Minnesota Teachers of English
to Speakers of Other Languages

MinneTESOL Journal

Volume 6 • 1986-1987

MinneTESOL Officers and Executive Board

1985-86

President
Kathryn Heinze Hanges
Concordia College

First vice-president
Mildred Sprunck
St. Paul Public Schools

Second vice-president
John Armbrust / Elaine Matyi
ELS Language Center

Secretary
Gail Ibele
University of Minnesota

Treasurer
Adele Hansen
University of Minnesota

1986-87

President
Mildred Sprunck
St. Paul Public Schools

First vice-president
Audrae Coury
Roseville Public Schools

Second vice-president
Elaine Matyi
ELS Language Center

Secretary
Gail Ibele
University of Minnesota

Treasurer
Adele Hansen
University of Minnesota

Members-at-large

1985-86

Dorothy Bilheimer
Audrae Coury
Kären Dudley
Carolyn Nayematsu
Tom Rowland
Ellen Vaut

Members-at-large

1986-87

Dorothy Bilheimer
Kären Dudley
Darlene Kunze
Carolyn Nayematsu
Dixie Olmstead
Karen Stier-Pulver

᠎# MinneTESOL Journal
Volume 6 • 1986-1987

Contents

A Word Is Worth a Thousand Pictures: A Writing Project for the Primary Grades 7
Vivian Mann

Teaching Paraphrasing to ESL Students 15
Patricia M. Odean

Self-Monitoring of Articles and Verbs in ESL Written Production 29
Barbara Schwarte
Emiko Matsumura-Lothrop

Choosing Helpful Examples of Structures 53
Eric S. Nelson

Publications Received 73

Journal Editorial Board

Eric Nelson, editor
University of Minnesota
Richard Carr
ELS Language Center
Elizabeth Henly
University of Minnesota
Mark Landa
University of Minnesota
Diane Pecoraro
Minnesota Department of Education
Nancy Ward
Minnetonka Public Schools

Newsletter Editorial Staff

1985-86

Lora Polack, editor
Audrae Coury
Anne DeMuth
Bernie Diehl
Martha Faltesek
Barbara Johnson
Ellen Mamer, editor emeritus
Lois Malcolm
Vivian Mann
Michele McRae
Judith Strohl
Jean Teigland

1986-87

Lora Polack, editor
Anne DeMuth
Ellen Mamer, editor emeritus
Mary Musielewicz
Karen Stier-Pulver

Membership in MinneTESOL

Membership in MinneTESOL ($15.00) includes a subscription to the *MinneTESOL Journal*. Contact the Secretary, MinneTESOL, P.O. Box ~~14162,~~ St. Paul, Minnesota, 55414.

Information for contributors to the *MinneTESOL Journal*

• Editorial policy

The *MinneTESOL Journal* 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.

• 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*.

Submit six copies of each manuscript, along with six copies of an abstract of not more than 200 words.

Contributions to volume 8 should be submitted to ~~the new editor~~:

Prof. Helen Jorstad
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
University of Minnesota
Peik Hall 125
159 Pillsbury Avenue SE
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

• Advertising

Requests concerning advertising should be directed to the Advertising Exhibits Coordinator, MinneTESOL, P.O. Box ~~14162~~, St. Paul, Minnesota, 55114.

In this volume

A concern with teaching the written language dominates this volume of the *MinneTESOL Journal*.

Vivian Mann plays on a familiar aphorism in her article, *A Word is Worth a Thousand Pictures: A Writing Project for the Primary Grades*. Mann describes a technique she has developed for stimulating young writers, especially those who are reluctant to express themselves.

Patty Odean, in *Teaching Paraphrasing to ESL Students*, argues that paraphrasing is a complex of various skills. Breaking down the task of paraphrasing, according to Odean, will help students become proficient paraphrasers.

Barbara Schwarte and Emiko Matsumura-Lothrop, in *Self-Monitoring of Articles and Verbs in ESL Written Production*, report on a study that investigated the ability of advanced learners to correct errors in their writing. The authors include pedagogical suggestions for teachers who want to help students improve their monitoring skills.

My own article, *Choosing Helpful Examples of Sructures*, offers advice about a teaching skill that has not received much attention in print: evaluating out-of-context language intended to exemplify structures.

E.S.N.

Books for Language Teachers

The Context of Language Teaching
Jack Richards
Winner of the M.L.A.'s 1985 Mildenberger Award
26565-7 Cloth $24.95
31952-8 Paper $ 9.95

Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching
A Description and Analysis
Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers
32093-3 Cloth $24.95
31255-8 Paper $ 9.95

Images and Options in the Language Classroom
Earl W. Stevick
32150-6 Cloth $24.95
31281-7 Paper $ 9.95

Beyond Methodology
Second Language Teaching and The Community
Mary Ashworth
26665-3 Cloth $22.95
31991-9 Paper $ 9.95

Culture Bound
Language Teaching from a Cultural Perspective
Joyce Merrill Valdes, Editor
32526-9 Cloth $24.95
31045-8 Paper $10.95

Course Design
Developing Programs and Materials for Language Learning
Fraida Dubin and Elite Olshtain
25676-3 Cloth $24.95
27642-X Paper $ 9.95

Working With Words
A Guide to Teaching and Learning Vocabulary
Ruth Gairns and Stuart Redman
26889-3 Cloth $24.95
31709-6 Paper $ 9.95

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
32 East 57th Street, New York, NY 10022

A Word Is Worth a Thousand Pictures: A Writing Project for the Primary Grades

Vivian Mann
St. Paul Public Schools

A technique is described which enables the beginning ESL student to produce an appealing finished writing product in a short time in a stress-free learning environment. Individual ideas are nurtured in a collective setting. The technique has proven effective with children from second to sixth grade and lends itself well to writing instruction that emphasizes free expression and creativity.

Within every ESL class, some students are more proficient in English than others. Some students quickly open up and reveal their opinions with or without adequate language tools. By contrast, some students have mainly a passive knowledge of English and are reluctant to speak or write. And many have the double handicap of low English proficiency coupled with a general reluctance to verbalize even in their native tongues. (Those who read at grade level with good comprehension and who are articulate in English are likely to be removed from ESL classes.) The technique for teaching writing in the primary grades which I will describe in this article is a technique that is especially well suited to those students who are reluctant to express themselves.

I would like to present here a set of lessons which is geared to the needs of reluctant writers, especially those with low English proficiency.

THE PLAN: SEVEN STEPS

Step 1: An oral performance by the teacher

The first step in the lessons involves a key word chosen by the teacher and an unrelated series of sentences in which the key word appears. I choose a word which is not a proper noun or a verb. Common nouns and adjectives are best. The word must be familiar to the entire group and it must be one that can elicit many associations. Words such as the following are well suited to the activity:

Nouns		Adjectives	
bike	friend	afraid	favorite
birthday	garden	brave	huge
cats	neighbor	cold	sick
fishing	vacation	famous	yellow

I show the students the written word on a large card which is displayed in a central place. I do not use pictures; I feel that a picture is superfluous and may in fact stifle the children's imagination. The well-chosen word conjures up mental pictures on its own.

After displaying the word, I say to the students, "Today I will show you how I can take one word and turn it into many sentences. Soon, you will be able to do the same thing." Then I begin to speak extemporaneously. I utter sentence after sentence, each containing the chosen word. The students are bombarded with at least twenty disjointed sentences which I say as rapidly as I can, without notes. (Teachers who are hesitant about trying this may want to use notes; it may not be easy for a teacher not used to the technique to come up with a long series of sentences with the key word.) I deliberately avoid getting into a set pattern of beginnings or endings because I wish to highlight the word, not a particular sentence pattern. If the key word is *vacation*, my sentences might be:

Vacations are fun.
I have just finished my vacation.
My best vacation took place three years ago in Canada.

My husband and I took a vacation together this year.
Everybody should take a vacation at least once a year.
Most vacations are in summer.
Sometimes you ask for a vacation.
Vacations cost money.
I saw lakes and rivers on my vacation.
I rode in three boats on my last vacation.
You can take a trip or stay home on your vacation.
Children like to go to camp on vacation.
I love to swim during my vacation.
Friends can visit me when they have their vacations.

This teacher performance--with seeming indifference to onlookers--is a long solo for a teacher who professes a belief in interactive teaching. My rationale is simply that it works. For one thing, the very fact that it is an unusual way of using language makes it interesting to the children. It also gives the children an opportunity to see the teacher thinking, creating, and having fun with words. Like Tom Sawyer whitewashing the fence, I lure the children into curiosity and a willingness to join in the fun. I present them with words to stimulate a pageant of visuals that emerges out of their own minds. I make them realize that--to reverse the aphorism--a word is worth a thousand pictures. As I reel off sentence after sentence, I can see by the expressions on their faces that they are actively imagining the many scenes that my sentences suggest. I gesture and change my tone and expression often, but I use no pictures or props.

In this step, I don't expect every child to understand every word. My language is usually simple, but not always. The important thing is that my performance is understandable enough to pique interest and evoke mental images.

Step 2: Yes/no questions

In the second step, I ask yes/no questions, again using the key word. The questions are directed to the group as a whole. The children answer out loud, spontaneously but not chorally. There are no anticipated correct answers, and I don't respond to answers. In this step I use written questions (not seen by the children) to assist me. I go from one question to the next without

hesitation and without discussion. Questions for the word *vacation* might be:

> Do you like vacations?
> Did you ever go on a trip during your vacation?
> Does your mother like taking vacations?
> Do we go to school on vacations?
> Do you go fishing (swimming, to the library) during vacation?
> Is there a vacation during winter?
> Are vacations one week?
> Are vacations one year?
> Are vacations sad?

Why don't I respond to the answers? I want the students to feel that they are not being evaluated at this point, that "anything goes," including shouting "No way!" when others are shouting "Yes!" They may use one-word answers, they may use slang, they may blurt out comments as they wish. I can see by their diverse answers and by the increased forcefulness of their voices that they are listening to me, responding honestly, and thinking about their personal experiences. Who says that every utterance must be significant and must be met instantly with a concerned remark? Certainly not the children. Anything that smacks of additional play time or experimentation time, with a little raucousness to boot, is a treat for them.

In this phase, I try to assure the students that they won't be instantaneously categorized and judged by their speech. When I begin to respond in the next step, they are usually eager for a reaction and curious to see how I receive their friends' remarks as well as their own.

Step 3: Sentences from students

In the third step, each student must say one sentence that is somehow different from those of the other students. Students are permitted to repeat a sentence from the original teacher performance in step one, but no two students may repeat the same sentence. The students are to listen to each other and to avoid mimicry. Soon they become very adept at attributing "ownership" to sentences and at finding ways to achieve the

required variation. They comment, "I said that one" or "Chue said that already!" When they falter, unable to come up with a sentence using the key word, I give them clues: "Think of things you have heard...seen...gotten...liked...bought...." In this step, the children begin to discover that they, like the teacher, are capable of using words creatively. Even as they are constrained by the need to use the key word, they stretch their imaginations in the effort for novelty.

In this step, variation in thought or sentence structure is given special praise. This is the point at which I respond to each contribution with some comment or question:

> Child A: I like to go fishing on vacation.
> Teacher: That sounds like fun! Do you know how to fish?
> [I don't pursue the subject further. A comment or question or two will suffice.]
>
> Child B: I sleep at my cousin's house during vacation.
> Teacher: That's always nice. Where does your cousin live?
>
> Child C: On Christmas vacation we went to our sponsors'.
> Teacher: You're telling me something new and different. Most people take vacations in the summer. But some people take them in the winter. And you're remembering a winter vacation.

