Second Language Acquisition, Schema, and International Tourism

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Second language acquisition and international tourism have a symbiotic relationship which needs to be nurtured, fostered, stimulated and developed in the English language classroom. Individuals who study English for a specific purpose, such as English for the international tourism and service industry, must acquire the necessary proficiency in order to be able to communicate effectively, formally, and professionally. There are various differences and similarities between first language and second language acquisition in a communicative setting. This paper will address several of those issues while focusing on whole language, culture, motivation, and schema. The ability to communicate effectively and clearly on a professional level is one goal of English as a second language acquisition in Japan.

The term communicative is essentially accepted to mean related to the competence (Hymes, 1972) and expectations of those participating in the learning process while acquiring a second language. A communicative pedagogical approach is based on negotiation between interlocutors. Communicative approaches have been applied to novel methods, materials, and even syllabi for language teaching and learning (Pica, 1988). Total communicative competence in English is necessary for the international tourism and service industry.

Whole Language

International tourism and service industry workers will benefit from studying whole English language. The concept of whole language includes a major tenet which asserts that language is best learned in authentic, meaningful, and communicative situations in which language is not separated into parts, but remains whole. This is best unfolded and ascertained from the careful analysis of observations of students learning to read and write (Goodman, 1986 ; Rich, 1985). One critical finding and observation is that students learn to read and write optimally under conditions similar to those of learning to speak and listen (Johnson & Stone, 1991). This is erudition from whole to part in contextually meaningful and purposeful situations and settings. Therefore, it is clear that an integrated, whole language, communicative approach which addresses all of the four skills : reading, writing, listening, and speaking is beneficial to learners of English. Notions of whole language matured out of a paradigm shift in education (Strickland & Strickland, 1993). The paradigm in pedagogy began to shift away from a behaviorist philosophy that employs a transmission model of teaching and learning toward a philosophy that employs a transaction model (Goodman, 1986 ; Strickland & Strickland, 1993 ; Weaver, 1990). Therefore, secondary and post–secondary educators are modifying their teaching strategies (Freeman & Freeman, 1989) as opinions shift from a transmission paradigm to a transaction paradigm. The continuing addition of communicative methodology has benefited English education all over the world. Many educators in Japan have also changed their practices toward a more communicative, whole language approach.

Japan is essentially a monolingual nation. (Shibata, 1985) Tourism, however, is an international and a multilingual phenomenon. English has become the predominant lingua franca for international tourism. English is used by tourism and service industry workers in Japan and it is used by Japanese people who work abroad in the industry. In addition, Japanese tourists who travel abroad may also use English. Although other western foreign languages are taught and spoken in Japan, it should be noted that American English has become the predominant foreign contact language in Japan (Loveday, 1986 and Haarman, 1986). The second most influential, though its influence seems to be declining, is German, which has made numerous contributions to the lexicon, particularly in the fields of medicine, mountain climbing, philosophy, and literature (Haarman, 1984). Increased contact between Japanese and people from other languages and cultures is providing more and more opportunities for the use of foreign languages for professional, intercultural, and interpersonal communication. Hall (1987) states in his analysis of Japanese culture that "interpersonal contacts take precedence over everything else" (p. 29). In addition, international tourism has increased dramatically from 4 million per annum in the 1970's to 8 million in 1988 and was expected to go to 10 million by 1991 (Moeran, 1989). In this way, it is clear that as this trend continues more and more English will be spoken in the future. Considering the significant and integral role that the international tourism and service industry plays around the globe, whole English education in Japan is critical.

In Japan, all junior high and senior high school students study English (Sather, 1981). Data from a survey of 10,381 university students further indicates that up to 30% actually begin studying English while they were in elementary school (Koike, 1985). Clearly English is viewed as a necessary and important subject, and the ability to communicate in English is coveted. People who work in the international tourism and service industry need to posses a high level of English proficiency. In junior high and senior high school, the focus of English education is devoted to grammar, reading, and writing skills. However, it should be pointed out that Higgins and Tanaka (1999) feel that "a fundamental goal of teaching is the empowerment of others" (p. 15). Students would also benefit from an increased, empowered study of the culture of the target language because

". . . culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups" (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 47).

Intercultural communication is taught and the teaching of communication utilizing whole language is on the rise. Further, the use of an integrated, communicative methodology is increasing. It should be acknowledged that while the language, grammar, and vocabulary skills acquired within the current compulsory curriculum are beneficial and may be utilized toward acquiring and increasing spoken English ability, a more detailed cultural study of the target language is also essential.

