified in the task itself. Thus, the nonnative data often included a time frame for the first position, a statement of the first position, a logical connector of concession, a time frame for the new position, an expression of a new opinion, and an explanation or justification for the change of opinion.

With regard to the expression of the new opinion, the nonnatives used all three of the sub-strategies used by natives: direct expression of change of opinion, indirect expression, and focus on current opinion. Concerning the explanation or justification for this new position, the nonnatives also used all three sub-strategies used by the natives: the writer as agent in the change of opinion, lack of evidence prompting the change of opinion, and new evidence causing the change of opinion.

There were two strategies that some natives used that none of the nonnatives used, and there was one strategy used by nonnatives and not by natives. One of the strategies used only by natives was that of offering a collective or personal evaluative comment--which Cohen, Olshtain, and Rosenstein (1986) found to serve as a social lubricant in projective oral discourse⁹ in rough moments: “I am embarrassed to say, I found much of the research

to be shoddy and the claims unwarranted...," "but we can't go on insisting that there are no differences...any more than we could try to cling to the idea that the earth is flat..." This sort of strategy is, in Myers' (1989) interpretation of the Brown and Levinson model (Brown and Levinson 1978), an unmitigated face-threatening act of criticism, and as such it would probably be unusual to find such a bald statement in print in a professional journal (although such phrasing might be more likely in a letter to the editor of such a journal). The other strategy was that of evoking collective responsibility: "How wrong we were!" "it has become clear that many of us in the scientific community erred when we rejected those early explanations for..." "what can we do?" In these instances, the responsibility is shifted off the shoulders of the individual scholar and instead placed upon a larger, more amorphous group of academicians. This strategy is described by Myers (1989):

One way of making a criticism while minimizing the [face-threatening act] is for writers to use pronouns that include themselves in the criticism. Besides the WE that means the writers, there is a WE that means the discipline as a whole. ...Crick uses the...device when drawing lessons from the split gene episode. Lacking evidence we had become overconfident in the generality of some of our basic ideas (Crick, 1979). (Myers, 1989:7)

The strategy used only by nonnatives was that of explaining or justifying their first position: "The statements...seemed to be very strong, and so we thought that..." (German speaker), "We used our best equipment, our best specialist...We could not give consistent foresight..." (German speaker), "My observations were strengthened by the scientific investigations of..." (German speaker), "In #1, he shows some evidences which...So #1 is more reliable than #2 for me" (Japanese speaker). None of the natives felt compelled to explain or justify the position that they were now refuting. Perhaps it was a deliberate strategy of the natives not to call more attention to their previous position than they had to. The nonnatives, on the contrary, occasionally did this.

b. A Comparison of the Linguistic Forms Used

Perhaps the most conspicuous difference with respect to form was in the choice of logical connector of concession. The natives used forms like "however," "despite," and "in spite of." The nonnatives used "but" almost exclusively. In fact, there were 22 instances of the use of "but" and only four uses of other connectors--all in the Treatment Group and all in posttesting. Three of these were appropriate--the use of "however" twice and the use of "despite" once. But one of the respondents who did use "however" correctly (a native Chinese speaker), used "but" and "nevertheless" incorrectly, perhaps in making an exaggerated effort to use connectors:

However, new studies and reports let me doubt my earlier position. The E.P.A. says that the greenhouse effect has the potential to destroy civilizations, in contrast to other environmental problems. *But* the officials will first deal with this problem if it is upon us. *Nevertheless*, it is necessary to act against the greenhouse effect before it is to late... [italics added for emphasis]

The author probably meant "consequently" or "hence" instead of "but," and "clearly" rather than "nevertheless." In both cases he has created an opposition that is not warranted, given the rest of the text that he generated. This result is reminiscent of Jisa and Scarella's (1982) unpublished findings. In their study, nonnatives felt so compelled to use connectors (e.g., additives such as "and;" contrastives such as "however") which they had learned that they made more use of them per t-unit in their essays than did natives (36% vs. 21%). They also often used them incorrectly.

With respect to expressing a change of opinion, the nonnatives were more abrupt in doing so than were natives. Several natives used hedges or mitigators both in explicitly stating their change of opinion ("*although I am not quick to make judgments, and by nature examine the facts carefully before taking a stand, I have on this issue had to change my view...*") and in focusing on their current opinion ("I now *tend* to agree more with the argument that..."). Nonnatives, on the other hand, simply came right out with the

change statement ("I changed my mind...", "I changed my attitude...", "I have change my opinion...") and/or with their current opinion ("Now I think...", "Now I agree with X's stand...").

3. What were the effects of training on the production of the written speech act of changing an opinion?

The interrater reliability for the two raters was high: $r = .91$ on the pretest ($p < .001$), and $r = .94$ on the posttest ($p < .001$), using Pearson's coefficient of correlation. The ratings were averaged and a t-test analysis for independent groups was performed on the data. The results showed that the Treatment and Control Groups did not differ significantly in pretesting, but that there was a significant difference in posttesting in favor of the Treatment Group (Table 1). In addition, a t-test of the gain scores was performed in order to adjust the posttest scores for the effect of pretest performance, and once again the Treatment Group came out significantly ahead (Table 2).

4. What were the processes that respondents went through in responding to the task?

The following are the findings from verbal report sessions in which three of the Japanese learners, one from the Treatment Group and two from the Control Group, provided retrospective self-observation in Japanese after performing the posttest task.

The first Japanese-speaking respondent (from the Treatment Group) decided not to reject either of the positions: "I thought each of the articles contains some truthfulness and, thus, persuasiveness. So, I didn't turn any of them down but approached them with respect." Apparently, the Japanese word keiji ("respect") implies that some credibility is granted each writer's authority, which makes it impossible to reject either one out of hand. The respondent finally chose the one that seemed more fact-oriented.

The second respondent perceived the task as a kind of game, and assumed more of a narrative, rather than argumentative, style. In other words, his statement flowed like a story, rather than reflecting a dialectical presentation of arguments. He said he debated in his mind like in a verbal game and created arguments haphazardly. This respondent chose a position which, as he put it,

"enabled me to make a story and actually write it.... there was no personal belief influencing this decision."

The third respondent reported that the choosing of an article to side with was "extremely hard to do," not because it was hard to weigh arguments, but because this task asked him, within a fixed time limit, to criticize arbitrarily a previous, artificially determined position in favor of his more recent position. He argued that this sort of process does not take place in writing in his area (medicine).

The first respondent reported that he attempted to express his change of position by creating strong reasons to support the act of changing his mind. He came up with one reason, namely, that one article was more fact-oriented than the other, and stated that he did not need to use modals or hedges: "I don't find it necessary to use hedges. It is I who changed my position, not others." The second respondent amplified the meaning of this lack of need for hedging: "In expressing the change of my previous position, I don't feel any social responsibility or anything of that kind." The third respondent added, "In this task, I was asked just to write. So I just wrote my summary." The Japanese investigator in these verbal report sessions concluded that the subjects may well have known how to hedge in English but did not find it important to do so in stating a change of viewpoint.

The second respondent noted that he did not envision a readership when he prepared the task because he viewed it as a verbal game. Thus, he reported that while he did care about grammatical accuracy, he did not care about how his sentences would be perceived by readers. Because the third respondent did not find it realistic in his area of medicine to express a change of viewpoint in "such a light-headed fashion," he also did not feel it important to "decorate his statements for this sort of game."

These responses speak to the validity of the task. These process-oriented data would suggest that because two of the respondents were not taking the task seriously, they were thus not making an effort to produce what they considered to be "public discourse." How different their language structures would have been in an authentic situation is, however, hard to say. The one respondent who **did** report taking the task seriously also indicated approaching the two articles with respect, as Ballard and Clanchy

(1991) would suggest that Asian students do. Myers (1989) points out that one of the great difficulties of applying a functional analysis to scientific and technical writing is the lack of a definite addressee for published texts. Some of the comments of these subjects may reflect this problem.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study set out first of all to describe the speech acts of stating and then changing an opinion, both among native and nonnative users of English. The findings from this relatively small-scale study still constitute a beginning in this direction.

In sum, among the natives, there was a tendency to indicate the duration of the previously held opinion and when the new view took effect. Then there was a brief statement of the first opinion, followed by a logical connector of concession. Next, there often appeared a statement of the new opinion and an explanation or justification for it, occasionally with a time frame for the new opinion.

For the most part the nonnatives used the same semantic formulas or discourse strategies as did the natives. There were two strategies that some natives used that none of the nonnatives used and there was one strategy used by nonnatives, and not by natives. One of the strategies used only by natives was that of offering a personal evaluative comment, and the other was that of evoking collective responsibility. The strategy used only by nonnatives was that of explaining or justifying their first position. None of the natives explained or justified the position that they were refuting.

With respect to the form that the message took, the most conspicuous difference was in the choice of logical connector of concession. While the natives used forms like "however," "despite," and "in spite of," the nonnatives used "but" almost exclusively. Then with respect to expressing a change of opinion, the nonnatives were more abrupt in doing so. Several natives used hedges both in explicitly stating their change of opinion and in focusing on their current opinion. Nonnatives, on the other hand, simply came right out with the change statement and/or with their current opinion.

There seem to have been some systematic effects of training in the treatment group, both in terms of a greater awareness as to

the speech acts that the Treatment students needed to perform and in terms of the carrier language they were to use to convey these speech acts. Although the significance of the difference was modest ($p < .05$), the sample small, and the treatment relatively brief, the findings about the positive effects of training in the use of speech acts in written academic discourse are consistent with those for training in the use of speech acts in oral language (Olshtain & Cohen, 1990; Billmyer, 1990).

Regarding the processes used in producing the responses, the case study work with verbal protocol yielded some insights. Each of the three Japanese ESL respondents had a different reaction. The first treated the texts with such respect that it was difficult for him to choose one to favor. The second simply saw the entire exercise as a game which he did not take seriously. The third felt the exercise was difficult because he was asked to make an arbitrary choice, something that does not occur in his professional work.

With regard to any conscious selection of vocabulary and grammar, the first respondent reported that he attempted to express his change of position by creating strong reasons to support the act of changing his mind. None of the three respondents felt the need to hedge in their responses because they did not feel the situation required it. Furthermore, the perception that this was just a game influenced their responses. While the second respondent indicated attention to grammatical accuracy, he and the third respondent did not attend to how their sentences would be perceived by a presumed readership of academic colleagues.

The research aims originally included a focus on the nature of the respondents' summaries for each of the texts, as well as their handling of their opinions. This broader focus proved to be too ambitious in that the students had enough to do simply dealing with the stating of an opinion and then expressing a change of opinion. A few of the students in each group, both in pre- and posttesting, did not provide summaries of the two articles, but launched directly into a discussion of their opinions. In rating the responses it became clear that the issue was not how well the respondents summarized the two texts but of greater interest was how they articulated their position and then their change of position. The performance of the speech act then was the major

concern.

We must remember that although the selected texts were relevant to the topics being discussed in the ESL courses at the time of the pre- and posttesting (i.e., "learning" and "the environment," respectively), the passages were not directly connected to the respondents' field of study. This lack of context expertise could have worked to the detriment of those less comfortable with the scientific nature of the subject matter. For this reason, a recommendation for follow-up research would be that the respondents perform such tasks using texts from their respective fields of expertise.

Even given the limitations inherent in the study, the results would suggest that such small-scale work is justified because it helps to improve our understanding of how native and nonnative written discourses compare in specific speech-act area. This type of research echoes the concerns of Ellis (1994) that data on written speech acts be garnered to demonstrate differences in acquisition and performance between written and oral discourse. The current study also provided insights as to whether systematic interventions to teach given speech functions would be of value. In this study, there seemed to be value in providing a treatment, but only after an empirical study of what ESL teachers would write and comparing that to what the ESL students wrote. Future research could also gather data samples from the nonnatives in their native languages in order to determine the influence of L1 discourse patterns on the writing of L2 text.

Table 1: Mean Differences in Ratings of Pretest and Posttest Tasks

	Pretest		Posttest	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Treatment (N = 13)	3.25	1.03	3.50	0.82
Control (N = 12)	3.04	1.12	2.46	1.27

t = -.47
df = 22

t = -2.46*
df = 23

*p < .05

Table 2: Mean Differences in Gain Scores

	Mean Gain Score	S.D.
Treatment (N = 13)	.33	.96
Control (N = 12)	-.58	.87

t = -2.44*
df = 22

* p

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parents' reaction as incentives to join. Eighty percent said they had no time, and the other group.