As the students produce sentences, I type them on a primary typewriter (a typewriter that produces extra-large type), spacing the lines so that the sentences may be cut apart with scissors later.

Step 4: Reading the sentences together

We read the sentences aloud. My favorite technique is to xerox the sentences, make a transparency, and flash it on the wall. Together, we read the sentences aloud very slowly, sounding out the more difficult words.

Step 5: Illustrating the sentences for an exhibit

I cut out each one of the sentences which have been typed on the xeroxed sheet and then every child picks one or more

sentences to illustrate for our bulletin board exhibit. I tell them that their pictures should not be alike. If there are eight children, then the pictures should reflect eight different sentences. Usually both the pictures and the sentences are quite different. Once when *vacation* was the key word, we had a bulletin board with a pool, a fishing scene, a picnic, a park, California, the zoo, a garden, summer school, a visit to Grandma, baking cookies, and traveling in a car.

Step 6: Writing based on the pictures

When the pictures are completed, I ask the students to write about the pictures. I give them a choice: they may do their own writing or they may dictate to me. If they dictate to me, I type their "story," and they copy what I have typed. Primary students often cannot retain their thoughts long enough to record them, especially when the act of writing is laborious. They can copy, however, when relieved of the responsibility of holding on to their ideas. And the ideas remain theirs alone: I do not contribute ideas as I type. I do edit for minor corrections, doing so out loud, discussing each correction with the child.

When the students submit their stories or dictate to me, I avoid negative critiquing. I make no attempt to teach structure beyond the insistence on complete sentences, capitals, and end-of-sentence punctuation. I do not try to teach coherence and organization at this juncture. I do expect that the students' words will fit their pictures and not contradict what they have drawn. In this sense, the "stories" are meaningful and tied to a context. Imaginative students sometimes add a dialogue, labels, humorous asides, background thoughts, or intriguing insights. To a picture of someone who is having bad luck, for example, a student might add a "dialogue balloon" with the words "Oh, no, not again!"

Here is an example of a "story" produced by a student to go with a picture of a family riding in their car, with the caption "My father and mother and my family traveled in the car":

We went to the park. We played with a ball. We went fishing too.

Another example accompanied a picture of a visit to the zoo which was captioned "I was happy when my mom and dad took me to the zoo this vacation":

> My mom bought some pop for me and my dad. It was a hot day. My dad took me to see the seals. Then my father bought some fish food. We threw it to the seals.

Step 7: Reading the "stories" together

The students read their writing to each other, showing the pictures and making comments. We often play the "I like" game: "I like Teng's sentence about..." or "I like the funny ears on his elephant." The children then help me arrange the display of pictures and "stories." The key word that began the series of lessons captions the exhibit. The end product is a collective collage of ideas in which the children take pride.

DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

As our students advance, their needs change. They need to learn how to organize their thoughts, how to capture and hold the reader's attention, and how to write with appropriate style and grammar. I branch out to these skills with each student when he or she is ready. The seven-step project, as described here, helps lay the foundation for further work. With its emphasis on spontaneity, experiences related to the students' lives, a collaborative effort, a realistic short-term goal, and an appealing end product, it can help transform the reluctant writer into a beginning writer who is eager to write on.
□

The author

Vivian Mann teaches ESL at Sheridan Elementary School in St. Paul.

Teaching Paraphrasing to ESL Students

Patricia M. Odean
Albuquerque Technical-Vocational Institute
Albuquerque, New Mexico

ESL students in an academic program must be able to write paraphrases, yet they often lack strategies for accomplishing this task successfully. The task of paraphrasing requires reading, analyzing, and writing skills. In this paper those skills are identified, and exercises are suggested to promote their development. By dealing with each skill separately and then combining them gradually, students are better prepared to undertake the complex task of paraphrasing.

Paraphrasing is a daily activity. In speaking, we paraphrase our own words to provide clarification or emphasis. We paraphrase a conversation partner's words to show we comprehend or to check our comprehension. Often we contribute to a discussion by paraphrasing a third person's words. Paraphrasing, in these situations, is done without conscious effort.

But writing paraphrases for academic purposes requires conscious attention. This kind of paraphrasing requires fitting another writer's ideas into one's own text while avoiding plagiarizing the first writer's text. It is a complex activity, composed of reading, analyzing, and writing skills. The paraphraser must decode a text, fully comprehend it, analyze how it relates to the ideas of the text under construction, select new vocabulary and structures to restate the ideas, and, finally, judge whether all of these steps have been successfully completed. Considering the complexity of the task, it is not surprising that college instructors complain of plagiarism in student papers. What may be surprising, however, is that most

college composition textbooks lack instructional materials for developing paraphrasing ability. A few examples might be provided, or the advice to avoid plagiarism by restating the text "in your own words" might appear in a brief paragraph. Until recently, textbooks did not provide strategies for writing paraphrases, perhaps because paraphrasing seems like an overwhelming task.

A sensible strategy for teaching a task which appears overwhelming is first to discover the component skills of the task and then to classify them in order to design a logical sequence for teaching. Obviously, many of the skills we teach in our reading, composition, grammar, and vocabulary classes contribute to a student's ability to paraphrase. But there is more we could be doing, and some we could be doing sooner.

Classification of skills needed for paraphrasing can begin with a distinction between how to produce a paraphrase and how to use one. Producing paraphrases consists of reading and rewriting an isolated passage. Using a paraphrase consists of selecting an appropriate passage to paraphrase and integrating it into a new text. Although this division does not reflect the actual sequence of steps we go through when we paraphrase, it is nonetheless a pedagogically useful division.[1]

PRODUCING PARAPHRASES

Understanding the source material

Paraphrases usually originate in sentences which have sophisticated syntax. Thus, to produce a successful paraphrase, students must be able to understand difficult passages in detail. The ESL college freshmen who were subjects for research reported in Odean (1986) demonstrated a weakness in

[1]The sequence of steps we go through in paraphrasing is likely to be 1) reading, 2) selecting, 3) writing, and 4) integrating; my label "producing" combines the first and third steps; "using" combines the second and fourth.

reading skill. For example, one of the texts they paraphrased was:

> A child who witnesses parental attempts to solve family problems or release frustrations through aggressive behavior is likely to incorporate this into his or her own behavior patterns. If being abused as a child does in fact lead to aggressive behavior, the seeds of this cycle may be manifested early in life relationships with peers and/or siblings, and, when greater strength is gained, in confrontations with parents or caretakers. (Kratcoski, 1982, p. 437.)

One ESL student's paraphrase of this passage included:

> By looking at the child's behavior...you could notice whether a child is being abused or not.

Clearly, this student and others like him need more practice and better strategies for understanding complex passages. In the following sections, I will discuss exercises for developing such strategies.

<u>Simplification exercises</u>

Familiarizing students with the strategy of generating simpler restatements of a difficult passage is one way to help them learn to understand such passages. The following exercise is an example of how to begin this process:

> Directions: Identify the statement which has the same meaning as the following:
>
> A child who witnesses parental attempts to solve problems or release frustrations through aggressive behavior is likely to incorporate this into his or her own behavior.
>
> a) Parents usually respond to violent children by using violence.
> b) If a child sees his parents use violence, he will probably learn to be violent.
> c) If a child is violent, it is because his parents are violent.

Students must, of course, be required to produce simplifications as well as recognize them. To begin with, it may be best to

practice producing simplifications in speech. Since speech usually has simpler syntax than writing, simplifying through speech may come more easily. And even when students are ready to simplify in writing, it may be useful for them to have the opportunity to discuss passages before writing simplifications. A student who understands a text but has difficulty simplifying it may be helped by being asked to explain it to someone who doesn't understand it (or at least pretends not to). The explanation is likely to result in simplification.

Extracting sentence kernels

Barnitz (1979) and Saville-Troike (1979) agree that having students extract sentence kernels can help them understand difficult sentences. This process is also referred to as "decombining" sentences. Exercises based on the following example (which includes the expected responses) can familiarize students with this strategy.

> Directions: Write three simple sentences using only the information provided in the following sentence:
>
> Democracy was invented as a device for reconciling government with liberty.
>
> 1. *Democracy was invented.*
> 2. *Democracy is a device.*
> 3. *Democracy reconciles government with liberty.*

Identifying word groups

Saville-Troike (1979) emphasizes the importance of reading in phrases. In order to do this, students need to recognize the boundaries between word groups, even in passages with complex syntax. For example, a proficient reader would divide the following between *civilization* and *men*:

> At the dawn of civilization men must have counted new moons and quarters to measure time intervals... (Kuhn, 1957)

One of the subjects in Odean (1986) divided the sentence incorrectly, resulting in an awkward noun phrase and a

misunderstanding of the initial prepositional phrase. The student's paraphrase read:

> The civilization men organize fundamental units into long term calendar which is easily understood by counting new moons and quarters many times at dawn...

Exercises which require students to divide passages into word groups can be done at all reading levels to diagnose problems. Answers to these exercises should be discussed, since there may be several acceptable solutions. Both Grellet (1981) and Saville-Troike (1979) include exercises for developing the skill of reading in phrases.

Cloze exercises

Cloze exercises require students to fill in blanks which have been created by deleting words from a text. Although cloze exercises have traditionally been used for testing, they can help students learn how words function in texts by focusing attention on how logical possibilities are limited by the syntax and meaning of a text. The following exercise is based on one of the passages cited above:

> Directions: Fill in the blanks with appropriate words.
>
> A child who witnesses parental attempts to ________ family problems or release frustrations through aggressive behavior is likely to incorporate this into his or her own behavior patterns. If being abused as a child does in fact lead to aggressive ____________, the seeds of this cycle may be manifested early in life relationshiops with peers and/or __________, and, when greater strength is gained, in confrontations with __________ or caretakers.

An additional benefit of cloze exercises is that they foster an awareness of what constitutes a synonym. Also, they can be easily prepared by teachers.

Identifying referents

Pearson (1981) emphasizes the need to give students practice in understanding reference early in their language learning. Misunderstanding reference can cause difficulties in complicated passages, with resulting faulty paraphrasing. Students should be encouraged to sort out referents in difficult passages, as suggested by Grellet (1981). An exercise in identifying referents might look like this:

> Directions: Draw an arrow from the underlined words to the word or words they refer to.

Democracy was invented as a device for reconciling government with liberty. It is clear that government is necessary if anything worthy to be called civilization is to exist, but all history shows that any set of men entrusted with power over another set will abuse their power if they can do so with impunity. Democracy is intended to make men's tenure of power temporary and dependent upon popular approval. In so far as it achieves this, it prevents the worst abuses of power.

Answering questions

Finally, questioning can be used to focus attention on various aspects of a text to determine what type of constructions may be interfering with comprehension. Such aspects include meaning, reference, inference, and grammar. The following questions are based on the passage above about child abuse:

1. Who are the first group of people children are likely to behave aggressively with? [meaning]
2. What does "this cycle" in the second sentence refer to? [reference]
3. Does the author believe it has been proven that children who are abused develop aggressive behavior? [inference]
4. What are the subject and main verb of the first sentence? [grammar]

Developing flexibility for rewriting

Recognizing and exploiting synonymity

The second skill I identified in producing paraphrases was that of rewriting the passage. If students are to master this skill, they must begin by learning, early in their instruction, to recognize semantic and syntactic synonymity. This is a prerequisite to exploiting synonymity as a successful paraphraser does. Students can be encouraged to make productive use of synonymous expressions early in their ESL work as well. To this end, Pearson (1981) suggests that students, in answering comprehension questions about a reading, should not be allowed to copy from the text. This will encourage them to build syntactic and semantic flexibility.

