1029

UNIVERSITE NATIONALE DU RWANDA

CAMPUS DE RUHENGERI

FACULTE DES LETTRES

COMMUNICATION AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN A RWANDAN HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Par

Frédéric NTEZIMANA

Mémoire présenté en vue de l'obtention
du grade de Licencié ès Lettres ,
Département ANGLAIS.

Directeur : Emmanuel RWAGASANA

Ruhengeri , Septembre 1988

UNIVERSITE NATIONALE DU RWANDA

CAMPUS DE RUHENGERI

FACULTE DES LETTRES

COMMUNICATION AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN A RWANDAN HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Par

Frédéric NTEZIMANA

Mémoire présenté en vue de l'obtention du grade de Licencié ès Lettres, Département ANGLAIS.

Directeur : Emmanuel RWAGASANA

Ruhengeri, Septembre 1988

I m a n a i r a k a r a m a

TABLE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. The Nature of Communication........................ 20
2. A Model of Communication........................ 24
3. Interactive Aspects of Communication........................ 24
4. Interactional Modification in NS-NNs Conversation...... 31
5. The Acquisition - Learning Distinction.i............... 34
6. Acquisition and Learning in Second Language Production........................ 34
7. Finely-Tuned and Roughly-Tuned Input................. 37
8. Operation of the Affective Filter........................ 38
9. Internal processing........................ 41
10. Model of Second Language Learning........................ 44
11. Model of Linguistic Input and Output................. 48
12. Language Acquisition Through Interaction.............. 53
13. Language Input Through Interaction........................ 54
14. Non-Communicative Activities-Communicative Activities........................ 89

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION i

TABLE OF ILLUSTRATIONS ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER ONE : COMMUNICATION AND SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION 15

CHAPTER TWO : RWANDAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE : SEARCH FOR DEFINITION AND ACQUISITION PROCESS 56

CHAPTER THREE : CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND ACTIVITIES FOSTERING LANGUAGE ACQUISITION 73

GENERAL CONCLUSION 98

BIBLIOGRAPHY 102

ANNEX 108

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My innermost gratitude goes to Mr Emmanuel Rwagasana who readily accepted to supervise this paper. His patience, understanding and insightful suggestions have been indispensable to me. My appreciation goes also to teachers of English in Rwandan high schools ; I particularly owe much to A.Rutayisire, B.Kamugunga, G.Ntibakunze and S.Maniraho for their pricelessly relevant information.

To you all who have influenced me during my efforts to produce this memoir, I say "Thanks".

F.N.

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, language teaching has been responsive to the ideas people have about what language is and how languages are learned. Going as far back as the time Latin and Greek dominated language teaching, language was seen as a system of rules and lexical words whereas language learning was seen as involving the memorization of these rules and words. The method which resulted from these assumptions came to be referred to as the Grammar Translation Method. Not only was that method characterized by the teaching of explicit grammar, but also by an intensive translation of the target language into the native language and vice versa.

The Grammar Translation Method reigned unchallengedly in the teaching of classic languages and vernaculars through the middle ages into the 18th century. However, as the role of vernaculars in day-to day communication superseded that of Latin and Greek, attempts were made to teach languages for oral proficiency without translating them. But it was especially with the coming of structural linguistics and behavioral psychology that language teaching, to some extent, divorced from the Grammar Translation Method.

Indeed, by the early twentieth century, language came to be redefined as a system of linearly produced elements in a structured way (Richards and Rodgers 1986). At the same time, language learning ceased to be understood as a mental activity involving memorization and translation, but as a mechanical

habit formation process (Stern 1983). Out of these views of language and language learning grew then the Audiolingual Method which gained credit in almost all language teaching institutions, with its heydays in the sixties.

Yet, by the seventies, language teaching profession was characterized by skepticism and dissatisfaction. This attitude on the part of linguists and applied linguists was brought about by the recognition that the Audiolingual Method had fallen short of its expectations : in Europe as well as in the United States where the method had been adopted with so much enthusiasm, students still proved unable to express themselves in the target language. Moreover, the Audiolingual Method and related material were not pitched to the knowledge people had about language and language learning. The discrepancy between language teaching practice and the underlying theory led some scholars to ascertain that students were learning despite the metho and despite the material (Burt and Dulay 1975 : 22).