Cultural Factors and Motivation

The international tourism and service industry may be benefited greatly by increased cultural appreciation and understanding. Pica ponders the issue of the necessity of a learner's cultural integration to learning a language. Further, Pica states that this is something which seriously

". . . troubles teachers, whether they work with students in classrooms far removed from the culture of the language they are learning or with students who are physically immersed in the culture but experientially and psychologically distant from it" (1994, p. 70).

In Japan this notion takes on a very significant role as teachers are faced with various teaching situations and various students who remain in a monocultural environment while pursuing their studies

of English. Higgins and Tanaka (1999) also attest that students must "overcome cultural obstacles" (p. 15). Motivation is a key issue as students need to have clear goals in order to remain engrossed in learning English for the international tourism and service industry.

Research has been done which increases our understanding of motivation related to the culture of the target language. Gardner and Lambert (1972) propose that learners have two basic kinds of motivation. The first type of motivation is integrative motivation. This refers to the desire of language learners to acquire the language while completely immersing themselves into the whole culture of the language, in order to "identify themselves with and become part of that society" (Brown 1994, p 154). The second type of motivation identified is instrumental motivation. Instrumental motivation refers to the functional need for learners to acquire the language in order to serve some utilitarian purpose, such as obtaining the English language skills required for securing a job. The contrasting argument is that such instrumentally motivated learners are neither concerned with the culture from which their target language emerged, nor interested in developing any feelings of cultural affinity with the native speakers of that language. This may, in part, be due to the fact that

> ". . . although we know that culture is learned, we also know that it is made up of multifarious components. A great deal of culture, in fact, acts in much the same way as radio waves — it carries information, is omnipresent though invisible, and, if one is tuned to the right frequency, it conveys powerful messages to those equipped to receive them. Just as non-scientists who listen to the radio have difficulty describing how radio waves are transformed into sound, most people have trouble explaining culture, despite the fact that it is the basis of much of their behavior, attitudes, and ways of life. The limitless zones of culture are both readily apparent on the one hand and subtle and impalpable on the other. It

is within many of these elusive, intangible aspects of culture that our specific behavior, values, and philosophies are steadily formed (Johnson 1999 p. 18).

Within the context of English language teaching in Japan, and specifically within the context of English language teaching for the specific purpose of the international tourism and service industry, both notions are significant. Indeed, cultural understanding and knowledge must be acquired in order for students to achieve a higher level of competence and ability. Further, the instrumental motivation generated by the prospect of securing a lucrative position in the international tourism and service industry should be sufficient to stimulate the desire for learning. This should also generate the desire to achieve communicative competence of the target language as well as deeper intercultural understanding.

Communication, Schema, and Motivation

Communication and communicative ability in the first language (L 1) shares several various important basic elements with communication in a second (L 2) or a foreign language, the processes, however, also differ greatly. Beguiling questions involve whether there are two parallel cognitive processes at work, or whether there are processing strategies that accommodate both the first and the second language collectively. Communication in the L 1 is different from and similar to communication in the L 2. Particularly, factors of cultural differences : content (background knowledge) schema, formal (textual) schema, linguistic (language) schema ; need to be examined. Based on a comprehensive and detailed examination of language ability and the various types of schema, an improved, more explicit understanding may be achieved.

Communicative ability, while certainly the most necessary interpersonal skill, is nevertheless surpassed by reading ability in being acknowledged as the most stable and durable of the second language modalities (Bernhardt, 1991). Reading, whether in a

first or second language context, involves the reader, the text, and the actual interaction between the reader and text (Rumelhart, 1977). Although communication and communicative ability in the L 1 share important basic elements with communication and communicative ability in a second or foreign language, the processes also differ greatly. It is interesting and useful to examine various intriguing questions about whether there are two parallel cognitive processes at work, or whether there are processing strategies that accommodate both first and second languages. These interests clearly reflect how more second language research on communication needs to be initiated and undertaken. Communication in a second language was often viewed as merely a laggard version of doing the identical task in the native language. Such approximations, however, imply that second language tasks are simply mapping tasks that replace one mode of behavior with another. Indeed, while the L 1 and the L 2 language processes have similarities, it is also important to recognize that many factors are involved. This begets the notion that second language communication is a phenomenon unto itself. Despite the similarities between communication in an L 1 and communication in an L 2, a number of multifarious variables make the process of L 1 separate from L 2. Educators need to make significant endeavors in the classroom to understand their students' linguistic behaviors and it is is critical to be able to help students understand those behaviors as well. It is, therefore, important that teachers know as much as possible about the cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds of their pupils since many of these factors direct communication in an L 2 context.