Again, the responses from the school differed. One hundred percent said they had no time as factors which prevented them from joining. Eighty percent marked both no time and no money as secondary reasons.

Students who circled "0" (0) might get killed, 2) if you join, you might go to jail.

The most frequent responses were wanting an education and going to school. Being afraid of parents was next. There were also five responses relating to being poor, have a long life, have a lot of money, and have a family. (See Appendix for responses.)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Given the small sample size, we cannot draw concrete conclusions from the data. However, we provide some answers to our questions.

What prevents students from joining? It appears there may be some correlation between not speaking, reading, and writing English and not joining. This is important if Police Officers are more apt to join if they are not in school (Dufresne, 1993). If they are not in school, it is highly probable that their family is not intact and the family hierarchy is not intact. The parents, then, would not be able to control their children. According to the National Gang Center, "Helping parents gain control of their children is one of the most difficult tasks to accomplish, yet it is one of the most important solutions to prevent gang involvement." From the results that the students gave, we can see negative feelings about school, lack of money, parental English ability and the

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NOTES

* An earlier version of this study appeared as Cohen, A. D., & Tarone, E. (1994), "Describing and teaching speech act behavior: Stating and changing an opinion," in L. Barbara & M. Scott (Eds.), *Reflections on language learning* (Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters).

¹ For clarity, Ellis's *interlanguage pragmatics* is the same as *pragmatic competence* applied to second-language learning. He defines pragmatic competence as "the knowledge that speaker-hearers use in order to engage in communication, including how speech acts are successfully performed. Pragmatic competence is normally distinguished from linguistic competence. Both are seen as relating to 'knowledge,' and are therefore distinct from actual performance" (Ellis, 1994:719).

² Following Austin (1962), *illocutionary acts* and *speech acts* are used synonymously in this paper, representing his view of such acts as inclusive of the social functions of both speaking and writing. However, it is worth noting that "speech acts" has commonly referred only to oral discourse.

³ Politeness strategies can be either positive, in which case the speaker is attempting to establish a social link with the hearer on the basis of equality or commonality, or negative, wherein the speaker wants to reduce the addressee's sense of obligation (see Levinson, 1983).

⁴ On the pretest, four papers were revised, two from the Treatment

Group and two from the Control Group. However, on the posttest only two papers were revised—both for the Treatment Group.

⁵ Actually, eight from this group did the task with the pretest passages and two did it with the posttest passages.

⁶ In both this and the previous task, the passages reflected the theme being addressed in the classroom at the time: “learning” in the first case and “the environment” in the second.

⁷ In other words, there was not strong support in the native-speaker baseline group for Myers’ processing step of displacing responsibility. Consequently, this did not emerge as a strong criterion for this particular speech act. This may be an artifact of the small sample size.

⁸ This represents a classic strategy for displacing personal responsibility, according to Myers (1989).

⁹ I.e., the respondents in the Cohen et al. (1986) study wrote down their responses in a discourse completion task presumably the way that they would say them.

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Hmong Gangs: Preventing Lost Youth

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The literature which deals with the topic of gangs, and, in particular, with Hmong gangs, has seemed to focus on why children join gangs. But not every Hmong youth is in a gang. Perhaps the more pertinent question for educators is what prevents students from joining gangs? What are the factors present in their lives that eliminate the need to be affiliated with gang members? How large a role does success in schools play? What, if anything, can we as educators do to prevent or decrease gang involvement? In this article, we present a brief overview of Hmong history in the U.S. and discuss factors behind gang affiliation. The results of a survey given to 23 Hmong students at one St. Paul junior high school and one middle school are discussed, with recommendations for future research.

INTRODUCTION

It is said that history repeats itself. As the world continues to experience extreme changes politically and socially, so do the immigration populations continue to change. People from Europe and Scandinavian countries comprised the majority of U.S. immigrants at the turn of the century. Southeast Asians are now the majority group among immigrants in the Upper Midwest. In the Twin Cities, the Hmong community has received substantial news coverage for its enormous and rapid growth.

As these international populations have grown, problems

and tensions have also increased. Not only are the immigrants having to adjust to a new culture, but many also strive to maintain the culture of their homeland. "Southeast Asians come to the United States for the same reasons all immigrants do: to find a better future for their children. '[But the children] learn the new lifestyle and they don't really believe in or respect the old traditions'" (Ingrassia, King, Tizon, Scigliano, and Annin, 1994, p. 65).

One of the problems that has resulted from the Hmong relocation is the growth of Southeast Asian gangs. A gang expert from the Minneapolis Police Department believes that Hmong gangs exist because they are a convenient third culture for youth. Without them, some youth feel too uncomfortable having one foot in refugee culture and one foot in contemporary culture (L. Evenrud, 94). Some Asian teenagers have termed themselves the ".5s—half in one culture, half in another," with the challenge to assimilate into the American mainstream while keeping one's own heritage (Bonner, 1994, p. 15A).

Obviously, not all Hmong youth join gangs. Some are influenced by other important factors. There is little in the literature, however, which predicts these factors. As teachers working with Hmong students, we decided to examine more closely just what influences work to prevent gang membership. Our questions, then, are: What do Hmong students perceive to be the factors that keep Hmong students from joining gangs? and What can we do as educators to help prevent and to decrease gang involvement?

HMONG BACKGROUND

With the fall of the Royal Lao government in April, 1975 and the takeover by the Pathet Lao, the Hmong, who had sided with the United States Army throughout the Vietnam War, were forced to flee Laos. A small number (approximately 1,000 Hmong) were airlifted to Thailand, leaving the rest to fend for themselves and try to escape on foot (Hamilton-Merritt, 1993). By August 1978, at least 55,000 Hmong had fled Laos to avoid seminar camps (e.g. re-education camps), labor battalions, bombs, napalm, and other reprisals (Kouman, 1978). By the year 1984, 60,000 Hmong had been relocated in third countries, 40,000 had remained in the camps, and an estimated 200,000 had stayed in Laos (Hendrix,

Downing, & Deinard, 1986).

The United States is one of the main countries of choice for relocation, with California, Minnesota, and Wisconsin becoming major resettlement sites. In 1992, there were 125,000 Hmong in the United States (Hamilton-Merritt, 1993). In 1980, there were relatively few Hmong in the Twin Cities. By 1990 the number had risen to 27,000, with 65% of Hmong adults not in the labor force.

Relocation in the United States has impacted traditional Hmong culture in a variety of ways. A once fiercely independent, self-sufficient people, many have now become reliant on the welfare system. Frustration grows among these immigrants who have not yet been able to assimilate into the economy (Beck, 1994). Hmong youth, in school all day, have in many cases learned to speak English better than their parents and often have a better understanding of American culture. Parents are then dependent upon their children to act as interpreters and guides; they may be unsure of how to check up on their children, and resent their children becoming Americanized (Bonner, 1994). This results in a "role reversal"—undermining the adult's authority and causing many young people to lose respect for their parents. Dufresne (1993) writes:

The youth lose respect for the elders who they think cannot teach them anything about the new world and who cannot help them at all with their adjustment to a new culture. As a result, they seek to impose their own rules at home, doing whatever they want, going out with whomever they please, and coming home at all hours of the night, without any restrictions. If they sense any opposition or receive any reprimands from the family, they may simply quit school and run away from home (p. 98).

GANGS

Gangs are not new in the United States. According to sources, gangs have been around ever since the country established its independence from England (Evenrud, L., 1994; Evenrud, C., 1994; National School Safety Center, 1988; Gaustad, 1990) or even as long as organized society has existed (Prothrow-Stith, 1991). In 1927, it was recognized that gangs developed among

youth who lived in deteriorating neighborhoods, had inadequate recreation, did not have a strong religious background, had a lack of parental control, lived in poverty, and who had little education (Evenrud, L., 1994) At an April 7, 1994 seminar, Evenrud provided the following definition of a contemporary street gang, written by Miller in 1975: "A gang can be defined as a group of recurrently associating individuals with identifiable leadership and internal organization; identifying with or engaging individually or collectively in violent, illegal behavior." A similar definition was written by the California Council on Criminal Justice: "A gang is a group of people who interact at a high rate among themselves to the exclusion of other groups. A gang has a group name, claims a neighborhood or other territory, and engages in criminal or other anti-social behavior on a regular basis" (Barden, 1989, p. 9). The most defining factor of all of these is violent behavior (Evenrud, L., 1994).

Prothrow-Stith (1991) offers some interesting comparisons between anti-social groups such as gangs and pro-social groups such as fraternities in her book, *Deadly Consequences*. Both exist to provide members with a supportive base when dealing with the ambiguity between adolescence and adulthood. They both provide an opportunity to be a part of a group separated from the family. Both give some purpose to life, providing a place to be valued and to find loyalty. In addition, both have rituals, colors, oaths, and initiation rites. But, again, anti-social groups feed off of violence. Prothrow-Stith writes, "When young males come together as a gang, the group exerts a powerful influence that is capable of eliciting violent, illegal, and anti-social acts that they would not necessarily commit if acting alone" (p. 97-98).

Prothrow-Stith describes three distinct types of gangs: 1) "scavenger gangs," 2) "territorial gangs," and 3) "corporate gangs". The first is the least organized and least successful of the three. Members tend to be dropouts and low-achievers, who are subject to erratic behavior. Their crimes tend to be spontaneous, their method of uniting disorganized, and their leadership constantly changing. Territorial gangs, also referred to as "fighting gangs", are considerably more organized. Members tend to have done poorly in school, come from troubled families, and often speak little English. Their traditions are set and secretive; however, their

primary purpose is social, not necessarily drug-related. The members often wear particular clothing or colors to distinguish themselves from others. The last type, the corporate gangs, or "crews", are highly structured organizations centered on the drug business. Even though members are not necessarily schooled, they are often intelligent. Leaders must be able to plan strategically, manage personnel, and handle money. In fact, corporate gangs can be so structured that the individual members may not know about the organization as a whole. Even though most of these gangs do not find such things as turf and colors relevant to their purpose, discipline, secrecy, and strict codes of behavior are demanded from each member.

The reasons for joining gangs are numerous. Many join because they do not realize there are other options besides participating in violence, especially since that is all they have witnessed growing up. In this respect, then, violence appears to be a normal and appropriate way to resolve disputes (Prothrow-Stith, 1991). Poverty, social disparities, school failure, unemployment, unmet needs, family dysfunction, resentment, lack of parental control, gaining a sense of identity/self-worth, discrimination, transition, and protection have all been listed as factors leading to the risk of gang involvement (Beck, 1994; Bonner, 1994; Evenrud, C., 1994; Evenrud, L., 1994; Gaustad, 1990; National School Safety Center, 1988; Prothrow-Stith, 1991). A junior high teacher in Watts summed up why gangs are so attractive to youth: They say, "I've been here. I was here. I was a part of something" (in Prothrow-Stith, 1991, p. 106).

HMONG GANGS

The marginalization and alienation of first generation immigrants has long been documented. But where there were once Irish, Italian, and Polish gangs roaming the streets 50 years ago, society is now seeing African-American, Hispanic, and Asian gangs (Gardner, 1992; Prothrow-Stith, 1991). Hmong youth, like so many immigrants, are often caught between two cultures: the traditional culture of their homes and the novel culture of the United States. In a *Mpls./St. Paul Magazine* article, "Lost Boys," Lee Pao Xiong, director of the Hmong Youth Association of Minnesota, referred to these youth as "lost souls" (Robson, 1992). The National

School Safety Center (1988) wrote, "Asian gangs present a problem in most cities with a large population of recent Asian immigrants" (p. 15). And they are even filtering into smaller cities where immigrants are getting recruited by those in the larger cities (Beck, 1994).

According to one former gang member and an inner-city high school counselor, Hmong gangs, originally soccer clubs, began emerging in 1984-85 when conflicts erupted between teams. Robson (1992) wrote that soccer games were disrupted by intense heckling from people of other races; hence, gangs may have been organized for self-protection. Beck (1994) points out that "the cycle of community tensions spins round as native youths link up with outside white gangs to respond to Asian gangs" (p. 86).