As Stern (1983) points out, scholars who had to speak about the state of the art characterized the period around 1970 as an era of uncertainty. Quoting from Wardhaugh (1969a), Stern writes :

> ...the present state of the art may be characterized by the word uncertainty. This uncertainty arises from the current ferment in those disciplines which underlie language teaching : linguistics, psychologyand pedagogy (1983 : 108-109).

And as the following excerpt makes it clear, more pessimistic was the view Brown (1935) had about the 70'S :

> suddenly, we look around us and nothing seems to work : not of the linguitics and most of the teaching methods of the past 30 years don't work :

> contrastive analysis doesn't work, the transformational grammar doesn't work, the ALM (Audiolingual Method) doesn't work (...). And that pretty well sums up our situation in 1975 : nothing works (Brown 1975 : 80-81, my parentheses)

Clearly enough, at the time this statement was issued, there had been progress in theories of language and language learning, but language teaching had not progressed to the point of putting them into practice.

Indeed, as far bak as 1965, Chomsky's Aspects of the theory of syntax and his "Review of Verbal Behavior by B.F.Skinner" gradually eroded the high hopes which had been placed in the method that had derived from structural linguistics and behavioral psychology. The important feature of Chomsky's account of language laid emphasis on creativity rather than on habit formation. As quoted in Stern, Chomsky argues that "the most obvious and characteristic property of normal linguistic behavior is that it is a stimulus-free and innovative" (1983 :146). From this perspective a speaker can produce and understand a number of sentences without having to memorize them. What spekers need, therfore, is the rules for creating and understanding new sentences. Chomsky refers to this ability as the linguistic competence. Later, however some linguists began to question Chomsky's view and postulated a communicatively oriented view of language. Among others, the most quoted is Hymes (1972) especially for the distinction he made between the linguistic competence and the communicative competence. Language therefore came to be seen from the purpose for which it is used rather than merely from its intenal structure.

Given this wider view of language, it would have been unfair to characterize the 70'S as merely an era of confusion and uncertainty. In fact, Brown refers to it as a period of search and hope as well (1980 : 243): This search and hope were reflected through a number of methods which sprouted during the 70'S. To describe them would be pointless yet, an overview of them illustrates different trends that ensued from the period described above.

The first methos, the Total Physical Response (TPR) was initiated by J. Asher, a psychologist at San Jose State University, California, USA. It is based on the assumption that language learning can be associated with the coordination of speech and action and thus purports to teach language through physical activity. Language is introduced in form of commends that are executed by the teacher for demonstration and then by students (e.g. Walk to the table! Sit on the chair!). As Richards and Rodgers (1986) note, the TPRiis not sufficent in itself it should be used in association with other methods.

The second method which developed at the same time is under the name of The Community Language Learning and is based on the role of affectivity in communication. As Richards and Rodgers indicate, The Community Language Learning derives from Counseling, that is, "one person giving advice, assistance, and support to another who has a problem or is in some way in need" (1986 : 113). In a Community Language Learning class, students are generally teamed in groups and, using their mother tongue, ask the teacher how to say things they want to communicate to other students. It is assumed that learners will be able to

address others in the target language without the teacher translating. Like the Total Physical Response, the "Community language Learning" was developed by a psychologist, Charles Curran, of the Loyola University, Chicago, USA.

The third method that occurred in this same period is called "The Silent Way". In this method the teacher is relatively silent but presents objects to students so as to stimulate speech and to motivate them to communicate with each other. As developed by C. Gattegno this method was not revolutionary. Richards and Rodgers note that it exemplifies many of the features of the traditional methods such as accurate repetition of the teacher'model (1986 : 111). What is innovative in this method, the authors maintain, is the manner in which activities are organized, the indirect role of the teacher, the learner's responsibility to form and test hypothesis about language, and the material used.