While the research in the field of second and first language skills is varied and extensive, schema remains as one of the most weighty factors because it is intrinsically related to all of the other components which enable individuals to communicate with one another effectively on an interpersonal, intercultural, and professional fashion. Bennett (1993) also provides an educational model to "transcend traditional ethnocentrism and explore new relationships across

cultural boundaries" (p. 21). Schema is particularly significant in consideration of English as a second language for the specific purpose of working in the international tourism and service industry.

The denotation of schema by various scholars ought to be related in order to provide a cogent framework of understanding. Schema is described as cognitive constructs which allow for the organization of information in long-term memory (Widdowson, 1983). Cook promotes the concept that "the mind, stimulated by key words or phrases in the text or by the context, activates a knowledge schema" (Cook 1989, p. 69). Widdowson (1983) and Cook (1989) both emphasize the important cognitive characteristics of schema which allow us to relate incoming facts to previously processed and acquired knowledge. This covers knowledge of the world, knowledge of language structures, and knowledge of texts and forms they take in terms of style and organization. In addition to allowing individuals to organize information and knowledge economically, schema also permits us to predict the logical continuation of both spoken and written discourse. The beginning of a conversation activates schema, which is either verified or repudiated by what follows. This activation and the perceptions of schema are especially critical in the tourism and service industry. Service workers must be able to immediately recognize and attend to the needs and specific desires of their clients and customers. This discourse is the combination of professional and interpersonal communication.

Research on the theory of schema has had a great impact on understanding language acquisition. An effective understanding of second language acquisition will aid in the grasp of communicative English language acquisition for the international tourism and service industry. Academicians have identified several types of schema. Content schema refers to background or world knowledge and it provides people with a foundation and a basis for correlation (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983 ; Carrell, Pharis, & Liberto, 1989). Formal schema, often referred to as textual schema, alludes to the organizational forms and rhetorical structures of written texts. This can in-

clude knowledge of different text types and genres, text organization, language structures, vocabulary, grammar, and level of formality and politeness. Formal schema also implies the understanding that different types of texts are used by different cultures. As Sower (1999) states :

> ". . . culture is not created, it accretes. It builds up over hundreds, if not thousands, of years. It consists of the traditions, languages, religions, folk ways, customs and habits of a people handed down over generations. While attitudes may change from year to year, the fundamental values of a society do not. Changes occur slowly. Like a large body of water, the surface temperature may be affected by the prevailing winds, but the temperature at deeper levels remains more stable" (p. 737).

Therefore, education and culture play the largest role in providing one with a knowledge base of formal schemata.

While formal schema addresses discourse level items, linguistic or language schemata includes the deciphering features required to identify words and how they fit together in a sentence. First language readers, may through repeated examples, be able to notice a pattern and foresee the meaning of a word which may not have initially been part of their linguistic schema. The building of linguistic schema in a second language can progress in a comparable fashion. It is evident that schema plays a significant role in text comprehension, in both the L 1 and L 2 context. While communicating or reading in a first or second language, both native and non-native learners will understand more of the message when they are familiar with content, formal, and linguistic schema. An L 2 learner, however, who does not possess such knowledge can experience schema interference and a lack of comprehension.

Content schema and cultural orientation in terms of background knowledge is also a primary factor and has been elaborated on in detail by Barnett (1989), Carrell and Eisterhold (1983), and Johnson

(1982). Most methodologies investigating the role of schema were variations on Carrell's (1987) paradigm. Analysis of the recall protocols and scores on the comprehension questions suggests that schemata affected the ESL readers' comprehension and recall. Participants better comprehended and remembered passages that were considered more familiar to them. Other studies have shown similar effects in that participants better comprehended or remembered passages that were more familiar (Ammon, 1987 ; Carrell, 1981 ; Johnson, 1981, 1982 ; Shimoda, 1989). Clearly, when learners have a higher level of knowledge and information they benefit in terms of understanding capability. English for specific purposes, such as the tourism and service industry, needs to acknowledge and address the teaching of necessary background knowledge. As Woodfield states :

> "If asked how language is acquired, many teachers would reply that it is through comprehensible input, through understanding messages in the L 2 that are just a little above one's current language level, . . . it seems intuitively true, however, that not only comprehension, but also production, has a direct role to play in acquiring a language" (1997, p. 19).

Learners of English for the international tourism and service industry need to become acquainted with and acquire necessary language skills. This will be aided by having a detailed understanding of linguistic components and cultural knowledge of the individuals they will be providing service to. Further evidence from such studies also suggests that readers' schema for content affected comprehension more than did their formal schema for text organization. Carrell (1987) illustrated how subjects remembered the most when both the content and rhetorical form were familiar to them. However, when only content or only form was alien, unfamiliar content caused more befuddlement for the leaners than did unfamiliar form.