There are a myriad of reasons for joining a Hmong gang, many quite similar to those for a gang member of any race. In a recent conversation (1994), Mai Xiong*, a former female gang member, told us that generally males join for increased identity and manhood, while females join to get back at their parents for unequal treatment. Mai also informed us that some of the present gang members she knows are lacking long-term, much less short-term, goals. They really have no hope for the future. In addition, Mai also described brothers and sisters learning gang-like behavior from their parents or older siblings. There are pictures of Hmong gang members and small children, with the latter "signing" to the photographer (Evenrud 1994). A seventeen-year-old gang member said he "is seduced by his gang friends and the lure of new crimes" (Bonner, 1994, p. 1A).

There is a growing frustration with the financial situation of Hmong people and "that frustration, in combination with resentment among natives over taxes and busing, seems to be the cause of inter-ethnic violence among the youth" (Beck, 1994, p. 86). Officer Cha of the St. Paul police force cites two main reasons Hmong youth join gangs: 1) the absence of a father, and 2) poor achievement in school (Dufresne, 1993). Robson (1992) writes that youth are faced with a choice: "fight or be shamed" (p. 91). Sergeant L. Evenrud (1994) pointed out that for many gang members the most basic needs for safety and security are not being met. And when Hmong teenagers and adults are having to deal with two different cultures, it would seem unlikely that anything

*name has been changed to protect anonymity

but the physiological needs are being met.

Sgt. Loren Evenrud (1994) commented that Hmong males hurt other Asian males because the latter are not of Hmong descent. On the other hand, Bonner's article in the *Star Tribune* (1994, p. 14A) reported that once exclusive Hmong gangs are now affiliating with other Southeast Asian populations (e.g. Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian). Perhaps the Hmong males are deciding it would be more beneficial to be a part of Asian gangs rather than exclusively Hmong gangs. Then, they could be a more vehement organization against all other races.

Some exclusive Hmong gangs, however, remain quite powerful and established. For example, the Young Cho Lovers gang has the following oath, "Until the Lord takes my soul, I devote my life to become a Cholo. I will honor, respect, protect and serve King C... For if I fail, Y.C.L. must destroy me" (Evenrud, L, 1994). According to Sergeant Evenrud and Mai (1994), present Hmong gangs include the Cobras, Junior White Tigers (or 612), Asian Knights, Peace Mud, Asian Boy Crips (or ABC), and Asian Mafia Crips. Though gang members identify themselves in various ways, the best indicator of gang involvement, according to Mai and Sergeant Evenrud, is the tattoo. We would probably classify most of these gangs as fighting gangs, since they do tend to be organized, speak little English, and are probably members for social (protection and belonging) reasons. In fact, Robson (1992) wrote that, "unlike their black and Hispanic counterparts, southeast-Asian gang members are almost never boastful or ostentatious about their affiliation" (p. 92).

METHODOLOGY

A survey was given to 39 ESL students in one St. Paul junior high school and one middle magnet school (Appendix A) in order to answer the questions: What prevents students from joining gangs? and What might we as educators be able to do to prevent or decrease gang involvement?

Both schools are in middle class neighborhoods, but the students surveyed are from predominately lower socio-economic status families. The Asian population at the junior high school is roughly 24%, with the majority being Hmong. At the magnet

school, the student body is comprised of only 6% Asian students. In addition, the magnet school, unlike the traditional junior high, has parental contracts requiring parents to actively participate in conferences, committees, and other volunteer services. Due to the differences in the types of schools and to the discrepancy in the Asian population, we have chosen to separate certain data by schools where there appeared to be marked variations. The survey results, including those separated by school, are found in Appendices B, C, and D.

It was explained to the students that the surveys were anonymous and would be disposed of after the data was obtained and examined. Students were also given the option of refraining from responding to the survey. Only one student, an identified gang member, refrained. Students were asked to write their ethnic group on the top of the survey and only the Hmong students' surveys were used. A total of 23 usable surveys from Hmong students was obtained. Five surveys were obtained from the magnet school and the other 18 were from the traditional junior high school.

Students responded to twelve questions in English pertaining to their background, attitudes about school, and their reasons for not joining a gang. The question, "What are your reasons for not joining a gang?" was thus phrased based on the assumption that even if students were involved in gangs, they would answer the question in general.

DATA INTERPRETATION

The results become particularly interesting when the subgroups are compared. In addition to trying to determine which factors prevent students from joining gangs, we were also interested in comparing the responses of students living with their fathers and mothers to those of students living only with a mother or guardian.

Attitudes about School and Grades

When examining the data regarding grades and liking school, we found that four out of five students from the regular junior high living with just a mother or guardian reported getting C's, D's, or F's/N's and, not surprisingly, answered "no" to the

question, "Do you like school?" In contrast, of the five students living with both parents who reported getting C's or below, four of the five responded "yes" to "Do you like school?". The eight students getting A's and B's all responded "yes" to "Do you like school?" All five of the students from the magnet school claimed to like school, and four of the five students were getting A's and B's.

The one student who is living with both parents and responded s/he did not like school refrained from answering the question "What are your reasons for not joining a gang?" There is no way of being certain, but one could speculate that this student may, in fact, be involved in gang related activities. (According to the teacher, at least one of the students who filled out a survey is in a gang.) In addition, this student could think of no reasons why Hmong youth in general do not join gangs, but s/he was able to answer the question about why Hmong youth join gangs—"Its [sic] fun and easy."

Grades vs. Parents' English Ability

We also looked at the English ability of the parents and the grades the students were receiving in school. We found that of the five not living with a father, three said the mother spoke and wrote only "a little" English. One said the mother didn't speak or write English. Unfortunately, we did not have a place for students to respond about their guardians' English abilities. Of the five living with both parents and getting C's or below, only two indicated that their fathers could speak, write, or read English. Two of the students answered that their mothers could speak English, but only one could both read and write.

Of the 8 students getting A's and B's, seven said their fathers spoke English and could read and write. In addition, four mothers could speak English, two could speak "a little," and two could not speak it at all. Only three mothers were reported as being able to read and write.

In examining the surveys from the magnet school, we found that of the three students living with both parents, two reported that their fathers could speak, read, and write English. The student living with just his/her mother said she could not speak, read, or write English. Again, we have no data on the English ability of the uncle. The one student receiving C's penciled

in that both his/her mother and father are bilingual. This student also added that "school is fun for me."

Exposure to Gangs

Of the 23 students surveyed, 70% have friends who are in gangs, but only 22% said they have been approached by a gang member to join a gang. Forty-eight percent of the respondents claimed to know someone who has been affected by gang violence.

What is curious here is that none of the students attending the magnet school has been approached by a gang member. Only 20% (1 student) has a friend in a gang and knows someone who has been affected by gang violence. Separating the magnet school surveys from the traditional junior high surveys and using just the traditional junior high percentage increases the percentage of students who have friends in gangs to 83%.

Why Hmong Students Do Not Join Gangs

In response to "What are your reasons for not joining a gang?," 70% of respondents circled the desire to obtain an education and perhaps go on to college, and 52% marked that they were afraid of their parents' response. Of the five respondents at the traditional junior high who do not have fathers, only 40% chose education and being afraid of their parents' reaction as factors which have prevented them from joining a gang. One of those students is currently getting mostly B's in school, although s/he apparently does not like school. S/he also answered that s/he lacks the time required to join a gang. Interestingly, in this grouping, not a single respondent marked gang activities being against the law as a reason for not joining. However, 60% marked that they had no interest or desire.

By comparison, of the five respondents living with both parents and getting C's and D's, 60% listed education and being afraid of their parents' reaction as important factors. Moreover, 60% marked illegality of gang activities as a factor in not joining a gang, but only one put that s/he had no interest or desire.

Looking at the eight students getting B's or better and living with both parents, 75% responded that education was an important factor. Fifty percent said they had no desire, and 38% listed both gang activities being against the law and a fear of

parents' reaction as incentives to stay out of gangs. Twenty-five percent said they had no time, and 25% were involved in a religious group.

Again, the responses from the students at the magnet school differed. One hundred percent marked both education and no time as factors which prevented them from joining gangs. Eighty percent marked both no interest and fear of parents' reaction as secondary reasons.

Students who circled "other" listed additional reasons: 1) might get killed, 2) if you join, you can't get out, 3) don't want to go to jail.

The most frequent response for not joining a gang was wanting an education and going on to college (nine respondents). Being afraid of parents was next with four respondents. There were also five responses relating to a better future: don't want to be poor, have a long life, have a better life, have a good career, and have a family. (See Appendix C for a complete list of the responses.)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Given the small sample size, it is difficult to draw any concrete conclusions from the data. However, it can begin to provide some answers to our questions.

What prevents students from joining gangs? First, it appears there may be some correlation between the parent's ability to speak, read, and write English and the student's success in school. This is important if Police Officer Cha is correct in claiming students are more apt to join gangs if they are doing poorly in school (Dufresne, 1993). If the parents are able to function in English, it is highly probable that much of the "role reversal" is alleviated and the family hierarchy, to some degree, will remain intact. The parents, then, would have more control over their children. According to the National School Safety Center (1988), "Helping parents gain control of their children is one of the most difficult tasks to accomplish, yet it is also one of the most viable solutions to prevent gang involvement" (p. 29). It is also obvious from the results that the students with lower grades tended to have negative feelings about school. If there is a correlation between parental English ability and the student's success in school, it is of

the utmost importance that schools start offering more support groups for Hmong parents to educate them not only in English, but also in American culture.

Parent meetings have started in both Minneapolis and St. Paul. One St. Paul teacher said she started the meetings in the fall of 1993 with approximately ten parents. By the spring of 1994, the group had more than tripled. In a survey given in both English and Hmong to the parents asking them to voice their special needs, the parents asked for more information on how the school operates, more time to talk with other parents, and for information about English classes. Currently, there is one elementary school in St. Paul with a successful English literacy program for Hmong parents. Another one is scheduled to begin December 1994 at a junior high.

In addition, Cowart and Cowart (1993) recommend that schools should have an orientation in the parent's native language about school procedures and expectations. Otherwise, children can take advantage of their parent's confusion and lack of knowledge about American ways. As Carole Evenrud pointed out in "Lost Boys" (Robson, 1992), "Kids will come back with some outrageous things to tell their parents about what American law says" (p. 136). Rumbaut and Ima (1988) support this claim by writing that the language problem is related to the lesser ability of the parents to supervise the children, especially when there is unfamiliarity with American society. The Cowarts suggest that all school correspondence should be written in the native language as well as in English.

A second implication is that it is important for students to realize they have a future (C. Evenrud, 1994). Mai told us that the gang members she knows do not have future goals; therefore, they need help learning how to help themselves and how to earn respect. Most of the survey respondents mentioned long-term goals, such as family and education, as gang prevention incentives. Getting away from the Southeast Asian overachiever stereotype is also a big step—this concept "has caused Asians to retreat into invisible communities...where their many problems are easily overlooked or ignored by governmental and social services" (Cowart and Cowart, 1993, p. 42).

What can we as educators do to prevent gang involvement?

As educators we must learn how to “sell” the future. The most frequent answers on our survey as to why people do not join a gang were education/college and other responses related to striving for a better future. Further research must be done to teach educators how they can best help students see a future for themselves.

We also recommend alternative schooling and more mentoring programs for at-risk students. Students need pro-social groups which serve their basic human needs for safety and security. It has become increasingly important for teachers and community members to be aware of opportunities for students and to help guide them in that direction. According to Roberto Colon, if youths have role models whom they can relate to, they have a 90% chance of coming out of a gang (McLaughlin, Irby, & Langman, 1994).

Lastly, it is important for students to see themselves in the school curriculum. Teachers can use highly interactive and visual teaching strategies (Coward and Cowart, 1993); teachers can also incorporate authentic Asian and Asian-American texts into the curriculum that reflect the various experiences and obstacles facing immigrant groups. School personnel must listen to the students, talk to the students, learn about and appreciate the students’ cultures, promote mutual respect, and teach an anti-gang curriculum (C. Evenrud, 1994). “Administrators must communicate clear, consistent standards of discipline and enforce them” (Gaustad, p. 161). The National School Safety Center (1988) recommends that teachers should uphold positive behavior, attitudes, and self-image and promote responsibility. In addition, a strong cooperative learning environment should be created within each classroom.

After examining both the literature and our data, we suggest that these ideas and programs be studied and implemented in other schools, especially at the elementary and junior high levels, given that “the peak period of criminal activity for Asian kids in St. Paul is 13 to 15” (Mollner in Robson, p. 137).

Clearly, further research is needed. An organized effort that includes the schools, educators, parents, and community needs to be developed to deal directly with the prevention of gangs, rather than the intervention of marginal or already associated gang members.