The last method worth mentioning is the "Suggestopedia" which was initiated by a Bulgarian psychologist, Georgi Lazanov. Roughly, it consists in the use of mental relaxation techniques such as music while listening to new language.

The rallying feature of the methods described above is that they result from "individual instructional philosophies and personal theories concerning learning" (Richards 1984 : 11). Indeed, these methods were initiated by people whose interest and background were largely rooted in psychology counceling and education in general. For this reason, they have been called "humanistic" (Brown 1980). As for Stern (1981), he subsumes them under what he calls the "I" approach, which is psycholo-

gical and pedagogical and emphasized the primacy of the learner's person. To this approach, Stern opposes the 'L' approach which is linguistic (1981 : 134).

According to Stern (1983), the main charactaristic features of the 'L' approach is that language teaching is conceived of in operational terms : the objectives to be achieved determine the content and the techniques to be used. Within this approach, the nature of language is interpreted not in terms of its composite elements, but in terms of the purpose for which it is put into use. It is not language as a system of rules which retains the attention, but language as a means of communication. In any language instruction, therefore, learners should be led not only to produce sentences which are grammatically correct, but also and mainly to choose among the linguistic forms the ones which are suitable to the context of communication. It is what Widdowson respectively referred to as "rules of usage" and "rules of use" (1979 : 143).

One of the consequences of viewing language as primarily a means of communication in language teaching was that communication was to be incorporated in the instruction process (Lado 1981 : 231). The question thus arose, however, as to whether communication was to be merely a result of language learning process or the very process by which languages were learned. There have been two views which grew out of this concern.

On the one hand, communication in language teaching was seen as at least the optimal context for learning (...), for a structure to be learned so it could be used in a conversation it had to be practiced in something resembling 'real' communi-

cation (Actor 1983 :196). This view is illustrated by among others the writings of such applied linguists as Candlin, Johnson, Harrow, Wilkins, Brumfit and Widdowson. The latter provides roughly a manifesto of the movement for which this view stands :

> The movement I am concerned with here is that which proclaims the primacy of communication in language. Its manifesto (...) which can be collated from a range of writings by different hands, contains expressions like 'notions', 'functions' speech acts', and assertions like 'There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless' (Hymes), 'The object of linguistics must ultimately be the instrument of communication used by the speech community' (Labor), 'Languages are learnt for the purposes of communication (Wilkins) etc... I am a member of this movement myself, and have contibuted to its general manifesto (1984 : 68).

On the other hand, communication in language teaching became even more central it came to be seen as the most important 'vehicle' Acton (1983) maintains that it connotes a more integrative role than does either content or product. It is only by interacting with speakers of the target language that the learner will achieve his communicative abilities in that language. The psychological/pedagogical approach illustrates well this position because it emphasizes communication between learners and the target speakers (Acton 1983 : 196).

All in all, the language teaching trends which ensued from the era of uncertainty and search and for which communication was the goal to be achieved came to be referred to as the Communicative Language Teaching or the Communicative Approach. Harmer defines this trend as follows :

> The communicative approach is (...) an umbrella term to describe methodologies which teach students how to communicate efficiently and which also lay emphasis on the teaching of communicative value and, in some cases the teaching of language functions (1983 : 38).

The use of the term "umbrella" to describe the communicative approach accounts for the fuzzy edges around the methods wich grew in the 70'S and which purported to develop students' abilities to communicate in the target language. Howatt distinguished the weak and the strong version of Communicative Language Teaching :

> There is, in a sense, a 'strong' version of the communicative approach and a 'weak' version. The weak version which has become more orlless the standard practice in the last ten years, stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use their English for communicative purposes and, characteristically, attempts to integrate such activities into a wider program of language teaching (...). The 'strong' version of communicative teaching, on the other hand, advances the claim that language is acquired through communication, so that it is not merely a question of activating existing but inert knowledge of the language, but of stimulating the development of the language system itself. If the former could be described as learning to use 'English, the latter entails' using English to learn it' (1984 : 279)