A very stimulating and interesting inquiry was

conducted by Kang (1992). Kang explored how second language readers filter information from second language texts through culture specific background knowledge. All of the variables concerning culture and background knowledge influencing reading are not fully understood. Assent exists that background knowledge is of foremost significance, and that content schema also plays an integral role in comprehension. Generally speaking, pupils appeared to have a higher level of comprehension when the content was familiar to them. Therefore, second language learners do not possess the same degree of content schema as first language learners which may result in comprehension difficulties. Many studies have also examined the role of text schemata in relation to leaners' comprehension. Many of these studies utilized similar methodologies. The structures inherent in the texts were identified and what people remembered was analyzed for specific variables. Essentially, these studies suggested that different types of structure affected comprehension and recall (Bean, Potter, & Clark, 1980; Carrell, 1984). Other research studies also showed that there may be variables among language groups as to which text structures facilitated better recall (Carrell, 1984). The results, however, must be viewed as suggestive as further studies examining the interaction of language background with text structure are needed. In spite of these findings, it is salient to recognize that organizational structures in text will differ across cultures. Associations and interpretations may also be made between English language skills. The discipline of contrasting rhetoric, initiated by Kaplan (1966), has proven to be particularly insightful. The areas of focus are the role of the first language conventions of discourse and rhetorical structure on second language usage, as well as cognitive and cultural dimensions of transfer from a first language to a second language.

Second language refers to "the chronology of language learning; a second language being any language acquired after the native" (Stern, 1983, p. 12). This definition implies that a firmly developed native language was acquired prior to the onset of second language study. The term second language also implies that the language is probably not spoken in the home. In addition, the second language may contain a linguistic base that is syntactically, phonetically, semantically, and rhetorically distinct from the target language. Schema plays a vital role in second language comprehension and second language acquisition. An L 2 learner who is not familiar with culturally based knowledge or content schema, or a learner who does not possess the same linguistic base as the L 1 speaker will encounter difficulties and experience various challenges.

These challenges will be distinct and singular depending on the differences between the first language and the target language. Such difficulties may, in fact, be greater when there is a greater difference between the L 1 and the L 2. Indeed, if the syntactic structure of a student's native language is very different from that of the target language, a greater degree of cognitive reconstructing is required (Segalowitz, 1986). Grabe (1991) also notes that second language learners begin reading in an L 2 with a seriously disparate knowledge base than they had when they started learning how to read in their first language. One particularly significant factor is how L 1 readers already have a sufficiently large vocabulary base before they actually start to learn how to read in their native language. The first language speakers will also have inherent grammatical knowledge of their native language. L 2 learners, on the other hand, do not possess any of these privileges. Furthermore, second language learners often have neither finely honed sociolinguistic skills nor a firm base of total communicative competence.

The lack of communicative competence means that a second language learner is not equipped with the proper grammatical, discourse, strategic, or sociolinguistic skills and knowledge. The cultural knowledge and schema to perceive texts in a culturally authentic or a culturally specific way is critical. As culture is

"the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of

people from another" (Hofstede 1984, p. 51).

Knowledge of culture and intercultural communication skills are especially consequential for people studying English for the international tourism and service industry. People who are studying English need to familiarize themselves with the cultural schema the people they will communicate with posses. Further, as Hall (1959) points out,

"culture controls behavior in deep and persisting ways, many of which are outside of awareness and therefore beyond conscious control of the individual" (p. 35).

This phenomenon is clearly related to the potential lack of content schema. Ultimately, comprehension may suffer as a result of this lack of background cultural knowledge.

In conclusion, this paper has discussed some of the differences and similarities between the acquisition of a first language and the acquisition of a second language. Factors of motivation and culture were considered with special attention directed to the role of whole language and schema and how they relate to comprehension in a first and a second language. Numerous other factors exist which also influence L 1 and L 2 acquisition. This discussion provides some insight and analysis on how cultural factors, namely differences in types of schema, can influence second language acquisition related to English necessary for the international tourism and service industry. It must also be noted that students' perception of their linguistic difficulties are also similar in many ways across languages. Learners can better understand some of those similarities and educators must question students about their learning and acquisition behaviors. Pupils themselves can offer tremendous insight into both their L 1 and L 2 experiences. Further research needs to be done in order to better understand this intriguing aspect of language acquisition and the perception of how and why people acquire language.

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