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Appendix A
SURVEY

1. How old are you? _____

2. Do you live with your parents? YES NO
If yes, with whom? MOTHER FATHER BOTH
If no, who do you live with?

3. Does your mother speak English?
YES NO DON'T KNOW
Does your mother write and read English?
YES NO DON'T KNOW
Does your father speak English?
YES NO DON'T KNOW
Does your father write and read English?
YES NO DON'T KNOW

4. How long have you been in the United States?
 - a. less than 6 months
 - b. 7-12 months
 - c. 1-2 years
 - d. 2-3 years
 - e. 3-5 years
 - f. other

5. Do you like school? YES NO

6. What are your grades right now?
 - a. mostly A's and B's
 - b. mostly B's
 - c. mostly C's
 - d. mostly D's and F's/N's

7. Have you ever been approached by a gang member to join a gang? YES NO

8. Do you have any friends in a gang? YES NO

9. Have you or anyone you know ever been affected by gang violence? YES NO

10. What are your reasons for not joining a gang (can be more than 1 answer)?

- a. gang activities are against the law
- b. no interest or desire/don't want to
- c. afraid of parent's/family reaction
- d. education/want to go to college
- e. no time (job, sports, clubs, etc.)
- f. involvement in a religious organization
- g. other, please explain

11. Why do you think Hmong youth, in general, do not join gangs?

12. Why do you think Hmong youth join gangs?

Appendix B Survey results

<u>question/answer</u>	<u>total # of responses</u>	<u>traditional junior high</u>	<u>magnet middle school</u>
1. How old are you?			
12 years old	5 22%	4 22%	1 20%
13 years old	10 43%	9 50%	1 20%
14 years old	8 35%	5 28%	3 60%
2. Do you live with your parents?			
YES	21 91%	17 94%	4 80%
NO	2 9%	1 6%	1 20%
If yes, with whom?			
MOTHER	5 24%	4 24%	1 25%
FATHER	-	--	
BOTH	16 76%	13 76%	3 75%
If no, who do you live with?			
UNCLE	2	1	1

<u>question/answer</u>	<u>total # of responses</u>	<u>traditional junior high</u>	<u>magnet middle school</u>
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3. Does your mother speak English?

YES	14 66%	12 70%	2 50%
NO	6 29%	4 24%	2 50%
DON'T KNOW	1 5%	1 6%	-

Does your mother write and read English?

YES	12 57%	10 59%	2 50%
NO	6 29%	4 24%	2 50%
DON'T KNOW	3 14%	3 17%	-

Does your father speak English?

YES	13 76%	11 79%	2 67%
NO	3 13%	2 14%	1 33%
DON'T KNOW	1 11%	1 7%	-

Does your father write and read English?

YES	12 71%	10 71%	2 67%
NO	5 23%	4 29%	1 33%

DON'T KNOW

<u>question/answer</u>	<u>total # of responses</u>	<u>traditional junior high</u>	<u>magnet middle school</u>
	-	-	-
4. How long have you been in the United States?			
a. less than 6 months	-	-	-
b. 7-12 months	3 13%	3 17%	-
c. 1-2 years	-	-	-
d. 2-3 years	1 24%	1 6%	-
e. 3-5 years	6 26%	3 17%	60%
f. other (7-9 years)	1 4%	1 6%	-
f. other (lifetime)	12 52%	11 61%	20%
5. Do you like school?			
YES	18 68%	13 72%	5 100%
NO	5 22%	5 28%	-
6. What are your grades right now?			
a. mostly A's and B's	4 18%	2 11%	2 40%
b. mostly B's	9 39%	7 39%	2 40%
c. mostly C's	7 30%	6 33%	1 20%
d. mostly D's and F's/N's	3 13%	3 17%	-

<u>question/answer</u>	<u>total # of responses</u>	<u>traditional junior high</u>	<u>magnet middle school</u>
7. Have you ever been approached by a gang member to join a gang?			
YES	5 22%	5 28%	-
NO	18 68%	13 72%	5 100%
8. Do you have any friends in a gang?			
YES	16 70%	15 83%	1 20%
NO	7 30%	3 17%	4 80%
9. Have you or anyone you know ever been affected by gang violence?			
YES	11 48%	10 56%	1 20%
NO	12 52%	8 44%	4 80%
10. What are your reasons for not joining a gang (can be more than 1 answer)?			
a. gang activities are against the law			
	9 39%	6 33%	3 60%
b. no interest or desire/don't want to			
	11 48%	7 39%	4 80%
c. afraid of parent's/family reaction			
	12 52%	8 44%	4 80%

<u>question/answer</u>	<u>total # of responses</u>	<u>traditional junior high</u>	<u>magnet middle school</u>
d. education/want to go to college			
	16 70%	11 61%	5 100%
e. no time (job, sports, clubs, etc.)			
	9 39%	4 22%	5 100%
f. involvement in a religious organization			
	5 22%	3 17%	2 40%
g. other, please explain			
	5 22%	4 22%	1 20%

Appendix C
Verbatim responses to question 11

11. Why do you think Hmong youth, in general, do **not** join gangs?

TRADITIONAL SCHOOL
A's and B's

Because they don't want to be poor and they want their education

Don't want to get in trouble.

They want to be a good person.

I think that they want an education and I think that they want to have long life

Some do not join Gangs because they scare of parents. and some do not join gangs because the want to have better life then being a gang.

Because they want to get smart and go to collage and atleast get a Dr. degree and a good career.

I think because of education or no interest.

Some people wants to go to college or have a family.

C's, D's, and N's

The reason why Hmong youth or any other kids don't join is because some people want to go on with theirs life.

I don't readlly know...

Don't know

Because, their parents might leacture them.

Because they steal and kill each other

no father

Don't have time

Because they don't deal with hard probelm, their parent deal it for them.

Because they want to be an example how kids should turn out like. They want to be special.

They want to do good in school

Afraid of death by shooting, afraid of being kick out buy parents, and just don't want to.

MAGNET SCHOOL

Because they could take care of themselves.

Because they don't want to get killed. They want to education/go to college.

Because they care about their family.

They want to go to collage and get graguate

In my opinion because they afraid of parent's and they want more education and it dangerous that's why they didn't join gangs.

Appendix D

Verbatim responses to question 12

12. Why do you think Hmong youth join gangs? (the following is written verbatim)

TRADITIONAL SCHOOL A's and B's

Because they want to be bad and die soon

Get help. It depends where you live. If you live in a neighborhood with gang members you will be most likely to be one. And if you live in a neighborhood with no gang members you'll be not a gang member.

They think they're cool or their lives are messed up.

I think that they want to join gangs is because they want protection and they want to be bad

They join gang because some other want to beat them up and get scared so join gangs for protection, some want to join gang because they want to be cool and bad.

Because they want protection and want to look bad and cool.

I think because of stress and people force them into it and scared.

They join a gang to have fun or to be cool.

C's, D's, and N's

Some of them do because they may think that gangs are special treatment meant. But No!

Because they want to be cool like their friends and on one will want to miss with them.

It's fun and easy.

Because, I think they like to join in a gang to help them as a family and to protect themselves

To hang out to do drugs. To get bad. And to kill.

no father

for protection

Because of stress and a mess up in their life.

Because they think that they are with "cool" kids. Plus they want to be prejudice.

stress

For fun, stress, anger by family, and just felt like it.

MAGNET SCHOOL

Because they want to be cool, popular.

Because they want to be popular and the best one. Some kid's parents likes them to be one of the gang member.

Because they don't care about their family.

They don't want to love and care about their family and make their own family and ditch school all the time.

Because they wanted to fight and be cool or maybe they have family problem. Have fun nobody tell them what to do.

Achievement Tests as Predictors of Subsequent High School Performance for LEP Students

JUDITH STROHL

Minneapolis Public Schools

Focusing on a junior high school LEP center in Minneapolis, this article considers the relationship between standardized reading comprehension test scores and high school achievement as indicated by grade point averages. In addition to reviewing the background of the kinds of assessment which are required to exit students from LEP programs, the article presents data which calls into question the assumption that standardized test scores are good predictors of subsequent high school achievement.

INTRODUCTION

English as a Second Language (ESL) programs which assist non-native speakers to acquire English proficiency are viewed by some as crutch programs to be dispensed with as soon as one can limp along in the new language. Others would say that students should not be entirely mainstreamed into all-English programs until they are achieving as well as monolingual students of their age and grade level. Between these two extremes there are a variety of positions on the issue of when to exit students from ESL programs.

The purpose of this study is to examine one school district's exit process and the relationship of particular assessment measures to subsequent high school achievement. It is a preliminary case study of two groups of limited English proficient (LEP) students, who were monitored from junior high school to high school to examine how their standardized test scores related to their performance at the secondary school level as indicated by class grades.

All school age students in the United States are guaranteed by law the opportunity for an equal education. According to the

Supreme Court decision in *Lau v. Nichols* in 1974, simply being in the same school and using the same textbooks does not guarantee such equality if students are not native speakers of English. To ensure that each student is able to benefit fully from instruction, school districts must provide special language programs for non-English language background students until they are ready to compete and succeed in an all-English program. In order to provide these mandated educational services, school districts have established procedures to identify, place and reclassify students into and out of LEP programs (entry/exit procedures). States which receive federal funds through ESEA Title VII (U.S. Department of Education) generally follow sequential procedures that have become somewhat standardized over the years. These include the use of home language surveys as a screen to identify students who may be in need of language support, testing to determine whether the student is a proficient speaker, and placement into a bilingual or English as a Second Language program if it is indicated by the assessment.

In general, the placement tests assess speaking and listening skills. There are three or four tests in common use which classify a student as non-English proficient, limited English proficient (LEP) or fully English proficient—categories established in conformance with the *Lau* decision. While the tests may seek the same ends, those commonly used by school districts may not be parallel. It has been shown that the tests in use do not even identify the same students or groups of students as being proficient. (Ulibarri, Spencer & Rivas, 1981).

Initially the same tests of oral proficiency were used for placement into programs and for determining reclassification into all-English classes. It became evident, however, that students reclassified as proficient were not succeeding in the mainstream as had been predicted once the language barriers were lowered. This prompted another line of investigation (Cummins, 1979) based on the notion that academic success did not follow as a necessary result of language fluency in everyday situations.

According to Cummins, oral proficiency is not the best indicator of whether a child is able to succeed in an all-English

classroom. In fact, basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) are two distinct areas of competence. Conversational skills in face to face situations where there are a considerable number of environmental cues to provide context generally develop in two to three years; whereas, academic competence develops over a much longer period of time. Studies by Cummins as well as Collier (1987) suggest that five to seven years may be a much more realistic time frame for the acquisition of academic skills.

Once it was accepted that interpersonal language skills assessed by tests of oral competency are not appropriate indicators of academic achievement, investigators began to try to specify which competencies at what levels would point the way to classroom achievement, and to explore what instruments would accurately assess readiness for reclassification.

In an effort to assess academic as opposed to linguistic competence, some have proposed that achievement tests might be an appropriate way to measure readiness for exit. The argument is that if students are to do academic work in an all-English setting, they should be assessed with the same tests of academic achievement used for mainstream students. This has led to the increased use of standardized achievement test scores in conjunction with other measures to determine readiness for exit from ESL services.

At present, the debate continues to center around how to define and then assess the various proficiencies needed for school success. Despite the ongoing discussion, there is no clearcut answer to the question of how to assess readiness for reclassification. Given the lack of agreement between tests used, many public school systems have established multiple criteria to provide a broad profile of pupil skills and to reduce the chances of reclassification errors. These generally include several standardized tests in conjunction with teacher ratings.

PROBLEM SITUATION

Although Minneapolis has had a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) program for more than ten years and maintains test scores in a computerized database, little longitudinal information

has been gathered about students as they progress through school. This lack of monitoring has been a concern of the LEP teachers in Minneapolis for a number of years. Instructors have often expressed a need to know whether students are being exited appropriately and whether the criteria being used for reclassification are indeed predictors of future success. There have also been requests for follow-up data from other stakeholders as well. In December, 1985, an Office of Civil Rights Compliance Review report done by the State of Minnesota Department of Education recommended that the district maintain data on all exited students to track their performance.

As managers of federal and state programs, the district administration and school board members focused on other issues. They asked why students did not exit from the LEP program sooner and why they did not always show greater gains on their oral proficiency *Language Assessment Scale* (LAS) In 1986, a consultant was hired to look into the appropriateness of the test for use with populations such as those in Minneapolis and into the general issue of the instrument's validity for monitoring progress (Rengel,1987). The report answered the board's questions at the time, but similar concerns have resurfaced over the years.