From the above considerations, it is noticeable that there was no method which was entirely based on both the nature of language and language learning altogether. When a method did not draw on the latter, it drew on the former, with some degrees though. For mistance, Krashen an Terrel's The Natural Approach (1983) is based on the theory of language learning rather than

on the theory of language. Conversely, the method proned by Widdowson, Brumfit and associates draws more on the linguistic theory than on the theory of learning. As Richards and Rodgers have pointed out, "Neither Brumfit and Johnson (1979) nor Littlewood (1981), for example, offer any discussion of Learning Theory". Lack of interdisciplinarity is one of the main criticisms addressed against the developing language teaching methods. As been righteously argued by Stern, one feature motivated language teaching trends towards thes decade. He writes.

> Towards 1980, the concept of communication was a ralying point for these different strands. But this does not mean that this concept has given us a genuine synthesis. In any case, it may not be desirable to attempt to build a language teaching theory around a single concept (1983 : 112).

At any rate, however, whatever the version they took on, these methods and approaches required never teaching techniquees and materials. It is by these new techinques that the communicative framework are offered opportunities to use language for communicative purposes. They are either put in contact with the target milieu or native speakers are brought into the classroom to exchange ideas with them. Where the language environment is poor or inexistent, conditions are created in the classroom in order to enable learners to use the target language for communication. Thus, such contrived activities as games, probem-solving, role-plays, simulations and information gap activities have been designed for that purpose and gave served as the basis of the investigation into the communicative language teaching.

As far as Rwandan English language teaching is concerned, the research has been mainly based on these same activities in order to investigate the communicative approach to the teaching in high schools. For instance, Ngoboka investigated the activities which were carried out in the classroom and concluded that "the argument that Rwandan teachers of English are becoming more geared to communicative language teaching at present finds evidence (...)"(1984 : 126). Subsequent studies explored the techniques and procedures proned by the communicative language teaching like group work and drama techniques. Kazanenda (1986) conducted a study on group work activities and came up with the evidence that "there is a shift toward a greater emphasis on meaningful activities based on creativity and for communicativeness instead of mechanical drills" (1986 : 107). At the same time, Nagambo (1986) examined the use of drama techniques and reached almost the same conclusion.

Other studies have delved deeply into the teaching of the four language skills and have suggested improvement in the light of the communicative approach. Among these, Karake (1986) and Gasinzigwa (1986) are telling enough. One would also mention Ruzigamanzi (1984) who focused on a somewhat teaching for special purposes : the teaching of commercial English. At the close of his investigation, Ruzigamanzi urged "student-student interplay (...) in class to stimulate actual communication required by business transactions" (1984 : 15)

These studies are valuable for they provide some indications regarding the areas to improve in Rwandan English language teaching. In my opinion, however, there is still lack of knowledge

as to whether the diagnosed activities are carried out so as to prompt communication in the classroom, I think it is also necessary to consider the type of interaction which is talkig place in the classroom and how the target language is used. To date research has yet addressed the classroom as a real content which the teacher can exploit advantageously in order to enhance language acquisition through communication. Moreover if some existing, studies are congruent to assert that teachers are geared to developnig the students'communicative competence, none of them has as yet defined this concept with reference to Rwandan high school students. If teachers are asked to develop the students'communicative competence, it is high time they grasped the meaning of this concept and what it entails for the different groups of students they teach. In addition, teachers should gain insight into how this competecce can be imparted to students.

It is particularly in response to the above concerns that, through this paper 'communication and English Language Acquisition in a Rwandan High School Classroom', I have sought to contribute to the research in English language teaching in Rwanda by investigating communication in high school classrooms and by suggesting some ways to foster English language acquisition. In other words, the purpose of the present paper is twofold :

- Investigating the actual communication and thus
- language acquisition.
- Discussing attitudes and various ways by which teachers can improve their teaching strategies to prompt communication in English.

At the end of this study, I hope I will have provided my readers with insights into how they can improve their teaching in the light of recent findings in second language acquisition studies. I particularly have in mind teachers and trainee-teachers. From the reading of thismemoire, they will add to the "armory of stratedies and tools which they need to keep on adding to " (Brown and Yule 1983 : ix).