Sentence-combining

Sentence-combining exercises can also be used to develop flexibility in structure. Klassen (1976) tested the effects of sentence-combining exercises on intermediate ESL students and found that they were very useful in expediting syntactic development. Zamel (1980) also acknowledges that sentence-combining "can help the students understand that the sentence is a base structure to which other information can be attached rather than a string of words that cannot be broken into or rearranged" (p. 89).

Sentence-combining can be difficult. It requires preparation and follow-up. An exercise can begin with a discussion of the relationships among the short sentences provided. Then individuals or small groups can work to combine the sentences. The products can be compared to those of other students. Sentence-combining can often reveal difficulties students are having with grammar. Tackling these problems can help them both in reading and in writing.

A number of books for native speakers of English provide sentence-combining activities. Two which can be used for non-native speakers as well are Daiker, Kerek, and Morenberg (1979) and Strong (1973). Provided that vocabulary and content are discussed before students combine sentences, these

books are suitable for intermediate and advanced ESL students.

Rewriting the passage

Some sources for developing rewriting strategies

The flexibility that students gain from an understanding of synonymity and from sentence-combining exercises must eventually be put to use in the actual rewriting of passages from sources. A few recent non-ESL textbooks may be useful in helping students when they are ready to begin rewriting passages. Bazerman (1985) provides and exemplifies strategies for restating ideas. Bazerman suggests that students first substitute synonyms into the original passage, aided by a thesaurus, and then restructure the sentences. Restructuring, according to Bazerman, can consist of breaking longer sentences into shorter ones, combining short sentences into longer ones, changing the verb structure of the sentence (changing active to passive, for example), or moving phrases. These suggestions are similar to those of Spatt (1983), who proposes that students first write a "literal paraphrase" in which synonyms have been substituted for key words, and then use the literal paraphrase to write a "free paraphrase"--one in which the sentence pattern will be altered to avoid sounding stilted. Spatt also provides examples and exercises for learning these techniques.

Kennedy and Smith (1986) propose an approach similar to that of Bazerman and Spatt, but provide more examples and exercises for the discrete steps than the other authors. Hence, their materials are probably more useful for ESL students. They discuss, for example, how to move phrases, and they include an exercise which provides practice in that skill.

Setting aside the original text

Strategies such as moving phrases, changing voice, substituting synonyms and the like are important, but they may, if overemphasized, lead students to see paraphrasing as simply a matter of manipulating another writer's words. Students must eventually see paraphrasing more as an exercise in rethinking information and letting it come out in their own voices. To this

end, the best strategy may be for the students to set aside the original text long enough to forget the wording but not the information. The paraphrases that result from this strategy are likely to be less artificial and more in tune with the students' own prose. Paraphrases written in this way can still be checked for accuracy by later scrutiny of the original alongside the paraphrase.

USING PARAPHRASES

Students who have been provided with passages to practice on and have written paraphrases in isolation are ready to learn the more difficult skill of using paraphrases. To begin with, students must learn how to select appropriate passages for paraphrasing and how to integrate the paraphrases into their own texts.

Selecting material to paraphrase

Analyzing material and relating it to ideas outside the text

Like producing paraphrases, using paraphrases begins with reading. Early in learning to read, students need to become aware of how different passages function in a text. Many reading textbooks have exercises which help students recognize arguments, details, explanations, and examples. In addition to understanding how passages function within the text in which they are found, students must also learn to relate the passages to ideas outside the text. The teacher can help students develop this skill starting with the earliest stages of reading--by encouraging discussions which diverge from the reading and then go back to the text to isolate passages which might relate to the discussion. Another way to help students develop the skill of relating a reading to ideas outside the reading is to have students read texts from different sources on the same topic and discuss how the texts compare and contrast not only as a whole, but also in specific passages.

Examining sample research papers

Having students look at finished research papers can give them an idea of how other writers have chosen and used material for

paraphrasing. Many textbooks on writing research papers provide models, some including excerpts from the sources used. Both Bazerman (1985) and Lester (1984) provide models with marginal notes explaining how the writer used various sources.

Integrating the paraphrase

In addition to selecting passages from sources, students must learn to integrate them into their papers. Again, examining how other writers have handled this process, as in the exercises in Bazerman (1985) and Lester (1984), can be helpful. Such textual features as how much original material appears with the paraphrases and how paraphrases and quotations can be combined can help students learn to make decisions when writing their own papers. Noting the language used to signal the purposes of the paraphrases--purposes such as presenting an opposing opinion or providing an example--can guide students in making their own papers more coherent.

The problem of the "cut-and-paste" paper

A major pitfall students need to avoid is that of producing a "cut-and-paste" paper. The cut-and-paste paper results from viewing source material as bits of information to be pieced together. Students must be encouraged instead to view source material as something they can use to supplement their own ideas and interpretations. Students who are not confident of their English skills often have difficulty accepting this view, especially since most academic writing evolves out of reading. It becomes easy to let the sources take over; it becomes difficult for students to discover their proper roles as authors.

How can the teacher help students become masters rather than servants of their sources? Having students set aside their readings and do prewriting activities (including discussions) to explore their reactions to the topic and what they have read can help them put the sources into perspective and arrive at their own point of view about the topic. Having established their own positions, they will be better able to provide solid skeletons of papers, to which they can add source material. If they establish

that skeleton first, they have a paper which can stand on its own, independent of its sources.

A GRADUAL APPROACH

In order to help students gain confidence in themselves as authors and competent users of source material, a gradual approach to using sources is helpful. Students can start by using interviews rather than articles as source material. Using "ordinary people" as sources should encourage students to include their own ideas (avoiding the "cut and paste" problem), particularly if they have been guided to choose an interviewee with an opinion on a topic which is in opposition to their own opinions.

Students can begin including paraphrases of the spoken word early in their writing instruction. Something as simple as discussing a topic with a classmate and reporting the results in a short paragraph can result in a paraphrase such as the following:

> José said that he thinks Americans are friendly, but I don't agree because no American has ever invited me to his house to eat.

Later, a similar exercise can be done with written material: students can write essays on a topic, read each other's essays, and then write a report of how their ideas compared. This use of the classmates' writing as source material can provide a painless entry into paraphrasing work using the written word as source material.

Beginning to write papers from a single source rather than multiple sources makes the task of learning to use paraphrases less complicated. The number of sources can be increased as students become more comfortable writing papers. As the number of sources increases, so does the need for skill in synthesizing information. Munsell and Clough (1984), in a text designed for advanced ESL writers, provide examples and exercises to help students learn to write syntheses.

Having groups of students working from the same sources can be advantageous for both the students and the teacher. It allows

for discussions among the students on the topic and the readings. Furthermore, because the number of articles is minimized, the teacher can become familiar with all the reading material in order to guide the students in using it and evaluate their success.

If the teacher also provides the articles in the beginning stages of teaching how to write research papers, it eases the students' burden, allowing them to concentrate on the writing process. Also, this guarantees that appropriate source materials are used--sources which resemble those the students might use in later academic writing but which are suitable for their reading level. For a later paper, each student might be asked to provide one article, and the sources can be pooled. Eventually, the students should be ready to accept full responsibility for researching sources. Two ESL texts which can help students develop researching skills are Shoemaker (1985) and Byrd, Drum, and Wittkopf (1981).

By gradually preparing students to use paraphrases in writing research papers, teachers will not only have made the process of writing papers less formidable, but will also have helped students learn important reading, writing, and analyzing skills.
□

The author

Patricia M. Odean taught composition classes for non-native speakers at the University of Minnesota before moving to New Mexico in the summer of 1986. She now teaches at the Albuquerque Technical-Vocational Institute.

REFERENCES

Barnitz, J.G. (1979). Developing sentence comprehension in reading. *Language Arts, 56*, 902-908.

Bazerman, C. (1985). *The informed writer: Using sources in the disciplines.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Byrd, P., Drum, C.A., & Wittkopf, B.J. (1981). *Guide to academic libraries in the United States for students of English as a second language.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Daiker, D. A., Kerek, A., & Morenberg, M. (1979). *The writer's*

options. New York: Harper and Row Publishers.
Grellet, F. (1981). *Developing reading skills.* New York: Cambridge University Press.
Kennedy, M. L., & Smith, H. L. (1986). *Academic writing with sources across the curriculum.* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
Klassen, B. (1976). Sentence-combining exercises as an aid to expediting syntactic fluency in learning English as a second language. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1976). *Dissertation Abstracts International,* 37/10A, 6258.
Kratcoski, P. C. (1982). Child abuse and violence against the family. *Child Welfare, 61,* 435-444.
Kuhn, T. (1957). *The Copernican revolution: Planetary astronomy in the development of Western thought.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Lester, J. D. (1984). *Writing research papers.* Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman and Company.
Munsell, P., & Clough, M. (1984). *A practical guide for advanced writers in English as a second language.* New York: MacMillan.
Odean, P. (1986). *A comparison of the written paraphrases of English as a second language and native-speaking college freshmen.* Unpublished paper, University of Minnesota.
Pearson, C. R. (1981). Advanced academic skills in the low-level ESL class. *TESOL Quarterly, 15,* 413-423.
Saville-Troike, M. (1979). Reading and the audio-lingual method. *TESOL Quarterly, 7,* 24-35.
Shoemaker, C. (1985). *Write in the corner where you are.* New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
Spatt, B. (1983). *Writing from sources.* New York: Random House.
Strong, W. (1973). *Sentence-combining: A composing book.* New York: Random House.
Zamel, V. (1980). Re-evaluating sentence-combining practice. *TESOL Quarterly 14,* 81-90.

The Self-Monitoring of Articles and Verbs in ESL Written Production

Barbara Schwarte
Iowa State University

Emiko Matsumura-Lothrop
Mexico City, Mexico

This paper presents the results of a study analyzing the ability of 31 advanced ESL students to self-monitor article and verb errors in their compositions. These two categories of grammatical errors were monitored in three successive steps: immediately after production and without prompting (that is, no indication of the error was given); one class meeting after production, also without prompting; and two class meetings after production, with prompting. The specific research questions were: (a) How frequently can article and verb errors be monitored without prompting? (b) How does a time lag between production and monitoring affect error detection? (c) How accurate are the monitorings? (d) How much do ESL learners vary in their monitoring ability? (e) Can monitoring practice lead to a decrease in errors?

Although it is quite well-known that some adults learn a second language better than others, it is not so well-known why this is so. Several researchers, including Rubin (1975), Stern (1975), and Bialystock (1981) have suggested that one factor is the ability to self-monitor: good language learners analyze the content and form of their output before, during, and after production. The constant interaction between the good language learners' creative and critical faculties may be responsible for their better internalization of the language system. The conscious application of pedagogical rules allows the good language learners to check, either before or after production, the accuracy of their language. With frequent incorrect items, this

repeated focus may help lead to the automatic use of correct forms and improved language proficiency.[1]

Because of its possible importance in improving language proficiency, self-monitoring is a skill that all ESL learners are encouraged to develop. To help them develop this skill when writing, instructors often use an error correction technique that involves both guided learning and problem solving. Students are guided in making their own corrections by their instructors' having located and coded the errors. The students, in turn, must solve the problem of deciding what the correction should be. Learning is enhanced because students are active participants in the correction process: either they are reminded to apply a forgotten rule or they become aware of a rule not known.