College ESL teachers present yet another perspective on what a successful LEP program should be doing. They state that students are exited from language assistance programs too early. They see the students who reach them in post-secondary programs as being inadequately prepared for academic tasks. According to college teachers (Bosher, 1990), high school teachers spend inadequate time on crucial language issues. Students are exited too early and end up floundering in mainstream classes. In their view, students in high school sit quietly, study hard (though ineffectively), and are given passing grades as a reward for good conduct, attendance and cooperation. In these situations, the students are able to survive but do not develop their academic skills. Once the students move into post-secondary education, however, the strategies which served in high school are no longer sufficient and they begin to experience failure.

Students themselves often feel that they are inadequately

prepared for post high school education. Quest (1992) interviewed students in a general college ESL program who described their ability to do college level writing as inadequate. They felt that their previous ESL classes had not prepared them for the tasks they would encounter in college, in part, because language support was discontinued as soon as they had attained minimal levels of proficiency.

Each of these concerned groups sees the ESL program from a different and sometimes conflicting point of view and each one has different perceptions about when a student is ready to enter the mainstream. Minneapolis, like many other public school districts, avoids reliance on a single measure when assessing the ability to benefit from instruction in an all-English setting. The district's requirements for reclassification are as follows: a rank of English proficient on the LAS test of oral proficiency, passing scores on the three district competency tests for the appropriate grade level, teacher recommendations, successful trial mainstream experience indicated by a grade of C or better in academic subjects, and a score of 40th percentile or higher on the reading comprehension subtest of a standardized achievement test.

In general, it is the last criterion which is the most difficult to attain. Students who are taking all of their classes in English, who have passed their competency tests and who are regarded by their teachers as performing reasonably well in class as indicated by their grades are often not achieving at the 40th percentile on a standardized reading comprehension test. In fact, scores in the teens and low twenties are more typical of this group of students who are trial mainstreamed but still receiving ESL services. The problem of whether to exit students who are meeting the other criteria but are still not close to grade level in reading comprehension scores is a question which has often concerned teachers responsible for making reclassification decisions. Despite the fact that such reading criteria are in widespread use in LEP programs across the United States, there has been little research to show whether one particular cut-off score is a better predictor of success than another. In fact, the standards designated by various states are

far from consistent, calling into question the usefulness of these scores as a criterion.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Emerging from this background, the basic issues under examination are how to determine when a student will be able to succeed in an all-English educational setting, how to define success, and in what ways to assess his or her readiness to compete. The research questions focus on the utility of standardized achievement tests as an exit criterion in view of the fact that the designated cut-off score is extremely difficult to attain relative to other established criteria.

The specific research questions under study are as follows:

1. Is performance on the 8th grade reading achievement test an accurate predictor of later achievement in high school as measured by grade point average (GPA)?
2. Is performance on the 8th grade reading achievement test an accurate predictor of whether a student will pass the 9th grade district reading competency test required for graduation?
3. Is there growth between the 8th grade reading achievement test and 10th grade reading test scores, indicating that students are maintaining or improving their position relative to other students?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Assessment plays several roles in LEP programs. Testing is used to determine eligibility for assistance, to place, to diagnose and to reclassify. Assessment practices in LEP programs are derived as much from the judicial and legislative constraints imposed by federal and state mandates as from educational best practice. Since many bilingual and ESL programs receive federal or state funds for staff and operations, many of their testing procedures are driven by the need to provide what is regarded as proper accountability to their funding agencies. The primacy of the use of oral testing to determine eligibility for language support, stems from the fact that until 1978 bilingual program legislation provided funding for assistance to limited English speaking children. Consequently, tests focused on evaluation of oral skills to the exclusion

of other modalities.

While keeping in mind the cautious approach needed in using standardized tests with language minority students, once such tests have been mandated, it is then necessary to grapple with the question of which ones to choose. Several authors (Chamot and O'Malley, 1987; Ulibarri, Spencer and Rivas, 1981) agree that assessing English proficiency is a problem in LEP programs. Most of the commonly used tests tap social interactive and basic literacy skills which are only a fraction of the skills required for success in mainstream classes. Tests of oral proficiency, in particular, are not good indicators of future academic achievement. For example, fifth grade students who were classified proficient by oral tests, also scored below the 36th percentile on standardized reading tests (Ulibarri, Spencer & Rivas, 1981) indicating that oral skills do not go hand in hand with academic proficiency as measured by achievement tests. According to Pelavin (1987), agreement between teachers' ratings of student proficiency and oral proficiency tests used to determine readiness for exit ranged from 61 to 72 percent; that is, teacher judgment was at odds with the oral test rankings from 28 to 39 percent of the time.

Saville-Troike (1991) agrees that existing language assessment measures are not good predictors of academic achievement. She proposes that we examine what constitutes the ingredients of successful academic achievement among native speakers and how the schools routinely measure student progress and concludes that a standardized vocabulary test provides the best predictive information.

Cummins (1983) also recommends that cognitively demanding, context-reduced measures be used to assess readiness for exit. He reasons that children must be able to handle such demands if they are to compete in a mainstream classroom.

Definitions of proficiency — What are we testing?

It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the many perspectives on what constitutes language proficiency. For the purposes of this study, the discussion will be limited to operational definitions used in typical LEP programs.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO,1992) proposes that a fully English-proficient student be able to use the second language to ask questions, understand teachers and reading materials, and to challenge ideas in class. Assessment of proficiency should reflect the full range of classroom tasks and the academic language needed to succeed. When the four language skills are examined, this implies the ability to:

Read—understand and interpret grade appropriate texts

Listen— extract information and follow instructional discourse.

Write— produce written text with content and format to fulfill classroom assignments.

Speak—use oral language appropriately and effectively in learning and social interactions.

A slightly different but overlapping definition of proficiency was proposed by the Significant Bilingual Instructional Features study (Tikunoff,1983). These researchers laid out a framework of functional proficiencies which suggested that students needed to demonstrate:

participative competence, the ability to respond to class tasks and to the rules for accomplishing them;

interactional competence, the ability to follow class and social rules of discourse

academic competence, the ability to acquire new skills and assimilate new information.

Although these competencies were enumerated in some detail, no performance standards were developed to guide educators in applying them in the classroom.

Reclassification Procedures

The CCSSO takes a strong position on standards for reclassifying students. Their report (1991) recommends that selection criteria should require a high—not minimal—level of English language performance. Assessment should provide evidence of language and academic skills necessary for successful participation in an English-only class. Standardized tests are needed to assess how LEP students are doing compared with native speakers

but these tests should be supplemented with observations and other performance assessments. The exit process should require attainment of multiple criteria and performance of the student at a level of achievement comparable to that of age mates.

Even this strong position leaves many questions unanswered. Which native speakers should we compare LEP students with? Low achievers? College-bound students? Students scoring at the 50th percentile on a standardized achievement test? In other words, what standards do we hold for determining whether LEP students are "ready" to take on the challenge of a mainstream curriculum?

De George (1987) advocates a more pragmatic, individualized procedure for reclassification. He regards exiting as a process which places the student into a mainstream program. He suggests that we ask the question, "Readiness for what?" He maintains that reclassification is similar to the general task of placing students into appropriate classes. De George suggests that exit criteria be matched to the demands of the program students will enter. This requires that those responsible for making exit decisions examine the expectations of specific classes to find a learning situation that will fit a particular student.

De George calls for "sensible" exit criteria such as the ability to communicate socially, follow directions, comprehend non-technical reading materials (e.g. newspapers), comprehend content area assignments and behave in culturally appropriate ways. He sees academic language proficiency as the ability to use language to learn and communicate about academic subjects; that is, to use English as a medium of thought not only as a means of inter-personal communication. In his opinion, schools should utilize a combination of assessment methods, to help ensure that the student's ability to function in an English-only classroom is adequately measured. He proposes that tests should be aligned with curriculum implying a limited use of achievement tests for making reclassification decision.

Cut-off scores

Linked to the question of what kind of tests to use, is the

problem of what cut-off score to require on the tests. Many state departments of education rely on standardized achievement scores as a major determinant of readiness for exit. (CCSO, 1991). However, there has been a notable lack of consistency as to what score indicates the level of proficiency necessary for a student to profit from instruction in an all English environment. The operational definition of an LEP student varies across and within states because of the difference in assessment methods and choice of cut-off points on tests selected by the various educational entities. In fact, there is no explicit rationale to support the use of any specific cut-off score. The highest percentile recommended by any state is the 40th percentile, while the lowest is the 23rd. If we look for an analogy with other support services, it will be noted that native speakers who score at or below the 40th percentile are considered to be at risk academically and are eligible for compensatory reading services through Chapter I, etc.. Such a cut-off score, then, is an inadequate standard for ensuring academic success and one which most parents would not support for their children. It could, in fact, be perceived as a set up for failure. A similar point is made by McCollum and Walker (1990,1992), who question the motives of a federal policy which encourages minimal standards for LEP students while at the same time promoting excellence for mainstream students to meet the challenges of the year 2000.

Thus it can be seen that to some the cut-off scores on these tests seem too low; while to others at decision-making levels, they seem unnecessarily high. Each cut-off has its own particular costs. If we withdraw support too early (use a low percentile as the score to be attained) students may flounder, become frustrated, lose interest and drop out (NCAS,1988). Contrariwise, if we set the criteria too high, additional resources will be needed to serve students for a longer period of time. This, in turn, may cause administrators and tax payers to question why programs are not producing fully proficient English students at a faster pace.

METHODOLOGY

Setting

Sanford Junior High School is an urban institution of ap-

proximately 700 students. Its population is ethnically diverse, including 10% Native Americans, 24% African-Americans, 19% Asian-American, 2% Hispanic Americans and 46% Anglo-Americans. Sixty-three percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. The Minneapolis Public School district of which it is a part serves approximately 40,000 children, about 3,400 of whom receive English as a Second Language or bilingual services. Approximately 900 LEP students are at the secondary level; in an average year about 125 students are in the LEP program at Sanford.

The school is one of two junior high schools designated as a Limited English Proficiency center. The main language populations served are Lao and Vietnamese, with a small number of other language speakers. Most students are children of families who came to the area as refugees after the Vietnam War. A small group are children whose parents are attending the University of Minnesota in graduate studies; another small group are children of recent immigrants. Bilingual classes in Lao and Vietnamese are available, but no bilingual support is regularly offered for speakers of other languages. Science, social studies, and math are taught in the bilingual program. The ESL program consists of five levels, ranging from classes for newcomers to those for students with near-native language skills.

A newcomer student who has not studied English before would probably have three bilingual classes and two ESL classes—one which emphasizes reading and writing and one which emphasizes speaking and listening. Students gradually move into mainstream classes, usually starting with math and continuing with science and social studies. Overall, the program can be described as having most of the characteristics of a transitional bilingual education model (Ovando & Collier, 1985).

Subjects

Fifty-nine students were included in the study— 24 girls and 35 boys. These were approximately half the students in the eighth grade LEP program at the junior high school for the 1986-87 and 1987-88 school years. The first group of students graduated from high school in June, 1991 (Group 1) and the second group in

1992 (Group 2). Twenty-nine students were in Group 1 and 30 were in Group 2. The students in the study were in the top three levels of the five-level ESL program. In general, the students who took the tests were selected by the ESL teachers because they felt the students would experience the tests as an educational challenge rather than as a frustrating, discouraging encounter. In operational terms, this meant that most students who were tested on the achievement test were students who scored at intermediate to high intermediate levels on the Language Assessment Scale in the eighth grade. Most were already in mainstream classes for their core academic subjects.

The majority of the group were Laotian (61%) while 19 per cent were Vietnamese. There were smaller groups (five percent or less) of Chinese, Korean, Spanish, and English as a second dialect speakers. The length of residence of the students measured from date of entry to the United States ranged from one to eight years.

Test Descriptions

The *Language Assessment Scale* (LAS) is an oral language instrument which is administered when a potentially LEP student (as determined by a home language survey) enters the school district. The test is designed to discriminate between non-English speakers, limited English speakers, and fluent English speakers—categories established in conformance with the Lau decision to determine eligibility of students for ESL services. The test assesses phoneme discrimination and production; vocabulary and sentence comprehension; and story-retelling. Student scores are reported as one of five proficiency ranks—levels 1 and 2 = non-speaker; level 3 = limited English speaker; and level 4 and 5 = proficient English speaker. There is no explicit rationale for the cut-off scores for each rank.