Although ESL learners are encouraged to monitor their written production, little has been ascertained about their ability to do so. Most monitoring studies have dealt with oral production (Krashen & Pon, 1975; Schlue, 1977; White, 1977; Houck, Robertson, & Krashen, 1978; Fathman, 1980). Given the differences between written and spoken language, we cannot assume that monitoring in one mode is comparable to that in the other. To date, only a few studies have focused on the monitoring of written production. Hatch (1979) cites one such study, Hassan (1978), which analyzed the changes ESL learners made on second and third drafts of compositions. Hassan found that learners made few grammatical changes and instead focused on such content aspects as vocabulary choice and the addition of details. Two other studies indicate that unskilled ESL writers focus prematurely on form while making revisions. Zamel (1983), in her study of the composing processes of six advanced

[1]Explicit knowledge of the pedagogical rules is not a requirement during monitoring. Learners often correct "by feel" (that is, by what "sounds right") and are not able to verbalize the rules they are using (Stafford and Covitt, 1978; Seliger, 1979). At the same time, monitoring does have limitations. It is limited to the simpler grammatical rules (for example, inflections, simple order changes, etc.). It should also be restricted to situations where it does not interfere with communication, as in writing or prepared speech (Krashen, 1984).

ESL learners, noted that one unskilled ESL writer was "distracted by local problems" and seldom made changes that affected meaning. Raimes (1985) also observed that her unskilled ESL writers did not view editing as just a "clean-up" operation but instead edited for grammatical errors during the composing process. There appears to be a need for further research in this area, particularly with regard to the ability of learners to monitor their own grammatical errors.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This paper presents the results of a small-scale, preliminary investigation into the ability of advanced ESL learners to correct grammatical errors in their written production. Focused on in this investigation was the monitoring of article and verb errors.[2] The specific research questions were :

1. How frequently can article and verb errors be monitored without prompting, that is, by the learner alone, without the teacher's intervention?
2. How does a time lag between production and monitoring affect error detection?
3. How accurate are the monitorings?
4. How much do ESL learners vary in their monitoring ability?
5. Can monitoring practice lead to a decrease in errors?

The first question concerns the ease of monitoring article and main verb errors in written production. To what extent are ESL learners able to correct such errors on their own, without prompting by the instructor?

Articles and verbs were investigated for two reasons. First, most ESL learners have difficulty with them, thus ensuring

[2] The decision to focus on article and verb errors was made before the data were collected. During the monitoring sessions, however, the students were told to monitor for all grammatical errors in order to determine the emphasis they give to various types of grammatical errors while monitoring.

The verb errors analyzed were limited to those in verb phrases which include a finite verb.

an ample number of errors for monitoring. Second, articles and verbs differ in "rule learnabilty," (Krashen, 1982), which is determined by relative simplicity of form and use. Article usage involves rules that are simple in form but very complex in use (Hawkins, 1978). Verb usage involves rules that vary in simplicity: some, such as subject-verb agreement, are relatively simple; others, such as tense selection, are more complex.

The second question probes the role of a time lag in the ease of monitoring. It may be that, while some article and verb errors are detectable immediately, others can be recognized only when there is a break between production and monitoring. While writing, learners must focus on both content and form. To monitor for grammatical errors, they must then "switch gears" and focus only on form. A time lag might help learners separate these two aspects of their writing.

The third question deals with the accuracy of monitoring. We need to know not only the frequency of the unprompted corrections but also their accuracy. How accurate are ESL learners when correcting article and main verb usage on their own? We also need to examine the accuracy of the prompted corrections in order to determine the difficulty learners have in making corrections once they have been located and coded.

The fourth question examines variation in monitoring frequency among ESL learners. Of interest here is the degree of individual variation: are only a few ESL learners able to monitor article and main verb errors successfully without prompting?

The fifth question investigates the effect of monitoring practice over time. Can such practice lead to a reduction in errors? It is hypothesized that the repeated analysis of errors involving "learnable" rules will lead to internalization of correct rules, resulting in greater accuracy over time.

METHOD

Subjects

Subjects were 31 foreign students enrolled in two sections of an advanced, sixteen-week composition course for foreign graduate students at Iowa State University. All subjects had a

score of more than 500 on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The native languages of the subjects were Chinese (10), Korean (9), Spanish (4), Arabic (2), Indonesian (2), Japanese (2), Hebrew (1), and Malay (1). The language groups were about equally represented in both sections. The sections were taught by the same instructor, Barbara Schwarte, and used the same syllabus and materials.

Data elicitation

Data for the study were collected from the initial and final compositions written by each of the 31 subjects. The topic of the compositions was the same for all subjects at both times: "Changes I would like to see made in my country." In neither session did the subjects know beforehand what the topic would be. In both sessions, the subjects had 30 minutes in which to write their compositions.

Monitoring procedure

The monitoring took place in three sessions: the first a few minutes after the composition was written, the next two during the next two class meetings.

The first monitoring session was separated from the composing time only by a short break, during which the subjects put their compositions in folders and rested a few minutes. They were not allowed to look at their compositions during this short break. Then the subjects were given until the end of the class meeting (about ten minutes) to make corrections in their compositions, the only stipulation being that new content (that is, new sentences or paragraphs) not be added. They were instructed not to erase an error but simply to indicate the correct form in the line above it. No help in correcting the errors was given. The subjects worked individually and were not allowed to use dictionaries or other references.

In the second monitoring session, during the next class meeting (two days later), subjects were again given the opportunity to correct errors in the compositions they had written during the first session. Subjects were told to read

through their compositions and make additional corrections. They took fifteen minutes to do this second monitoring.

After the second monitoring period, the instructor went through each composition and located and coded various grammatical errors, including those under investigation. Corrections were indicated using a set of correction symbols familiar to the students. The symbols both located errors and coded them according to type (for example, wrong tense, improper deletion, etc.) Errors miscorrected during the first two monitoring sessions were also marked.

During the third monitoring session (at the next class meeting, two days after the second session), the subjects were given 50 minutes to correct the errors that had been indicated by the instructor.

After the third monitoring session, the instructor collected the compositions and checked the accuracy of the subjects' corrections.

In addition to the sessions outlined above, the monitoring procedure also involved the tabulation of errors. When the compositions were returned after the third monitoring session, the subjects made a list of their errors, grouped according to type (for example, wrong tense, improper article deletion, etc.) They also indicated the corrections and, if possible, gave explanations for them. The completed tally sheets were collected and the explanations corrected by the instructor. The tally sheets were later returned to the subjects so that they received feedback on the adequacy of their explanations.

The effectiveness of the monitoring procedure as a teaching technique was determined by having the 15 subjects in one section, the monitor group, use it with six additional in-class compositions. The 16 subjects in the other section, the nonmonitor group, used the procedure only with the initial and final compositions. For all subjects, article and verb accuracy on the initial composition was compared with that on the final composition to see if those subjects using the monitoring procedure throughout the semester would have a greater reduction in errors over time.

Comparing initial and final compositions to determine the monitoring procedure's effectiveness is not without its limitations. Most importantly, the two writing tasks may not be comparable measures. Whereas objective pretests and posttests are comparable because they can be the same or very similar, free writing tasks, even when on the same topic, may not be. Differences in performance over time, with regard to error frequency and type, may be due to subjects' having attempted more challenging or just different structures and not to changes in their language proficiency. This methodological weakness should be kept in mind when interpreting the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For the first four questions, data from the two writing sessions (initial and final) and from the two sections (the monitor group and the nonmonitor group) are combined. Differences between the two writing performances and the two groups are identified during discussion of the fifth question.

Totals of 1,751 articles and 1,205 verbs were analyzed. The error analysis included not only incorrect forms but also those that should have been produced but were not (that is, improper deletions[3]) and those that were produced and should not have been (that is, improper insertions). Of the articles, 1,513 were correct, leaving 238 in need of monitoring. Of the verbs, 186 required monitoring. Eighteen of the main verbs contained two errors, making the total number of main verb errors 204. The correctness percentages for both grammatical items were quite high--86% for articles and 84% for verbs--indicating that neither item proved especially difficult for subjects to control.

An error analysis was done to determine the frequency of different types of article and verb errors. Article errors included improper deletion, improper insertion, and wrong

[3] Because deletions were included, it is in fact more accurate to say that the study examined article *sites* and verb *sites*. For simplicity, however, the shorter terms *article* and *verb* will be used.

choice of article. Verb errors included subject-verb disagreement, wrong tense, wrong lexical choice, wrong form, improper deletion, and improper insertion. (An example of each type is presented in the appendix.) Errors not falling neatly into the categories were discussed and judgment calls made. Forms occurring in garbled sentences were not included in the analysis.

Results for question 1: Frequency of unprompted monitoring

How frequently were article and verb errors monitored without prompting? Table 1 presents the number of articles and verbs monitored during each of the three monitoring sessions.

Table 1

Number of article and Main Verb Errors Monitored

	Articles		Main verbs	
	number	percentage	number	percentage
Monitoring Session 1 (immediate, unprompted)	19	8.0	25	12.3
Monitoring Session 2 (delayed, unprompted)	16	6.7	25	12.3
Monitoring Session 3 (further delayed, prompted)	168	70.6	118	57.8
Other	35	14.7	36	17.6
Total	238		204	

*The category "other" refers to errors that were unintentionally overlooked by the instructor when locating and coding the errors or whose indication eliminated the need for correction, as in the case of improper insertion.

Thirty-five of the 238 article errors and 50 of the 204 verb errors were monitored without prompting (that is, during the first and second monitoring sessions). The percentage of verb errors corrected without assistance was about 10% higher than that for article errors (15% for articles versus 25% for verbs). To put it another way, a higher percentage of article errors had to

be pointed out by the instructor before the students could correct them. Although not especially high, the percentages indicate that unprompted monitoring can take place for both types of grammatical errors.

Table 2 indicates the ease of detecting errors for different article and verb error types. For articles, all three error types were quite similar in monitoring ease (that is, one error type was not easier to detect than another). Interestingly, monitoring

Table 2

Monitoring Ease of Article and Main Verb Error Types

	Number of errors	Number of errors monitored without prompting*	Percentage of errors monitored without prompting
Articles			
Improper deletion	120	18	15%
Improper insertion	93	13	14%
Wrong choice	25	4	16%
Total	238	35	
Main verbs			
Wrong tense	79	17	22%
S-V disagreement	50	19	38%
Wrong lexical choice	45	4	9%
Improper deletion	13	4	31%
Wrong form	12	5	42%
Improper insertion	5	1	20%
Total	204	50	

*The monitorings done during Monitoring Session 1 and Monitoring Session 2 have been combined.

frequency was not related to error frequency. Although deletion accounted for half of the article errors, it did not have a higher monitoring rate. For verbs, form errors, which were few in number, were the easiest to monitor. This is not surprising, since form errors can usually be corrected through reference to conceptually easy rules. Subject-verb agreement errors were also fairly easy to detect, indicating that although difficult to control (50 of the 204 verb errors were of this type), they were not difficult to monitor. Tense and lexical choice errors were difficult both to avoid and to detect: they were frequently made and infrequently monitored. The low monitoring rate for lexical choice errors is surprising since both Schlue (1977) and Hassan (1978) found that vocabulary selection was of primary concern when their students monitored. This may have been due to the fact that the subjects were told not to change content. They may have thought that changing lexical choice was a content change.

Results for question 2: The effect of a time lag

How did a time lag between production and monitoring affect error detection? For both articles and verbs, about the same percentage of errors was monitored during the first and second sessions (see Table 1). The time lag was helpful. Some errors could be monitored without it; others could not. Although it may be suggested that the errors monitored in the second session were those that subjects did not have time to monitor in the first, this did not appear to be the case. Most subjects turned in their compositions before the end of the first monitoring session. It would be interesting to see if even more monitoring could have been done if the second session had occurred after a time lag of a week or more.

Results for question 3: Monitoring accuracy

How accurate were the monitorings? Table 3 presents data on the accuracy of the unprompted and prompted monitorings. For articles, all of the 35 unprompted monitorings were correct. The prompted article monitorings were not so accurate, but the percentage was still quite high. One explanation for the high

accuracy of the prompted article monitorings is the formal simplicity of article usage. Subjects had a good chance of making accurate corrections since there is a limited number of article choices.

The monitorings for verbs were less accurate than those for articles. Like those for articles, however, the unprompted monitorings were accurate more frequently than the prompted ones. This may indicate that the subjects found first those errors that were the easiest to correct. The only errors left for prompting were the harder ones to correct. Once a verb error was prompted, subjects had little difficulty figuring out its correction: over three-fourths of the prompted verb monitorings were accurate. This indicates that errors were probably due to the nonapplication of a known rule and not to unfamiliarity with the rule. It would be interesting to see if this accuracy decreases with proficiency level. An analysis of the incorrect prompted verb monitorings reveals that the aspects most difficult to monitor accurately were tense and lexical choice: for each about a third of the monitorings were correct. This is not surprising since both of these aspects involve less "learnable" rules.

Table 3

Accuracy of the Monitorings

	Unprompted monitoring sessions			Prompted monitoring sessions		
	# correct	#incorrect	% correct	#correct	#incorrect	% correct
Articles	35	0	100	149	19	89
Main verbs	42	8	84	116	34	77

Results for question 4: Variation in monitoring ability

How much did learners vary in their monitoring ability? Table 4 presents the unprompted monitoring rates of individual subjects. Only six subjects did no article or verb monitoring on

Table 4

Number of Unprompted Monitorings by Individual Subjects

*M - Number of unprompted monitorings; *E - Number of errors.
Monitor group: subjects 1-15; nonmonitor group: subjects 16-31.

	Articles						Main Verbs					
	Time 1		Time 2		Total		Time 1		Time 2		Total	
Subject	*M	*E	*M	*E	*M/*E	%	*M	*E	*M	*E	*M/*E	%
1	0	2	0	2	0/4	0	0	5	0	2	0/7	0
2	1	6	1	3	2/9	22	1	1	3	5	4/6	67
3	0	6	0	3	0/9	0	0	9	0	0	0/9	0
4	0	7	1	4	1/11	9	1	3	0	0	1/3	33
5	0	6	0	1	0/7	0	1	1	1	4	2/5	40
6	0	3	1	2	1/5	20	1	1	2	4	3/5	60
7	1	2	4	8	5/10	50	1	3	2	4	3/7	43
8	0	3	0	8	0/11	0	0	3	0	3	0/6	0
9	1	4	0	6	1/10	10	0	1	0	1	0/2	0
10	0	3	2	4	2/7	29	1	4	1	4	2/8	25
11	0	1	1	7	1/8	13	0	8	0	3	0/11	0
12	0	2	1	4	1/6	17	2	8	0	5	2/13	15
13	0	1	0	2	0/3	0	0	1	1	4	1/5	20
14	0	2	1	3	1/5	20	0	3	0	0	0/3	0
15	0	3	0	3	0/6	0	0	2	0	1	0/3	0
16	3	7	0	5	3/12	25	4	4	1	5	5/9	56
17	0	1	1	5	1/6	17	2	3	2	4	4/7	57
18	0	6	1	5	1/11	9	0	3	0	1	0/4	0
19	3	8	2	2	5/10	50	1	1	0	2	1/3	33
20	0	0	0	4	0/4	0	0	2	1	7	1/9	11

[Table 4, continued]

	Articles						Main Verbs					
	Time 1		Time 2		Total		Time 1		Time 2		Total	
	*M	*E	*M	*E	*M/*E	%	*M	*E	*M	*E	*M/*E	%
Subject												
21	0	9	3	10	3/19	16	4	8	0	3	4/11	36
22	0	3	0	4	0/7	0	0	1	0	1	0/2	0
23	1	6	0	6	1/12	8	1	4	0	1	1/5	20
24	0	2	0	9	0/11	0	1	1	5	9	6/10	60
25	0	1	0	4	0/5	0	0	1	2	2	2/3	67
26	3	8	0	2	3/10	30	1	9	1	2	2/11	18
27	0	0	0	0	0/0	0	0	3	0	1	0/4	0
28	0	1	0	2	0/3	0	1	3	0	2	1/5	20
29	1	2	1	6	2/8	25	1	5	0	3	1/8	13
30	1	2	0	1	1/3	33	2	2	1	7	3/9	33
31	0	3	0	3	0/6	0	0	4	1	7	1/11	9

either the initial or final composition. Eighteen made at least one article correction, and 21 made at least one verb correction. The highest number of monitorings per subject on a composition was about the same for both grammatical items. One subject made four article corrections; another made five verb corrections. No one subject was responsible for a major portion of the unprompted monitorings of either articles or verbs; the majority of subjects were able to make a few unprompted monitorings.

Because of the high proportion of Chinese and Korean subjects in the study, the monitorings of these two groups were compared. A comparison of the monitoring frequencies presented in Table 5 indicates that there was indeed a difference for verbs. This difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.004$). One explanation for the difference is found in the types of errors made by each group: the Korean subjects made more

subject-verb agreement errors whereas the Chinese subjects made more tense errors. The Koreans may have monitored more because their types of errors made it easier to do so.

Table 5

A Comparison of Unprompted Monitorings by Chinese and Korean Subjects

	Articles			Verbs		
	#monitored	#errors	%monitored	#monitored	#errors	%monitored
Chinese (N-10)	12	78	15.4	11	79	14.0
Korean (N-9)	13	80	16.3	25	58	43.0

Results for question 5: The effect of monitoring practice

Did monitoring practice lead to a decrease in errors? As stated earlier, subjects in one section, the monitor group, used the monitoring procedure with six other in-class compositions, while subjects in the other section, the nonmonitor group, used it only with the compositions written at the beginning and end of the semester. The initial and final compositions were compared to see if use of the monitoring procedure throughout the course led to a greater reduction in errors on the final composition. The accuracy percentages are presented in Table 6. For articles, the percentages for both groups remained the same over time. For verbs, the nonmonitor group showed essentially no change in the percentage of correct occurrences, while the monitor group had a 6% increase. The results of a paired t-test indicate, however, that the monitor group's improvement was not statistically significant ($p < 0.1402$). When fixed expressions such as *as you know* and *I think* were not included in the correctness percentages, the difference between the two performances was closer to a significant level ($p < 0.0781$).

The findings here are consistent with those observed in two other studies that have investigated the relationship between error feedback and improvement in grammatical accuracy.

Table 6

Accuracy of Article and Verb Usage
by Group and Time

	Articles	
	Monitor Group % correct	Nonmonitor Group % correct
Time 1	87	86
Time 2	87	86
	Verbs	
	Monitor Group % correct	Nonmonitor Group % correct
Time 1	83	84
Time 2	89	83

Lalande (1982) investigated the effect of an error correction technique involving guided learning and problem solving with 60 American college students enrolled in four intermediate German classes. Half of the subjects--the experimental group--were asked to correct errors that had been located and coded and to keep track of the different types of errors made. The remaining subjects--the control group--had their errors corrected by the instructors, and no record was kept. Twelve types of grammatical and orthographic errors were examined. Although the between-group difference was significant (that is, in 11 of the 12 categories, subjects in the experimental group made significantly fewer errors than subjects in the control group), the within-group difference was not: within the experimental group, only orthographic errors realized a significant reduction from pretest to posttest.

Another study investigating the effect of different types of feedback on error correction was conducted by Robb, Ross, and Shortreed (1986). They contrasted four methods of providing feedback on written errors: correction of errors by the

instructor, student correction of errors that were located and coded, student correction of errors that were located but not coded, and student correction of errors that were indicated only by putting the number of errors per line in the margin. The subjects were 134 Japanese college freshman learning English in Japan. No significant differences were found among the methods. Regardless of the type of feedback, subjects wrote progressively more accurate, fluent, and complex structures.

Given that accuracy did not improve significantly over time in this study for subjects who used the monitoring procedure (that is, they did not make significantly fewer errors at the end of the semester), an analysis was done to see if their error-detecting ability, at least, did improve. Schlue (1977), in her study on oral monitoring, observed that with practice her subjects became more skilled at detecting errors.

Table 7 presents the percentage of unprompted article and verb monitorings by each group at both times. The greatest difference over time was in the monitoring of article errors by the monitor group. Further analysis revealed that this difference was due to an increase in the number of subjects monitoring and not just in the number of monitorings per subject; that is, whereas only three subjects made article monitorings in the initial composition, in the final composition eight did. The detection of article and verb errors by the nonmonitor group, on the other hand, was about the same for both the initial and the final compositions. For verbs, the monitor group again had an increase in monitoring frequency while the nonmonitor group had a decrease. Unfortunately, because of the small number of monitorings, conclusions about the effectiveness of the procedure are premature. The increases noted, however, suggest that this is an area for further research.

Table 8 presents data on the accuracy of the monitorings at the beginning and at the end of the semester. For articles, the accuracy of the monitor group's monitorings increased only very slightly while that for the nonmonitor group decreased. For verbs, the monitor group's accuracy remained about the same while that for the nonmonitor group showed a fairly substantial

increase, 12%. The nonmonitor group's greater accuracy rate may be attributed to their having made more agreement and fewer tense errors in the final composition. The greater monitoring ease of subject-verb errors most likely contributed to the increase in accuracy.

Table 7

Frequency of Unprompted Monitorings by Group and Time

	Articles			Verbs		
	#monitored	#errors	%monitored	#monitored	#errrors	%monitored
Monitor Group						
Time 1	3	51	6%	8	53	15%
Time 2	12	60	20%	10	40	25%
Nonmonitor Group						
Time 1	12	59	20%	18	54	33%
Time 2	8	68	18%	14	57	25%

Table 8

Accuracy of Unprompted and Prompted Monitorings by Group and Time

	Articles			Verbs		
	#correct	#inc./NC*	%cor.	#correct	#inc./NC*	%cor.
Monitor Group						
Time 1	40	2	91%	34	12	74%
Time 2	53	3	95%	26	10	72%
Nonmonitor Group						
Time 1	38	3	93%	29	14	67%
Time 2	55	9	86%	42	11	79%

*NC = no change was made even though it was indicated

CONCLUSION

Although limited, this investigation has provided further insight into the monitoring of grammatical errors in written production. In sum, with regard to the 31 advanced ESL learners in this study, the specific findings were as follows:

1. Twenty-five percent of the verb errors and fifteen percent of the article errors were detected and corrected by the subjects without assistance from the instructor. The different types of article errors were monitored with about the same frequency, but different types of verb errors were monitored with different frequencies.

2. About half of the unprompted monitorings occurred during the first monitoring session (that is, immediately after production).

3. Article errors were monitored accurately more frequently than verb errors. For both types of errors, the unprompted monitorings were accurate more often than the prompted monitorings.

4. Four-fifths of the subjects were able to make at least one unprompted article or verb monitoring.

5. Subjects using the monitoring procedure throughout the semester exhibited a decrease in verb errors but not in article errors. This decrease in verb errors, however, was not statistically significant. Subjects using the procedure with only the initial and final compositions showed no decrease in either type of error.

These findings indicate that while the self-monitoring of articles and verbs in written production is not easy, even for advanced students, it is possible. These findings also indicate that monitoring practice may have only a marginal effect on improving grammatical accuracy.

One practical implication of the first finding is that ESL learners should be given the opportunity to monitor their in-class writing. This would result in the instructor having to make fewer corrections later. Because students often do not budget their time in order to monitor after production, instructors need to

incorporate such time into the writing task. Following the monitoring procedure in this study, the instructor can allow time for monitoring in the class session after the composing session.