The *California Achievement Test* (CAT) is a standardized achievement test administered in the 6th, 8th and 10th grade. The reading comprehension section of the test is used as one of the indicators of readiness for reclassification from the LEP program. The verbal section consists of vocabulary, reading comprehension, and language mechanics subsections. The math section measures

computational skills and knowledge of math concepts. The test has forms appropriate for each grade.

The *Minneapolis Benchmark* tests are locally developed, criterion referenced tests written to assess performance on district outcomes in mathematics, writing and reading. Scores on the tests are taken to indicate how well the student is meeting the objectives set for that grade level. The tests are administered in alternate years—first, third, and fifth grades, etc.. The tests have sometimes been used as promotional gates to determine the need for retention in grade. They are additionally important because in order to graduate from high school, students have to pass the ninth grade Benchmark tests in all three skill areas. In this respect, they serve as minimum competency tests. The reading test is a multiple choice instrument which assesses vocabulary and comprehension. The writing test assesses the ability to write an organized, coherent essay on an assigned topic. It is holistically scored by two or more teacher readers in the district. The math Benchmark test measures concepts and computation.

Tests were scheduled as follows for the Minneapolis LEP students under discussion:

Yearly	Language Assessment Scale
8th grade	California Achievement Test
9th grade	Minneapolis Benchmark Test
10th grade	California Achievement Test

The testing schedule and data collection for the two groups were as follows:

	CAT 8 Benchmark		CAT 10 GPA		Graduation tests
Group I	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1991
Group 2	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1992

PROCEDURES

Test scores and grades for the 59 students were retrieved from the Minneapolis Public Schools data base with the assistance of the evaluation department. Most of the statistics were developed using the statistical package (SPSS, Version 9.1) available to the district through a link with the University of Minnesota.

The subjects came from two successive groups of eighth grade students at Sanford Junior High School during the school years 1986-87 and 1987-88. Using cumulative records and the district's computerized data base, test data was collected for CAT 8, CAT 10 and Benchmark tests for grade 9. GPA was collected in 1990 and 1991 for 11th grade students. It was hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between performance on the CAT 8 and subsequent high school achievement. Achievement was defined as passing the ninth grade Benchmarks, obtaining a grade point average of C (2.00) or better, and graduating from high school.

Variables examined included: CAT reading scores for 8th and 10th grade, Benchmark scores, and GPA. Means were calculated for each of the tests. Growth between CAT 8 and 10 was examined. Correlation (Pearson product-moment) was calculated for CAT 8 and GPA in 11th grade.

Not all scores were available for all students. For example, only 53 of the 59 scores were available for the Benchmark writing test. Only 42 scores were obtained for the CAT 10 reading test. In some cases, the missing tests are due to absences on test dates; in other cases, as for the CAT 10, some students may not have been expected to take the test because of their LEP status.

RESULTS

Findings fall into the following categories: CAT test results, Benchmark test results, grade point averages and graduation rates. Following the summary of results of individual tests, interrelationships between the various measures will be examined.

As mentioned earlier, the CAT reading test is the most difficult of the exit criteria to attain. As indicated by Table , the median percentile for the students in the eighth grade group was 17, presenting a marked contrast to the district median of 59th percentile on this test. If achieving the 40th percentile on the reading test were the sole criterion, only three students of the fifty-eight would be considered for reclassification. Even if the requirement were dropped to the 30th percentile, just one more student would be eligible for exit. Only if a percentile in the twenties were designated would an appreciable number of additional students

(18) meet the requirement.

Table 1

CAT 8 Reading Comprehension Scores

Pctl Score	No. of Students	Percent
1-9	11	19
10-19	25	43
20-29	18	31
30-39	1	2
40-59	3	5
60-99	0	0

N= 58

Mean Pctl = 18.36	SD 11.9	Median Pctl = 17
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The scores on the CAT 10 reading test show a marked increase over the CAT 8 scores as is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

CAT 10 Reading Comprehension Scores

Pctl	Scores No. of Students	Percent
1-9	19	8
10-19	24	10
20-29	17	7
30-39	12	5
40-49	19	8
50-59	5	2
60-69	5	2
70-99	0	0
Mean Pctl = 26.4	S.D. = 17.8	Median Pctl = 27

In contrast with the CAT 8 scores, the median percentile has risen from 17th to 27th. Whereas only three students were at or over the 40th percentile on the CAT 8, twelve students now have attained that criterion. Four students are above the 50th percentile on this test. On the other hand, only 42 of 59 student scores were available for examination; therefore, it is necessary to interpret the data indicating considerable growth with caution.

It can be seen in Table 3 that there is a moderate correlation between the scores on the CAT 8 and CAT 10 reading tests ($r=.40$, $p<.005$).

Table 3

Growth from CAT 8 to CAT 10

	<u>CAT 10</u>				
<u>Percentiles</u>	<u>1-9</u>	<u>10-19</u>	<u>20-29</u>	<u>30-39</u>	<u>40-99</u>
<u>CAT 8</u>					
1-9	4	0	0	2	0
10-19	2	4	5	2	5
20-29	2	5	2	1	5
40-99	0	1	0	0	2

N=42

The table indicates, for example, that two people who scored in the first decile on the CAT 8 scored between the 30th and 39th percentile on the CAT 10; twelve students out of 42 (29%) maintained the same decile rank. Ten people's scores (24%) decreased and 20 students (48%) improved their scores by more than five points.

Benchmark Tests

The Benchmark tests present a significant obstacle for LEP students although they seem to be a somewhat less difficult hurdle than the achievement tests.

Benchmark Writing Test

Table 4

Scores for Benchmark Writing Test

Rank	No. of Students	Percent
1 (low)	17	32
2	18	34
2.5	8	15
3	10	19
4	0	0

N = 53

Of the two language Benchmarks, the writing test generally proves easier than the reading test for most LEP students as shown in Table 4. Thirty-six students (61%) passed the test with a rank of 2 or higher. Eighteen students (34%) received scores of 2.5 or higher. Ten (19%) achieved scores of 3. There were, however, no scores in the top rank.

Eighteen students of the passing group (almost 50%) received higher than the minimum passing score of two; 61% of the sample students passed the test compared with the 47% passing rate on the reading test and 80% on the math test. Some staff have theorized that the writing test is easier to pass than the reading test because students have more control over the difficulty level of this measure. They are able to address the assigned topic in a way which suits their skills and can often express their thoughts in relatively non-complex syntax and vocabulary without being penalized for this simplicity.

Benchmark Reading Tests

Although less difficult than the CAT test, the reading minimum competency test also presents a significant hurdle for LEP students. The maximum achievable raw score on the test is 40. The passing score was 26 (65%). The range of raw scores was from 9 to 38. Forty-seven percent of the students in the group passed this test, but as indicated in Table 5, the largest group, twenty students (36%), scored in the lowest decile.

Table 5

9th Grade Reading Benchmark Scores

Percentiles	No. of Students	Percent
1-9	20	36
10-19	15	27
20-29	5	9
30-39	4	7
40-49	8	15
50-59	3	5
60-99	0	0

N = 55

Mean = 18.68

S.D= 17.3

The second largest group, 15 students (27%), scored in the second lowest decile. Eight students (15%) scored between the 40th and 49th percentile. Three students scored between the 50th and 59th percentile. This closely parallels the results on the CAT 8 test. Only five percent of the students are achieving at or better than the fiftieth percentile.

Relationships between Tests

The correlation between the scores on the two reading tests is .56 ($p = .001$) indicating that these tests seem to be parallel measures. Scores are clustered at the lower percentiles of both tests. Fifty-one of the students (91%) scored below the 30th percentile on the CAT and below the 50th percentile on the Benchmark reading test. At the upper end, only two students were at the 50th percentile or above on both the CAT 8 and the Benchmark reading test.

Benchmark Math Tests

The passing rates on the math tests are much higher than for the other two competency tests. Forty-four students (79%) passed the test. Forty-five percent were at or above the 50th percentile, a result which is strikingly higher than that attained on the other Benchmarks. When the students' performance in math is contrasted with their performance on the CAT 8 reading test, it is interesting to note that of the 44 who passed in math, only three were above the 30th percentile on the comprehension subtest and 27 were below the 20th percentile. As is often seen, students appear to display their cognitive abilities to greater advantage on non-verbal tests than on reading comprehension measures. Grade Point Average

In contrast to the standardized test score data which shows students performing considerably below their classmates, data on grade point averages presents a brighter picture as indicated in Table 6.

Table 6

Grade Point Averages

Average	Number	Percent
3.5-4.00	6	10
3.0-3.49	10	17
2.5-2.99	13	25
2.0-2.49	13	25
1.5-1.99	4	7
1.0-1.49	6	10
.5- .99	4	7
.00- .49	3	6
	N= 59	

Forty-two students (71%) had a GPA of C (2.00) or better. Sixteen (27%) had a GPA of B (3.00) or greater, making them eligible for the honor roll at their school. Six (10%) had an average of B+ (3.5) or better. The district mean GPA for the 1990-91 year for the eleventh grade was 2.57. The mean for Group I was 2.51 (S.D. = .79); the mean for Group II was 2.67 (SD=.89), both approximately equivalent to a C+ average. These means are not significantly different from the district means and show the students performing at approximately the same level as the district population of students, in contrast to their performance on standardized tests.

CORRELATION

It was hypothesized that the scores on the CAT 8 reading comprehension subtest would be a good predictor of future academic performance as indicated by average or better grade point averages. This proved not to be true. The majority of the students

with a C or better average in the 11th grade, scored below the 30th percentile on the CAT 8 reading test. Forty-one of fifty-nine students (69%) had grade point averages higher than 2.00 (C). Of these, 19 pupils (46%) received CAT scores between the 10th and 19th percentile. Another thirteen (32%) were in the 20-29th percentile range. Seven students (17%) received reading scores in the lowest percentile range—one to nine. Combining the second and third lowest groups accounts for 78% of all the students with a grade point of C or better. Only two students who had average or higher GPA's were from the above 40th percentile CAT group.

Based on this data, there is apparently only a weak correlation between scores on the 8th grade CAT and the students' grade point average in high school ($r=.22$, $p=.05$). These results seem to run counter to the view that reading scores are a fairly good predictor of academic success. Reading ability as measured by this test does not seem to account for the students' ability to perform at average or above average levels in high school courses. Students appear to be using other strategies to achieve academic success as indicated by class grades.

Graduation Rates

It proved difficult to obtain an accurate picture of graduation rates, because of student transfers out of the school system and the inability of the district to track them after that point. Thirty-five of the original 59 students graduated on schedule, and another three were still enrolled and proceeding towards commencement. This is equivalent to a 64% graduation rate. It is difficult to find a meaningful comparison for evaluating this rate since the district itself shows slightly lower graduation rates. Because the data system at present cannot track students who leave the district either because they move or drop out, this is an issue which needs further examination to obtain an accurate picture of the school completion rates.

DISCUSSION

When we return to the questions raised at the beginning of this paper, we are left with no clear answers about when students are ready to compete and succeed in the mainstream. Comparing grade point averages with standardized test scores presents two

different pictures of how well LEP learners are doing. From the point of view of fulfilling their classroom requirements, students seem to be performing at average levels or slightly better; on the other hand, examining test scores gives us a picture of students performing considerably below their mainstream counterparts.

On the positive side, the LEP students in the study seem to be taking solid academic classes and teachers seem to be satisfied with their classroom work. Of course, if grades are rewards for compliance more than performance, as mentioned above, their marks must be interpreted with caution.

The standardized test data is less reassuring. Scores are low in comparison with those of mainstream learners, indicating students who are performing well below grade level. In addition, at the time of this study, students needed to pass the Benchmark tests in order to qualify for graduation so that low test scores could have serious consequences for their future plans.

An intriguing question comes to mind as we look at the test scores. How are students able to attain the GPA's they do in spite of their weak reading comprehension? We can speculate that they use communicative strategies and their knowledge of classroom expectations to supplement their literacy skills and that their willingness to meet the requirements of the class in terms of attendance, participation, and completion of assignments may account for the attainment of average or slightly above average grade points. It is possible that these skills may be weighted as much or even more than test performance in determining grades.