Even though monitoring practice may not lead to a statistically significant decrease in errors, the merits of the procedure are not diminished. One benefit of such an approach is that, along with the tabulation of errors, it involves learners more actively in the correction process. Learners discover by themselves the patterns in their errors. Moreover, they must determine as best they can the causes of these errors. (The learners' explanations can be most revealing, as the research on introspection has shown [Seliger, 1979; Cohen & Robbins, 1976]. Some learners have misformed rules or no rules at all for processes that are seemingly straightforward.) Second, the tallying of errors helps instructors be more consistent when marking compositions. Ineffective feedback is often due to instructors' not being systematic in the types of errors corrected (Rivers, 1968; Cohen & Robbins, 1976). The tally reminds instructors of students' recurring errors so that these can be focused on.

Although monitoring should be encouraged, it should also be relegated to the final stage of the composing process. Excessive attention to form during the writing session can eat up the time that is better spent on prewriting and the monitoring of content and organization while composing (Pianko, 1979). If students know that they will have an opportunity to correct grammatical errors later, they can attend to the task at hand while writing--getting their ideas down on paper in an organized and developed manner.

More research into the monitoring process is, of course, needed. First, the correction of a wider range of errors needs to be examined because it would be worthwhile to know which errors are most affected by the monitoring procedure. The relative seriousness of these errors also needs to be examined: are the errors most frequently monitored also the ones which are the most serious? In other words, does saliency derive more from the learnability of the rule or from the gravity of the error? This aspect of monitoring was not addressed in the

present study.

Second, we need to know if the effectiveness of the monitoring procedure can be enhanced. It might be more effective if its use is limited to one "learnable" error at a time. In other words, when monitoring, subjects should focus on only one or two salient error types. Just as the detection of errors is enhanced through such focus (Knapp, 1972), so may its effectiveness be also. The monitoring procedure is also probably more effective with lower proficiency learners. Although White (1977) did not find a difference in the monitoring ability of intermediate and advanced ESL learners, the former may show a greater reduction in errors over time because of their tendency to make frequent form errors, which are more susceptible to eradication since they involve "learnable" rules.

Third, it would be interesting to compare the monitorings made in response to the three types of correction stimuli used by Robb, Ross, and Shortreed (1986): locating and coding errors, locating errors without coding, and indicating the number of errors in the margin line by line without coding. We need to know which errors can be detected under various conditions.

A fourth direction for further research involves investigating the monitoring of writing done outside of class. We need to know if out-of-class writing is monitored in the same ways as in-class writing or if the two types of analyses involve different strategies.
□

The authors

Barbara Schwarte is an assistant professor of English at Iowa State University. She teaches in the TESL master's program.

Emiko Matsumura-Lothrop is a graduate of Iowa State University's TESL master's program. She is currently tutoring ESL in Mexico City.

REFERENCES

Bialystock, E. (1981). The role of conscious strategies in second language proficiency. *Modern Language Journal 65*, 21-35.

Cohen, A., & Robbins, M. (1976). Toward assessing interlanguage performance: The relationship between selected errors, learners' characteristics, and learners' explanations. *Language Learning*, *26*, 45-66.

Fathman, A. (1980). Influences of age and setting on second language oral proficiency. Paper presented at the Los Angeles Second Language Research Forum, UCLA, February.

Hassan, F. (1978). First and subsequent drafts of compositions. Unpublished master's thesis, American University of Cairo.

Hatch, E. (1979). Apply with caution. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *2*, 123-143.

Hawkins, J. (1978). *Definiteness and indefiniteness: A study in reference and grammaticality prediction.* London: Croon Helm.

Houck, N., Robertson, J., & Krashen, S. (1978). On the domain of the conscious grammar: Morpheme orders for corrected and uncorrected ESL student transcriptions. *TESOL Quarterly*, *12*, 335-339.

Knapp, D. (1972). A focused, efficient method to relate composition correction to teaching aims. In Harold Allen & Russell Campbell (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second language* (pp. 213-221). NewYork: McGraw-Hill.

Krashen, S. (1978). Individual variation in the use of the monitor. In William C. Ritchie (Ed.), *Second language acquisition research: Issues and implications* (pp. 175-183). New York: Pergamon Press.

Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition.* New York: Pergamon Press.

Krashen, S. (1984). *Writing: Research, theory, and applications.* New York: Pergamon Press.

Krashen, S., & Pon, P. (1975). An error analysis of an advanced ESL learner: The importance of the monitor. *Working Papers on Bilingualism*, *7*, 125-139.

Krashen, S., & Terrell, T. (1983). *The natural approach: language acquisition in the classroom.* San Francisco: Alemany Press.

Lalande, J. (1982). Reducing composition errors: An experiment. *Modern Language Journal 66*, 140-149.

Pianko, S. (1979). Composing processes of college freshmen. *Research in the teaching of English*, *13*, 5-22.

Raimes, A. (1985). What unskilled ESL students do as they write: a classroom study of composing. *TESOL Quarterly*, *19*, 229-258.

Rivers, W. (1968). *Teaching foreign language skills.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Robb, T., Ross, S., & Shortreed, I. (1986). Salience of feedback on error and its effect on EFL writing quality. *TESOL Quarterly*, *20*, 83-93.

Rubin, J. (1975). What the "good language learner" can teach us. *TESOL Quarterly 9*, 41-51.

Schlue, K. (1977). An inside view of interlanguage. In C. Henning (Ed.), *Proceedings of the Los Angeles second language research forum* (pp. 342-348).

Seliger, H. (1979). On the nature and function of language rules in language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, *13*, 359-369.

Stafford, C., & Covitt, G. (1978). Monitor use in adult second language production. *ITL: Review of Applied Linguistics*, *39-40*, 103-125.

Stern, H.H. (1975). What can we learn from the good language learner? *Canadian Modern Language Review*, *31*, 304-318.

White, L. (1977). Error analysis and error correction in adult language learners of English as a second language. *Working Papers on Bilingualism*, *13*, 42-58.

Zamel, V. (1983). The composing processes of advanced ESL students: six case studies. *TESOL Quarterly*, *17*, 165-187.

APPENDIX

Article and verb error types

[Explanations are provided only where the error label is not self-explanatory.]

Error	Explanation	Example
Articles		
Improper deletion	Article needed but deleted.	I like United States.
Improper insertion	Article not needed but inserted.	I went to the Colorado.
Wrong choice	Wrong choice among the three forms *a*, *an*, and *the*.	I want to go around a world before I die.
Verbs		
Subject-verb disagreement	Subject and verb disagree in number.	Women is treated well.
Wrong tense		I take 3 courses last semester.
Wrong lexical choice		I feel difficulty talking.
Wrong form		It tooks three hours.
Improper deletion	Verb needed but deleted.	This kind of tough.
Improper insertion	Verb inserted but not needed.	Our system is looks like here.

Choosing Helpful Examples of Structures

Eric S. Nelson
University of Minnesota

Every language teacher is called on at times to provide examples of structures. Even teachers who strongly believe in teaching language in context must occasionally present examples of language on display out of context. Ideally, these examples will be effective; they will help students understand. This paper proposes nine questions that teachers can ask when searching for effective examples of structures. Examples from ESL textbooks are examined in light of the questions and found in some cases to be inadequate. The questions give rise to ten principles of exemplification against which examples can be tested.

Imagine that you are teaching an advanced ESL class and are called on to provide an example of the passive voice with *will*. You write on the board:

(1) The new highway will be completed in two years.

A student asks, "Can I omit *-ed*?" You answer, "No; you have to have *-ed* when you form the passive voice with a regular verb: *The new highway will be* ...." Stopping, you see that you're headed for an apparent counterexample to the rule you've just stated: *will be complete* doesn't sound so bad after all. Your choice of example has gotten you into trouble.

Imagine another class in which you are asked to provide an example of some different ways of connecting clauses in a way that shows contrast. You begin to write a set of sentences on the

---

An earlier version of this paper appeared in *New directions for TESOL: Proceedings of the second Midwest TESOL conference*. Bloomington, IN: INTESOL.

board:

(2) One of her eyes is blue, but her other eye is green.
(3) One of her eyes is blue, yet her other eye is green.
(4) One of her eyes is blue; however, her other eye is green.
(5) One of her eyes is blue; on the other hand, her other eye is green.

Stepping back, you scrutinize the set. The first sentence seems okay, the second not bad. But the sentence with *however* somehow doesn't ring true, and the last one is downright freakish. Again, it's a problem in the choice of examples.

All teachers, even those who are committed to teaching language in context, are called on from time to time to produce examples of language on display out of context. When we are asked to come up with an example of a structure, we hope to produce language that sounds natural, exemplifies what it is intended to exemplify, and enlightens students without inviting distracting questions. And this we have to do, often, with little time for thought. Textbook writers face the same challenge, and although they have advantages of time and editorial help, they nevertheless produce bad example sentences from time to time. (Examples 2 - 5 above are, in fact, from a published text.)

My goal in this paper is to encourage teachers and materials writers to give some thought to what makes an example good or bad or in between. I will propose nine questions that we can ask ourselves when we examine sentences that are used as examples of structures. I will present examples, some from texts and some of my own, and will measure them against the questions.[1]

---

[1] The order of the questions is not significant. All examples not attributed are my own. The texts are these:

Text A – Azar (1981)
Text D – Danielson & Hayden (1973)
Text F – Frank (1972)
Text K – Krohn (1971)
Texts M1 and M 2 – Maclin (1981 and [second edition] 1987)
Text P – Pollock (1982)
Text S – Stevenson (1987)

Examples (2) - (5) are from Text M2.

The purpose of this paper is not to criticize texts. No exhaustive examination of texts was undertaken, so no conclusions about the effectiveness of the examples in any of the texts is justified.

Some of my questions are closely related with others, and some overlap is inevitable. Some of the examples I discuss with respect to one question could as well be discussed under another question. I will make some of my points more than once, in different places and in different ways. This is deliberate: my hope is that a reader who is not convinced at one point may be convinced by a later statement of the same argument in another way.

The final section of the paper lists some principles of exemplification, all but one of which are derived directly from the questions. That section will serve as a summary.

NINE QUESTIONS ABOUT EXAMPLES OF STRUCTURE

Question 1: Considering the context and content of the example, is the use of the target structure in the example appropriate? (*Context* here means *situational context*. It may be a situational context that is given, or it may be one that the student is expected to imagine.)

Consider the use of a fronted-preposition relative clause in an example such as (6):

> (6) **The music to which we listened last night was good. (Text A, page 211)**

No context is given for the example, so we have to imagine a context. The topic of the sentence suggests conversation, as does the use of the deictic elements *we* and *last night*. The problem, of course, is that the target structure--the relative clause with a fronted preposition--is generally used in more formal contexts; it does not sound natural for most speakers in a sentence of ordinary conversation. The use of the target structure in (6) is therefore not appropriate to the content of (6) or to the context that we most readily imagine for the sentence. Alternatively, we might say that we can imagine *no* context for (6)--because it includes elements that suggest an informal context as well as one element, the target structure, that points to a formal context.

A second example of the same target structure illustrates the

same problem:

(7) She is the woman about whom I told you.
(Text A, page 211)

If we are to imagine a context for (7), it is again conversation; yet we can only conclude that the person who speaks such a sentence does not use English as most native speakers do. (It looks as though the author has tried to suggest a formal context with the uncontracted *she is*. Given the content of the sentence, however, the lack of contraction is not enough to convince the reader to accept the sentence as belonging to formal discourse.)

Now compare (6) and (7) with another example of the same structure:

(8) These are the earlier poets from whom Shakespeare drew many of his ideas.
(Text M2, page 289)

The academic content of (8) suggests a more formal context for the sentence. We imagine (8) to be a sentence in a lecture or a piece of academic writing. Since the use of the target structure is natural to such contexts, (8)--unlike (6) and (7)--sounds natural.