On the issue, raised earlier, of whether students continue to develop their academic skills as they move through high school, the evidence is mixed. Although some students showed significant increases between the 8th grade and 10th grade CAT tests, a number showed no change, while still others lost ground. It would appear that while some students are closing the gap with their mainstream counterparts and continuing to develop their language skills as they progress through the regular curriculum, others are lagging behind, indeed, losing ground as Mazzone (1980) warned they might if language support were withdrawn too soon.

The results of this study do not yield clearcut evidence on

how to view the 40th percentile as an exit criterion. Depending on which part of the data you focus on, it may be construed as an inadequate standard which puts students immediately at a disadvantage vis-a-vis native speakers because it is too low or it may be conceived of as an indicator which shows when a student is at the take off point ready for an academic growth spurt. If we consider a C average desirable, lower percentile cut-off scores on the CAT score are adequate, but if we are aiming for excellence for all students, then the 40th percentile criterion should be retained or even raised. It is disappointing to see so few students achieving even at the district median level.

In addition, although students can achieve average grades in high school in spite of low percentiles on the standardized tests, this does not guarantee that the same generous evaluation standards will exist at the post-secondary level. In an effort to be culturally sensitive, teachers may not be preparing students for a more demanding, less forgiving society. Once out of high school, students may find that grading standards are weighted more heavily in favor of test scores.

Returning to the question of using standardized tests as a criterion, we should add that the ability to pass decontextualized, reading comprehension tests may have value for students who will have to pass entrance exams for post-secondary programs. Moreover although high school students may not be expected to do extensive independent reading without teacher support and contextualization, this sort of learning task becomes more typical in post-secondary settings. For those students who intend to continue schooling, the ability to do such reading is a necessary skill.

Thus in considering exit criteria, we need to heed the post secondary teachers when they remind us that the students reaching them are not by their standards ready to do college level work. We also need to listen to students when they say that they feel themselves to be ill-prepared for university work. To graduate students from high school who believe themselves to be equipped for their next educational step, only to have them find that their skills are insufficient is a clear form of deceptive advertising on the

part of the secondary schools.

In addition, we need to keep in mind reports such as *America 2000* which are asking for students ready to enter the workforce prepared to do critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making. If schools are in agreement with these goals, they can hardly afford to be satisfied with the minimal scores now achieved by the students served in the LEP program.

In summary, to the extent that students are achieving slightly above average grade point averages and completing high school in numbers not far behind their mainstream counterparts, they can be said to be meeting the expectations set by the schools. To the extent that schools are not preparing these students for further education or for the workplace, it is the schools that are not meeting the challenge.

NOTE

At the time of writing, the district was in the process of changing the standardized tests required. It is also considering instituting a system of graduation standard.

THE AUTHOR

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WORK IN PROGRESS

MinneTESOL Journal invites readers to submit short reports and updates on their work. These summaries may address any areas of interest to *Journal* readers.

Memorylink Vocabulary Flashcards: The 90s version of an old standby

MERCÈ LÓPEZ I AGUSTÍ
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INTRODUCTION

Lack of “memory” for vocabulary is a common complaint among students who are learning a foreign language. Even advanced learners often struggle to come up with the right word in the right context when attempting to communicate in the target language. “I just learned that word yesterday. How could I forget it so soon?” “Wait a second . . . I *know* that word. It’s on the tip of my tongue.” “Well, never mind. Maybe I’ll think of it later . . .” Unfortunately for many students, the word or expression might never be remembered at all, or at least not when it is needed.

Language teachers have recommended many different ways to alleviate this memory “problem.” One of the many suggestions for remembering new words and expressions is to have students make their own vocabulary flashcards. However, traditional flashcards, while useful for some learners, often fail to provide the full range of cognitive elements considered essential to learning. Although little or no empirical research has been devoted to the study of the effectiveness of using flashcards to learn foreign language vocabulary, memory researchers from the field of cognitive psychology have provided significant insights into the learning process that can be applied to the learning of foreign language

vocabulary. While the traditional approach to flashcards does not systematically include elements generated from the results of this kind of research, we have designed the *Memorylink* vocabulary flashcard system to emphasize appropriate encoding and retrieval techniques in order to provide students with an effective way to learn foreign language vocabulary. These flashcards incorporate visual, verbal, auditory, semantic, and contextual aspects of words and expressions so that students can learn new vocabulary through the use of a variety of empirically-tested mnemonic techniques.

TRADITIONAL FLASHCARDS

Traditionally, vocabulary flashcards have consisted of a single word or expression written on one side of a small index card. The other side of the card, often used as the "prompt" to help the student remember the new word or expression, has typically included one of these three elements: the dictionary definition of the word (Cohen 1990; Mondria and Mondria-de Vries 1994), the native language translation (Nation 1990; Oxford and Crookall 1990), or a picture taken from a magazine or book (Oxford and Crookall 1990; Mondria and Mondria-de Vries 1994). However, a simple definition, translation or picture by itself may not provide sufficient contextual information for the learner to recall the item in question (Craik and Lockhart 1972; Craik and Tulving 1975; Baddeley 1990). Some authors have suggested the addition or substitution of other elements to increase the general appeal of vocabulary flashcards: a paraphrase of the dictionary definition or a target language synonym (Thompson 1984), the part of speech (Cohen 1990), the dictionary pronunciation (Wilf 1986), the context (i.e., sentence) in which the word was heard or read (Wilf 1986; Cohen 1990), a sample sentence written by the student containing the target expression (Wilf 1986; Carter and McCarthy 1988; Stutz 1992), or a simple mnemonic device (Cohen 1990).

While these elements have contributed to the general usefulness of flashcards by providing for the learner additional cues for remembering new vocabulary, they often still do not provide learners with sufficient contextual information if they are used in isolation. In addition, although flashcards are often prepared by the learners themselves, they are not necessarily personalized in such a way that they are sufficiently meaningful to the students or

relevant to individual learning needs, and thus the cards may not be adequate for their intended purpose. Further, it is unclear whether the suggested elements have been systematically generated from empirical research or if they have instead been based on anecdotal evidence from successful foreign language learners. What traditional flashcards lack, overall, is a fully-integrated mnemonic system based on the results of cognitive research on human learning and memory, with each individual element designed to facilitate retrieval (i.e., learning and remembering) by helping students focus on the appropriate encoding and storage of new vocabulary items.

THE MEMORYLINK VOCABULARY FLASHCARD SYSTEM

The *Memorylink* flashcard system allows learners to improve their acquisition of foreign language vocabulary through the incorporation of several elements that are directly related to a basic principle of memory: association. Because information is represented in memory through a series of associative networks that link concepts and facts in an organized, hierarchical structure, when new information, such as foreign language vocabulary, is actively related to knowledge already stored in one of the associative networks, the association can make the new information more meaningful and memorable. Items encoded and stored in this way are thus easier to understand and remember (Ausubel 1978).

The purpose of the *Memorylink* flashcards is to guide students through several mental operations in order to actively engage them in effective encoding and storing processes. The associations serve to make the material more meaningful, and therefore more memorable, to the learner. Because meaningful learning involves extensive mental processing to link new information with information already stored in memory, students who prepare these flashcards are asked to create a number of different mental associations to analyze different features of the target item. These different kinds of associations encourage active engagement of the students in the learning process, strengthen the pattern of familiarity with the target information, enhance the self-referential quality inherent and embedded in such associations, and broaden the degree of contextualization of the vocabulary learning process. These associations also serve as individual cues to help students

review the vocabulary items on the flashcards.

In order for a cue to be effective for the retrieval of a specific item, "the target item must be encoded in some sort of reference to the cue" (Tulving and Thomson 1973: 359) at the time it is processed, and thus "a cue's effectiveness in aiding target item retrieval is determined by what happens during acquisition" (Zechmeister and Nyberg 1982: 216). Failure to recall an item is based on inadequate or inappropriate retrieval cues, and therefore a cue is effective "to the extent that the cognitive system can encode the cue and the target as a congruous, integrated unit" (Craik and Tulving 1975: 284). The mental cues and the target item must be related in such a way that if the learner recalls one or more of the cues, s/he will also be able to recall the original word. The stronger the cued associations made with the target word during the encoding process, the better the chance for retrieval.

The *Memorylink* vocabulary flashcard system incorporates ten specific elements that serve as associational cues for aiding recall of target language vocabulary items:

1. Part of speech
2. Pronunciation
3. Visual image
4. Keyword mnemonic
5. Original sentence
6. Source
7. Place
8. Topic
9. Definition (or translation)
10. New sentence

Our goal in developing the *Memorylink* flashcard system has been to allow students to learn and remember foreign language vocabulary by formulating meaningful associations, engaging in deep cognitive processing, and creating distinct and unique cues for encoding vocabulary. Students can thus recall vocabulary more effectively because "stimuli that are attended to, fully analyzed, and enriched by associations . . . yield a deeper encoding of the event, and a long-lasting trace" (Craik and Tulving 1975: 270).

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Students' Work

My Family

ANA TEMIM

Minneapolis Public Schools

I came here from Bosnia five months ago. My family came with me, too. I have a husband and two daughters. Their names are Tea and Maja. Tea is 12 and Maja is 10 years old. They have gone to school since we came to Minneapolis. Tea is in the fifth grade. Maja is in the third grade. They are the best students in their classes. When we came here, they didn't know any words in English, but now they speak very well. They have had a lot of help from people in their school since they started to study. My husband and I have studied English for four months. We didn't know any words in English, either. Today, I can do many things by myself and I feel much better.

We live very hard. We left our home because the war has been in our country for two years. We didn't have any choice. We saw the death of many people. We saw the death of our own city and the death of our own country. We can't forget it. We think about it all the time. We don't know what happened to our relatives and our friends. We can't be entirely happy. We lost everything, but we have our children and our family. We have to start from the beginning.

It is high time to stop the war in Bosnia, but I wouldn't like to go back to my country. In my country they ask each child: "Who are you? Are you Croatian, Serbian, or Muslim?" I hate it. We want to be just human beings. We have to find our own home in America.

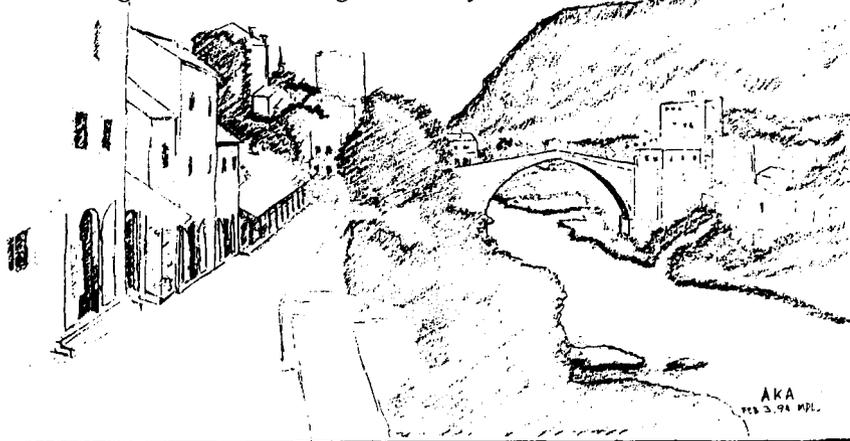
About the Places Where I Lived

I was born in Modrica. It is a small city in northern Bosnia and Herzegovina. When I got married I moved to Mostar. I lived in Mostar for fourteen years.

Mostar is in southern Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is a very old town. The first writing about Mostar was in 1452. Mostar was the capital city of Herzegovina. There were about 100,000 citizens in Mostar.

Mostar was a multicultural, multiethnic, and multireligious town. At noon we could hear the ringing of bells from the Roman Catholic church and from the Orthodox church, and the Islamic prayers in the mosque. All the prayers were at the same time. Mostar's citizens didn't observe them. They didn't think about them, because they were born with them, they grew up with them, and they lived with them. But tourists who visited Mostar were surprised and wondering. The people who visited Mostar once wanted to come back again.

The years went by. In the spring of 1992, the civil war in Bosnia started. Since the beginning of the war, Mostar has been destroyed. Today, there remain just the stones. Political leaders of each ethnic group have killed their own people and their own cities. Many people have been killed and many people have been expatriated. Mostar's citizens are living all over the world. Fascists couldn't kill our beings. We won't forget our city. Mostar will be forever.



The city of Mostar and its famous bridge, before the war in Bosnia.
Illustrated by Aka Temim (Ana's husband)

My Brother

MEE LOR

Concordia College

His name begins with a **K** and ends with an **R**
K and **R** do not stand for kill or rob, but kind and respectful
His name is Kai Lor....he's handsome...five foot five and muscular....
....his hair is darker and longer than mine....he's better looking than me altogether

June 15 will be his 20th birthday
I still remember his 18th birthday
At JDC we celebrated and laughed together, we ate cake with rice
Will I now celebrate his birthday at his grave in June? If not there, how and where now?
He is nowhere else

It has been some months since he was killed
I still even remember exactly....
.....how he shakes his head and laughs at me for my stupidity
.....how he waves his hand to get his point across
.....how he cries on the phone, "I miss home." *I wish I had visited him more often*
.....how two of his right toes overlap when he doesn't wear socks and shoes
.....how he walks and runs in and out of the house and
.....how he screams "I'm not in any gang!" *I wish I had listened*
Time will drag while memories of my brother will live and last forever in my heart

At many midnights tears race out of my eyes
A sharp pain I feel right in the center of my heart
"Where are you? Don't go, come home. Will you come home to stay?"

The question I ask myself everytime I feel this pain is
"I did have a brother named Kai, right?" He is nowhere to be found
I wish I knew where death lives, I know it's not at his grave
because even he is not at his grave, he lives in my heart and soul
I just want to see my brother once more....please just once more!

Then early mornings I would dream about him
Kai and I would be together laughing and talking about fishing, his
hobby
....While I fear that he would be shot again....
I fear to lose him again..I fear to never see him again..I fear to wake up

It seems like a dream that we were together
Now I wake up and cannot find Kai around the house....
....or in the yard....or in the parking lot with his friends....or at JDC
I want to know where he is going to rest, I'd like to visit

No door banging, no loud noises from outside the yard anymore,
just a little world filled with silence
But images of my brother walking into the house....to the kitchen....
"Anything for lunch? I'm hungry." *I wish I had
given him more than just eggs and rice that last night I spent with him*

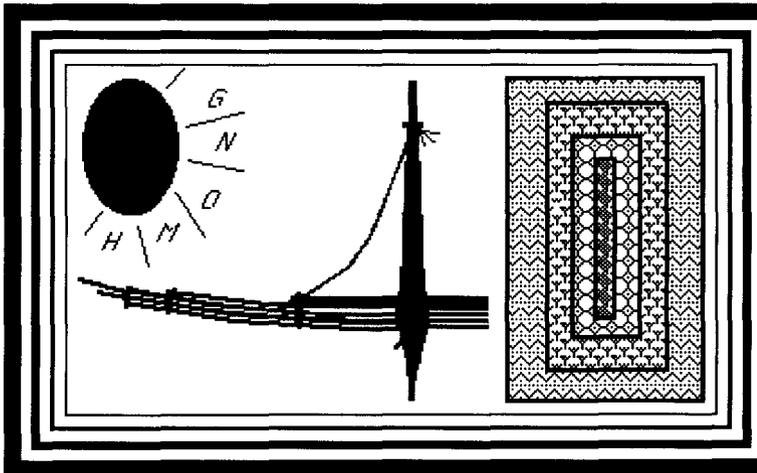
Sometimes the telephone would ring
"Can it be you?" I rushed to answer, but hear not his voice anymore
When Kai did call he always said
"Hi, Mom home? I want to come home, tell mom that. Oh, and I
miss eating rice."
I wish I understood

Many times I stare at the pictures of him for half a day
The pictures almost seem to respond to me....
the corners of his lips seem to smile or move a little
I wish his picture would understand how I'm feeling
I could say so much more if words could describe the depth of my
feelings....if there are such words
I'm trying to say "*I miss you so much Kai !*"

I wrote this poem because Kai Lor was my younger brother who I love dearly and who was the only child in the family that was biologically related to me. We grew up as best friends and brother and sister. Kai was killed on October 12, 1993 by an off-duty police officer for trying to rob a mini grocery store.

When Kai was killed, a piece of my life died with him. I die a little every day while I wait for his return. I miss him and it hurts, the hurt that I cannot explain in the English language. Although he was wrong in attempting to rob the store, he did not deserve to die so brutally. The sight of him the last time I saw him is painful and it terrifies me even worse now. But not a single day I go through without thinking about his characteristics while he was alive and happy with me. Not a single night I go through without dreaming about being with him. And not a single morning I wake up without crying. It seems like I say good-bye to him every morning.

Mee Lor



Art work by Moua Yang

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Guidelines: A Cross-Cultural Reading/Writing Text

Ruth Spack. NY: St. Martin's Press, 1990.

Ruth Spack's *Guidelines* is an advanced writing textbook geared towards non-native speakers of English in a college freshman-level writing class. Intended for academic-preparation classes, teaching of critical thinking is a focus of the book.

There are four central units cyclically organized on the process of writing, each comprised of two chapters, one with readings and one with essay assignments. Each unit is introduced with an enumeration of the goals to be achieved in the unit.

The readings are three to eight pages long and come from various genres, including narrative, descriptive, and opinion pieces. All are excerpted from authentic texts, drawn from the works of professional authors such as Sydney Harris, Margaret Mead, and Jacob Neusner. Intercultural perspectives on friendship, college life, and intercultural adjustment are addressed. Each reading is accompanied by pre-, while, and post-reading exercises asking for the learner's previous experience with a situation similar to that described in the text, questions on content, vocabulary in context, and critical evaluation of the text. There is also background information on the author of each reading.

The writing chapters include writing assignments, activities for understanding the assignment, invention strategies, an illustration and explanation of all phases of the process of writing a short essay, and essays written by students. There are four essay assignments which are increasingly demanding, including describing a personal experience, evaluating and analyzing a text, and synthesizing information in examining a controversial topic.

In addition to the four main units, there is also an introduc-

tory chapter in which the concept of a reading journal is introduced and two extensive supplementary units dealing with "Reading and Writing Skills" and "The Editing Process". The introductory chapter explicitly emphasizes the idea that authors and readers engage in a dialogue and that that dialogue can (and should) be articulated informally through marginal summaries and annotations which are then transformed into journal entries. These journals can later be used when writing an essay.

Part 5 comprises chapters on the skills of summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting, paragraphing, and citing sources. Each chapter contains, importantly, a rationale for learning the skill, directions, examples, an easy-to-read chart summarizing the important points of the chapter, and exercises. In the area of documentation of sources, both MLA and APA formats are presented, and the section on plagiarism is quite good.

While Part 5 deals with the mechanics of using textual sources in writing, Part 6 deals with aspects of the editing process from proofreading to grammar. The grammar section is particularly impressive. As in every other part of the book, the student is given a rationale for paying attention to the chapter, emphasizing, here, how "errors can shift a reader's attention away from your meaning" (p. 261). The grammar section is comprehensive, including fine summaries and examples on sentence construction, discourse markers, relative clauses, noun clauses, fragments and run-ons, agreement, verb tenses, modal auxiliaries, conditionals, gerund and infinitive complements, articles, and parallelism. There is also a section on punctuation. Interestingly, for those who wish an intellectual approach, there is also a chapter on the sources of errors as related to the second-language acquisition process. Parts 5 and 6 are set apart from the main units so as to be used easily for reference; an instructor could easily tailor use of particular chapters to the needs of individual students.

Not only the readings, but also the explanations and illustrations in the text are engaging. The explanations are quite clear, and there seems to be no need for an instructor's manual. However, one is available. It includes a rationale for all activities, suggested syllabi, summaries of the reading texts, and commentaries on some of the texts. Spack also points out pitfalls students may encounter in using the text.

There appear to be few weaknesses in this book. It is thorough in its treatment of both reading and writing processes and in grammar, editing, and citation. However, the text is quite dense, and less fluent readers may be daunted by the paucity of pictures or other visual aids. These aspects of the text might be dealt with by an instructor, though, especially if students are encouraged to utilize the summarizing boxes and the extensive index and detailed table of contents.

Students in technical or social science fields where statistics or processes must be reported might find *Guidelines* of limited relevance. There are only a couple of readings with illustrative graphs, charts, and statistics. Further, although documentation of sources is involved in three of the four essay assignments, there is only one reading which includes citations and a list of references, so there are insufficient models for this essential aspect of academic writing.

Altogether, *Guidelines* is a fine textbook. Its thorough treatment of important aspects of writing in general, and writing in academic fields in particular, is practical and easy to follow. Students should also feel comfortable using *Guidelines* later as a reference text. In addition to its use as a writing textbook, *Guidelines* may also be used effectively in a reading/composition class, because of the large number of readings, reading comprehension exercises, and critical thinking activities.

A Writer's Workbook: An Interactive Writing Text for ESL Students

Trudy Smoke. 2nd ed. NY: St. Martin's Press, 1992.

Trudy Smoke's *A Writer's Workbook* is a writing textbook for college-level ESL students at a high-intermediate or low-advanced level.

The overall organization of the book is in five units, each of which is thematically organized around a different aspect of life and the acculturation process. The units are cyclical in design so that in each chapter new concepts are presented which build on those of previous chapters.

The writing strategies sections are comprehensive in teaching invention strategies, paragraphing, methods of support, dis-

course markers, and process writing. In addition to rhetorical structures for descriptive, narrative, compare/contrast, persuasion, and cause-and-effect essays, there are also sections on writing a business letter and a resume. Interestingly, there are explanations of writing a dialogue, using anecdotes, and "setting the mood in your writing". The writing sections contain short explanations and brief exercises, and, therefore, the treatment is not exhaustive but may be oversimplified. There are both essay and journal assignments.

The grammar exercises present structures inductively and address many of the grammatical errors experienced by students with a wide variety of native languages: verb tenses, sentence structure, author's voice, adjective word-order, modals, passives, discourse markers, gerunds and infinitives, relative constructions, conditionals, parallelism, and punctuation.

In addition to writing and grammar instruction, the book also contains readings. The units are divided into chapters so that each unit comprises readings from journalistic, textbook, and fictional genres, including authors such as William Saroyan, Gary Althen, Ernest Hemingway, and Pablo Casals. However, though texts are interesting and authentic, they have been abridged and never go beyond four pages — most, in fact, are only one or two pages long. In addition to the texts written by native speakers, each chapter contains samples of edited student writing.

There are many pre- and post-reading exercises to choose from; it is doubtful that a teacher would want to use them all. Critical thinking and contextualization of reading skills are taught in post-reading exercises.

The design of *A Writer's Workbook* is extremely clear and there is an index. For reference, too, there are *four* tables of contents, by sequence in the book, reading and thinking strategies, writing strategies, grammatical structures, and editing strategies. Additional reference materials include answers to some exercises in an appendix, a lengthy verb-form table, and a table of verb tense forms.

The instructor's manual provides good guidance for teachers including ideas for novice teachers and those who need reminding of recent pedagogy, as well as notes for teachers who are non-native speakers of English. The rationale and philosophy of

teaching shows a respect for students' intrinsic intellectual capacities and language proficiency in their first language.

A Writer's Workbook seems best for a class of recent high school students or freshmen, e.g., in a community college setting where the students are immigrants. The unit titles are "Family and Growing up", "Language and Communication", "Society and Playing Roles", "Finding a Job and Working", and "Home and Finding One's Place", all of particular concern, in general, of persons in their late teens and early 20's. The texts and accompanying exercises foster self-awareness of personal, emotionally-charged experiences in acculturating to the U.S. and contextualize the readings based on other experiences. Further, *A Writer's Workbook* is very much informed by a U.S. perspective. Because there seems to be an underlying assumption that the students will be in the U.S. for some time, there is a strong emphasis on acculturation, even in writing. For example, Kaplan's well-known zig-zags and spirals are offered early in the book as a way of initiating reflection and cross-cultural comparison of rhetorical structures (p. 10).

As a writing textbook, *A Writer's Workbook* is thorough. Citation is not included, but it may be assumed that students using this book will take at least another term of ESL. The readings are rather short and there is inadequate treatment of vocabulary, particularly if words are to be added to students' active vocabulary. Though there are context-based vocabulary exercises, where students pick out key words and phrases, some vocabulary exercises are too vague, and therefore too hard, for ESL students. There are vocabulary glosses in the margins, but some of these are sometimes ungrammatical (different word form than word in text) and there are glosses of words the meanings of which students should be able to determine from context.

In general, *A Writer's Workbook* is a complete, easy-to-use textbook that addresses the needs of young college-age ESL students.

THE REVIEWER

Wendy Desmonde has an MA in ESL from the University of Minnesota, where she teaches reading and writing.

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