A similar mismatch between the target structure and context and content occurs in (9), which is intended to exemplify the use of *therefore*:

(9) It was raining; therefore, I carried an umbrella.
(Text M2, page 87)

Given the trivial content of (9), the use of *therefore* is unnatural. A more appropriate example would have less trivial content:

(10) In the 19th century West, mail delivery was unreliable, and in remote places, mail often came only a few times during the year; therefore the arrival of a letter was an important occasion.

It may be argued that the shorter and simpler example of (9) does a better job than (10) in making it easy for the student to see at a glance the relationship between two clauses that *therefore* expresses. I agree. I only want to point out that (9) is deficient in one respect, and that for that reason it may not be the best model for the target structure. I suggest that a teacher or text writer who uses an example like (9) should at least include alongside it an example like (10), which is more true to the way *therefore* is really used.

Question 2: Does the example illustrate the *need* for the target structure? (Does the target structure contribute information to the sentence? Is there another structure that would do the job as well?)

If the target structure contributes information to the sentence, and if no other structure would be a good substitute for the target structure, we can say that the example illustrates the *need* for the target structure. The example in (11) fails to illustrate the need for the target structure, the infinitive phrase with *too*:

> (11) That box is too heavy for Bob to lift.
> (Text A, page 199)

To see that this is so, we need only to compare (11) with (12):

> (12) That box is too heavy for Bob.

In most contexts, (12) would be interpreted exactly as (11) is. There is no need for the infinitive in (11); the target structure contributes no information that is not equally well understood when it is absent. If we modify (11) slightly, we can make the target structure more informative:

> (13) That box is too wide for Bob to lift.
> (14) That box is too heavy for Bob to lift with one hand.

The examples in (15) also fail to illustrate the need for the target structure:

(15) A student came into the room. I looked at the student.
Some students came into the room. I looked at the students.
I drank some water. The water was very cold.
(Text A, page 386)

The examples are intended to illustrate two things: the use of *the* with any kind of noun--singular, plural, or uncountable--and the use of *the* and a repeated noun to show identity with a preceding noun phrase. The target structure does contribute information--it shows the identity of the two noun phrases in each sentence--but the target structure is not necessary, and in fact would probably be avoided in sentences like those in (15) in favor of another means the grammar provides to contribute the same information:

(16) A student came into the room. I looked at her.
Some students came into the room. I looked at them.
I drank some water. It was very cold.

An example from another text shows that it is not difficult to exemplify the same target structure in such a way that the example illustrates the need for the target structure:

(17) Here's a pen, some paper, and some envelopes.
Please return the pen, but you can keep the paper
and the envelopes.
(Text D, page 117)

Another way of getting at the point of question (7), for some examples at least, is to put it this way: does the example illustrate an obligatory application of a rule? Suppose that we want to illustrate the "double possessive" structure:

(18) A friend *of mine* is coming to visit next week.
(19) A friend *of the teacher's* is coming to visit next week.

In (18), the structure is obligatory in the sense that the pronoun must be possessive: **a friend of me* is not correct. In (19), however, the possessive is not obligatory: we can equally well say *a friend of the teacher*. For this reason, (18) is the better example; it better illustrates the need for the structure.

Question 3: Does the example encourage the student to form a false hypothesis about the target structure?

Suppose we choose to illustrate the passive voice in the simple past tense with this example:

(20) My dog was hit by a car.

The example is consistent with at least three possible hypotheses about how the simple past passive is formed: (a) using a past form of *be* and the base form of the main verb, (b) using a past form of *be* and the simple past form of the main verb, and (c) using a past form of *be* and the past participle of the main verb (the right hypothesis). The example itself does not disprove any of the hypotheses. The reason, of course, is an accidental property of the main verb *hit*: its principal parts are identical. We might instead try an example such as this:

(21) My dog was examined by a veterinarian.

But even (21) is consistent with one of the false hypotheses, (b). We can eliminate both of the false hypotheses by using a verb that has a past participle distinct from its base form and its past tense form:

(22) My dog was eaten by a tiger.

Example (22) is not consistent with either of the false hypotheses, (a) or (b). There may be other false hypotheses that it is consistent with, but we have elminated at least two.

An example of "causative *have*" illustrates the same problem:

(23) He had the barber cut his hair very short.

The student who is given (23) as an example of causative *have*

with an active complement is free to assume that *cut* is a base form, a past form, or a past participle. An example with another verb shows that the verb in the complement is a base form:

(24) He had the barber trim his beard.

In both (20) and (23), the problem was the choice of verb. In (25), the problem is the choice of pronoun:

(25) I appreciated her taking the time to help.

As an example of a possessive + gerund form of complement, *her taking the time to help* may be misleading in that *her* is not uniquely possessive: *her* is also an object form. A better example would substitute *their, his*, or *your*. The improved example would not allow the student to analyze the pronoun in the complement as an object form rather than a possessive.

Of course, it is never possible to eliminate all possible false hypotheses that students may initially form about structures; but with some care, we can hope to eliminate at least some of the obvious ones.

Question 4: What does the student need to know about the world in order to understand the example?

If we want to exemplify the use of epistemic *must* (*must* for statements of inference), we might choose an example such as (26):

(26) John's last name is O'Hara. He must be of Irish descent.

In order to appreciate the use of *must* in (27), the student must know that *O'Hara* is an Irish name. If the student doesn't know this, the information in the first sentence does not--for the student--constitute evidence for the conclusion that the second sentence expresses. In order to use (27) as an example of epistemic *must* without assuming too much about the student's knowledge of the world, we need to add a little information:

(27) John's last name is O'Hara. That's an Irish name, so he must be of Irish descent.

Consider next an example that illustrates the use of *although* to introduce a concessive clause:

(28) Although I prefer warm climates, I took my vacation in Newfoundland.

A student who knows that Newfoundland does not have a warm climate is on the way to understanding this use of *although* -- both its syntax and its meaning. For the student who doesn't know this, the example illustrates nothing but the syntax.

Question 5: Will the student know how examples in a set relate to each other? (Are they paraphrases? Do they give different information? Contradictory information?)

Consider the following rule and examples for "causative *have*."

(29) [rule] Use *have* with an object followed by a bare infinitive.
(30) [example] Emma had everyone come to her party.
(31) [example] Paul has Stephanie buy the tickets.
(32) [rule] Use *have* with an object followed by an *-ing* form.
(33) [example] Emma had everyone coming to her party.
(34) [example] Paul has Stephanie buying the tickets.
(Text M1, page 71)

The student who reads these rules and examples will probably assume (no doubt correctly) that the sentences about Emma are not intended to have any relationship to the sentences about Paul. There is nothing to suggest a relationship: no content words are repeated, and the topics of the sentences are different. But what is the student to assume about the two sentences about Emma (or the two about Paul)--which differ only in the presence of *-ing*? Does the *-ing* change the meaning? The text does not say. Apparently the student is expected to understand, without being told, that in spite of the syntactic difference, the sentences are not paraphrases. And, of course, they are not. But

elsewhere in the same text, the student finds this example of an active-passive pair:

(35) A flood destroyed Mr. Johnson's house.
(36) Mr. Johnson's house was destroyed by a flood.
(Text M1, page 238)

Here again, the student is not told whether the sentences are paraphrases. But in this case the student's judgment must be just the opposite of the judgment made (one hopes) about the sentences with Emma and Paul. For (35) and (36), the student is expected to understand that, in spite of a significant syntactic difference, the sentences *are* paraphrases.

An unstated principle, which I will call the principle of minimal difference, seems to exert a great influence on teachers and textbook authors in their exemplification of structures. The principle of minimal difference says that in order to focus on a structural contrast, we should present contrasting target structures in sentences that differ minimally. It is the principle that leads to examples like these (as well as others we have already seen):

(37) John likes milk, and so does Mary.
(38) John likes milk, and Mary does too.
(39) John doesn't like milk, and neither does Mary.
(40) John doesn't like milk, and Mary doesn't either.
(Text A, page 267)

(The target structures, of course, are the forms in the second conjuncts.)

We may feel that examples like (37) - (40) require less of the student than examples that don't differ minimally: once the student has read the first line of the series he does not need to process any more new words or structures other than the target structures. But there is another task that examples like these require of the student. To appreciate this task, we need to ask ourselves what steps we go through in interpreting examples like (37) - (40). When we read (37), we imagine a situational context

that the sentence might fit into (as we do for any sentence out of context). Then we read (38), and the repetition of words encourages us to keep in mind the same imagined context: these are the same people in the same situation. The second sentence is odd, however, in that it gives no new information--contrary to our normal expectation that successive sentences about the same situation will give different information. We either accept this abnormality or we imagine a new context for (38). We read (39). Again, the repetition encourages us to keep in mind the same context. If we do this, however, we find that (39) contradicts (37) and (38). We either accept this contradiction or imagine a different context--and so it goes.

I believe that most students can cope easily with examples like (37) - (40) once they have become text-wise and have learned to accept contradictions and sentences that give no information. But I suggest that we can easily avoid relying on the student's imagination--and still follow the principle of minimal difference in spirit. We can allow the student to keep the *same* context in mind, and at the same time focus clearly on the structural difference we are trying to get across, with examples like (41) - (44):

(41) John likes milk, and so does Mary.
(42) John likes beer, and Mary does too.
(43) John doesn't like coffee, and neither does Mary.
(44) John doesn't like tea, and Mary doesn't either.

The contrast of the target structures still stands out, and the student is now free to imagine the same context for all of the sentences. This is not to say that the sentences now group together as a natural-sounding discourse; but each sentence does give new information, and there are no contradictions.

With semantically complex target structures, examples that follow the principle of minimal difference may confound even a text-wise student. Consider the following examples of three types of conditional sentences:

(45) If he knows the answer, he will tell her.

(46) If he knew the answer, he would tell her.
(47) If he had known the answer, he would have told her.
(Text K, page 257)

The syntactic differences among (45) - (47) are salient enough--the examples follow the principle of minimal difference--but the students' mental task is considerable. If the students understand (45), they imagine for it a context in which the speaker does not know whether "he" knows the answer. When they read (46), they must imagine a context in which the speaker knows that "he" does not know the answer. The students must either accept this contradiction or imagine that (46) fits a different context. The writer of these examples is careful to make it clear to the student that the sentences apply to different situations, but the problem remains that the situations are inconsistent with each other. Again, some small changes allow us to imagine the same situation for all of the sentences, while following the principle of minimal difference in spirit:

(48) If he knows the answer to number 5, he will tell her.
(49) If he knew the answers to all of the questions, he would tell her.
(50) If he had known the answers to the questions on last week's quiz, he would have told her.

I believe that (48) - (50) are at least a small improvement over (45) - (47). They do not require the student to form contradictory sets of presuppositions for each sentence. Each sentence does, obviously, require a *different* presupposition, but these presuppositions are consistent with each other.

In a section about tenses in Text S, we find these examples:

(51) I have lived here for ten years.
(52) I have been living here for ten years.
(53) I had lived there for ten years before we moved.
(54) I had been living there for ten years before we moved.
(55) I will have lived here for ten years by fall.
(56) I will have been living here for ten years by fall.
(Text S, p. 124)

In this set, the author has made a helpful switch from the first

pair of sentences to the second: *there* replaces *here*, allowing the second pair of sentences to be consistent with the first. The third pair, however, fails in this regard; it is not consistent with the first pair. Here too, a change as small as the change of *here* to *there* would solve the problem: if *ten* becomes *eleven*, the entire set of examples is consistent with the same situation.

It is the principle of minimal difference, of course, that accounts for many of the most unnatural-sounding examples in texts, including some that we have already looked at. The example quoted above about *the music to which we listened* is from a set of examples that follows the principle of minimal difference:

(57) She is the woman about whom I told you.
(58) She is the woman whom I told you about.
(59) She is the woman that I told you about.
(60) She is the woman I told you about.
(Text A, page 211)

It should be clear, however, that the more natural example we quoted can also be presented in such a set:

(61) These are the earlier poets from whom Shakespeare drew many of his ideas.
(62) These are the earlier poets whom Shakespeare drew his ideas from.
(63) These are the earlier poets that Shakespeare drew his ideas from.
(64) These are the earlier poets Shakespeare drew his ideas from.
(Text M2, page 289)

The more academic content which makes (61) an improvement over (57) is acceptable in *both* the formal and informal varieties of relative clause, unlike the conversational content of (57).

Question 6: Is the example sentence fiction?

I make a distinction between fiction and nonfiction sentences. A glance at some pairs of sentences will show what I mean:

	Fiction		Nonfiction
(65a)	Mary's hat is similar to Jane's hat. (Text F, page 124)	(65b)	Norway is similar to Sweden in its climate. (Text M1, page 92)
(66a)	If you had told me about the problem, I would have helped you. (Text A, page 344)	(66b)	If Reagan had lost the 1984 election, he would have gone back to California.
(67a)	They have waited since 10:00. (Text M1, page 336)	(67b)	Alaska has belonged to the U.S. since 1867.

The fiction sentences are one-sentence stories that are not tied to anything in the real world. The nonfiction sentences are about the real world; they do not require any imagination to interpret. If I present (66a) as an example of a certain type of hypothetical conditional sentence, I have to make it clear to my students that "you" did not tell "me" and that "I" did not help "you" (whoever "you" and "I" may be). The students need this knowledge in order to understand the conditional pattern. And every student in the class (except, of course, those who already know the target structure and can draw the right inferences) must get this information *from the teacher*. The students' knowledge of the world will not help them, because the sentences are fiction.

If instead of (66a) I use (66b) as my example, I can hope that at least some of my students already know the necessary background information--that Reagan did not lose in 1984 and that he did not go back to California. Those students who know these facts and look at (66b) in light of them already know what they need to know to understand the idea of unreal conditionals; they do not need to hear it from the teacher. (And those who do not know the historical information are no worse off with [66b] than with [66a].)

Let's compare (66a) and (66b) in another way. Let's imagine that (66a) has been written on the blackboard. There is discussion:

Student: Can I say "If you told me"?
Teacher: Yes, but then you have to say "would help."
Student: If you told me, I would help you. That's okay?
Teacher: Yes, but the meaning is different.
Student: Different meaning?
Teacher: Yes. Now it means....

Now let's imagine that (66b) is our example. The exchange between teacher and student might run like this:

Student: Can I say "If Reagan lost the 1984 election"?
Teacher: No. We're talking about the past, the election of 1984. Reagan didn't lose that election. So we say, "If he had lost..."

The use of the nonfiction example allows the teacher to focus on the structure at hand without being led into a discussion of related structures.

Question 7: Is there anything in the example that might keep the student from focusing on what is important?

Text M1, in presenting "causative *have*," uses these examples:

(68) John had his hair trimmed.
(69) We have just had a new house built.
(Text M1, page 71)

Both examples illustrate the rule, but the second example includes something which could lead the student off the track--that is, cause the student to focus on the wrong thing. The rule mentions *have* with a past participle, but in (69) there are two uses of *have* and two past participles. By exemplifying causative *have* in the present perfect form, the author has introduced another *have* and another past participle. Students must eventually be able to deal with sentences like (69), of course, but if they are just beginning to work with the structure, they may well find (69) confusing.

In (70), something quite different may lead the student off the

track

(70) Although the weather was warm, I wore a light jacket.

The potentially misleading element is *light*. A student who understands (70) properly will understand that the speaker means "I wore a light jacket instead of no jacket at all." A student who focuses on *light* may be confused by the apparent meaning "I wore a light jacket instead of a heavy one"--which, of course, is inconsistent with the *although* clause. An improved example would simply omit *light*.

Question 8: Does the example exemplify what it is intended to exemplify?

It may seem that this question is too obvious to mention, and in fact cases of examples which don't show what they are intended to show are rare in published texts. They are not so rare in manuscript versions of texts, however, and on blackboards in classrooms. Many structures in English are misleadingly similar to other structures, and it is inevitable that teachers will at times make the mistake of choosing an example which is not an example of the intended structure. Consider this set which, in a careless moment, might be used to exemplify embedded questions.

(71) Tell me what you want.
(72) Tell me who they hired.
(73) Tell me where he is.
(74) Tell me when she calls.
(75) Tell me why you want the job.
(76) Tell me how old you are.

A close examination will reveal that the subordinate clause in (74) is probably not an embedded question at all. The most likely interpretation of (74) is one in which it is synonymous with *When she calls, tell me*. If we change *calls* to *called*, (74) is a clearer example of a sentence with an embedded question.

Question 9: How much does the example alone tell the student?

Text A exemplifies *should, ought to,* and *had better* for expressing advisability in this way:

(77) I should lose some weight.
(78) I ought to lose some weight.
(79) You should study harder.
(80) You ought to study harder.
(81) You shouldn't leave your keys in your car.
(82) The gas tank is almost empty. We had better stop at the next service station.
(Text A, pages 150 and 151)

The sentences in (77) and (78) exemplify the syntax of *should* and *ought to* well enough, but they fail to reinforce the notion of advisability. The context of the target structure in the examples is in fact consistent with other modal meanings: I might lose some weight, I must lose some weight, I could lose some weight. The students don't know who "I" is. Unless they already know the target structure and can therefore draw the right inference, they do not know that "I" is overweight. The example does not reinforce the meaning of *should* and *ought to,* because the context *I ________ lose some weight* does not give any sure clues.

The contexts of the target structures are a little richer in (79) - (81). The students don't know who "you" is, but if they believe (as they well may) that it is advisable for *everyone* to study harder and that is inadvisable for *anyone* to leave keys in a car, then they receive some reinforcement of the notion of advisability.

Finally, in (82), the context of *had better* is rich enough to provide good reinforcement of the meaning of the target structure. The sentence in (82) clearly tells more about *had better* than (77) tells about *should*, and it does this at a cost of only a few more words.

Another set of examples, also involving *should*, comes from Text P. Under the heading *Expressing past time with* should +

have + *past participle*, the student reads:

(83) Obligation: You should have voted in the election.
(84) Expectation: We should have arrived at the airport twenty minutes ago.
(85) Advice: You should have studied harder last semester. (Text P, page 189)

Here the second and third examples, with their time adverbials, are more informative than the first. With no time clues, *the election* in the first example could be--for all the student knows --a coming election, not a past one.

Little needs to be said about the exemplification of *little - a little* and *few - a few* in Text F:

(86) [rule] There is a difference in emphasis between *little* and *a little*, *few*, and *a few*. *A little*, *a few* have positive force--they stress the *presence* of something, although in a small quantity.
(87) [example] I have a little money; I have a few friends.
(88) [rule] Little and few, on the other hand, have negative force--they stress the *absence* of almost all quantity.
(89) [example] I have little money; I have few friends. (Text F, page 123)

Again, at a cost of only a few words, we can build enough information into the context of the target structure to make the example more telling:

(90) Jill is bad at math. She works slowly and she always makes a few mistakes.
(91) Sheelah is good at math. She works fast and she makes few mistakes.
(92) Jim enjoys babysitting. He likes children and he makes a little money at the same time.
(93) The patient is in bad condition. There is little hope that she will recover.

NINE PRINCIPLES OF EXEMPLIFICATION

1. Choose examples that exemplify an appropriate use of language.
2. Choose examples that demonstrate the need for the target structure. If the target structure could be omitted from the example with no loss of information, or if another structure would be likely to replace the target structure, then the example needs work.
3. Insofar as possible, choose examples that are not consistent with obvious false hypotheses that the student may have in mind.
4. Choose examples that do not assume knowledge of the world that the student may not have.
5. If similar examples are paraphrases, label them as paraphrases. If they are not, explain them, or (better) replace them with examples that are not misleadingly similar. Beware of the principle of minimal difference. Bend it enough so that students do not need to juggle contradictory contexts as they interpret a set of examples.
6. Favor nonfiction examples.
7. Insofar as possible, choose examples that do not include anything that may keep the student from focusing on what is important.
8. Take care that examples exemplify what they are intended to exemplify. English is full of misleadingly similar structures. Study examples to make sure that you (or your text writer) have not been careless.
9. Choose examples that tell the student as much as possible. It is often not difficult to improve an example in such a way that it helps the student understand the meaning and use of the target structure as well as the syntax. In this way, the example itself repeats the things that we tell the student in our explanations.

And one more

An example that is good according to one principle may be bad according to another. (Principles 4 and 7, especially, will often be in conflict.) Some of the examples I have offered as good

examples by one criterion may be bad by another criterion. For this reason, it is wise to exemplify a target structure with a variety of examples, keeping in mind the strengths and weaknesses of each one. So the final principle is:

10. An example shouldn't be lonely.
□

The author

Eric Nelson teaches ESL in the English Program for International Students at the University of Minnesota.

REFERENCES

Azar, B. (1981). *Understanding and using English grammar.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Danielson, D., & Hayden, R. (1973). *Using English: Your second language.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Frank, M. (1972). *Modern English: A practical reference guide.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Krohn, R. (1971). *English sentence structure.* Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Maclin, A. (1981). *Reference guide to English: A handbook of English as a second language.* New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Maclin, A. (1987). *Reference guide to English: A handbook of English as a second language* (2nd ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Pollack, C. (1982). *Communicate what you mean.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Stevenson, M. (1987). *English syntax.* Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Publications received

Baugh, L. (1987). *Essentials of English grammar: A practical guide to the mastery of English*. Lincolnwood, IL: Passport Books, National Textbook Company.

Cargill, C. (Ed.). (1987). *A TESOL professional anthology: Grammar and composition*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Cargill, C. (Ed.). (1987). *A TESOL professional anthology: Culture*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Cargill, C. (Ed.). (1987). *A TESOL professional anthology: Listening, speaking, and reading*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Colman, L. (1987). *Intermediate activities for English language learners*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Colman, L. (1987). *Advanced activities for English language learners*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Colman, L. (1987). *Beginning activities for English language learners*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Cottrell, J. (1987). *Creative drama in the classroom, grades 1-3: Teacher's resource book for theatre arts*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Cottrell, J. (1987). *Creative drama in the classroom, grades 4-6: Teacher's resource book for theatre arts*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Danesi, M. (1987). *Puzzles and games in language teaching*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

de Frisching, S. (1986). *Let's learn about America: Games, puzzles, and activities*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Echeverria, E. (1987). *Speaking on issues: An introduction to public communication*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Friedenberg, J., & Bradley, C. (1986). *Finding a job in the United States*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Galvin, K. (1985). *Listening by doing: Developing effective listening skills*. [With teacher's guide.] Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Hall, E. (1986). *Grammar for use: A realistic approach to grammar study for immediate practical application.* Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Leavitt, H., & Sohn, D. (1985). *Look, think, and write: Using pictures to stimulate thinking and improve your writing.* [With teacher's guide.] Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Schinke-Llano, L. (1987). *Advanced vocabulary games for English language learners*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Schinke-Llano, L. (1987). *Easy vocabulary games for beginning English language learners*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Schinke-Llano, L. (1987). *Vocabulary games for intermediate English language learners*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Schinke-Llano, L., & Terdy, D. (1987). *Campus English: Practical American English for international students*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.

Spears, R. (1987.) *NTC's American idioms dictionary*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company.