The assumptions and conclusions made all over this paper, in addition to the reading from current studies in second language acquisition, are based on three main sources of evidence. The first consists in a form of a questionnaire that I handed ti teachers in some high schools. It contains questions about some of the activities bearing much on communication in the classroom. To ensure that the information given reflected what actually wa happening in the classroom, the questionnaire avoided largely to present alternatives from which teachers could choose. Instead, it contained open-ended questions and, when the quetion required yes/no answer, suggestions and comments were requested.

I delibarately avoided to check on the use of activities like dialogues, role plays and others because I feared that some teachers would say they use them while they do not. On the contrary, teachers were required to specify the type of activity they use in order to devolop students' ability to produce appropriate utterances. If some teachers have answered role play or simulation, there is an indication that they probably use these activities not for their sake but to d they actually know what skills they want to develop in their students.

In addition to the questionnaire, I got evidence from the interview I had with teachers who readily made themselves available. With them, I discussed some matters which appeared unclear and/or unknown to them in the questionnaire form · this was not the main object of the interview though. The main concern was with the concept of communicative competence and what it entails for different groups of students attending high schools. In selecting the interviewees, I took into consideration the qualification and experience in teaching English. These subjects indeed had taught almost all the forms and had at least a licence degree. On the whole, I interviewed three teachers with an M.A. in TEFL or a post-graduate diploma, and four others with a licence degree.

Equally, of valuable importance were the classroom observations that were granted by the teacher I interviewed. Despite the assumption some people have tha "except the teacher and children, nobody else knows what happens in the classroom" (Herriot 1971 : 82). I could see how teachers catered for genuine communication in the classroom. On the whole, I hope that all these sources put together provide this study with strong grounds as that it will offer relevant and insightful information to its readers. As far as the format is concerned, this paper comprises three chapters of which the first after the introduction discusses the relationship between communication and second language acquisition. It provides a definition of communication and interaction, two terms which have become atchy in second learning literature. In this same chapter, current theories of second language acquisition are reviewed.

The second chapter expounds the concept of communicative competence, attempts to define it with particular reference to Rwandan high school students, and investigates the actual language acquisition in the classroom.

The third and last chapter before the conclusion discusses different types of interaction in the classroom which are likely to prompt students' use of the target language for communication. For each type of interaction, this chapter suggests ways and attitudes by which teachers can enhance acquisition.

CHAPTER ONE

COMMUNICATION AND SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

As has already been pointed out, theconcept ofcommunication has come to be a rallying term in language teaching and learning. In their attempts to overcome the prevailing uncertainty of the last decade. language specialists have ever since designed methodologies ans researches oriented to the concept of communication. This is what Stern reveals when he observes that :

> From the mid-seventies, the key concept that has epitomzed the practical, theoretical, and research preocupations in educational linguistics and language pedagogy is that of communication or the communicative competence (1983 : 11).

Thus, scholars concerned themselves with either finding out the impact of communication on second/foreign language acquisition, or investigating how language could be taught as/for communication. On the one hand, such works as those produced for instance by Krashen and associates, Long, Pica and Daughty, jointly or individually, have given considerable revelations about the effect of interaction on the acquisition of second/foreign language. On the other hand, linguists and applied linguists like Johnson, Morrow and Brumfit, have pointed out some of the features of communication which are relevant in language teaching. Among these features, the most referred to is the concept of information gap. It consists in providing information to some students and withholding it from others so that the situation created becomes such as students can interact by sharing and exchanging infomattion not previously

known (Johnson 1981 : 151).

But what do the terms communication and interaction entail in second/foreign language teaching? In what follows, I shall elaborate on the nature of each term and the relationship between the two. For the purpose of this paper, I shall rely on the literature produced mainly by linguists and applied linguists. Communication and interaction, therefore, will be understood as occurring between human beings who are communicating by means of language.

To begin with, there is always a purpose one person wants to achieve when he initiates communication. Nobody speaks or writes in vacum. Either he wants to make another person aware of something he thinks that person does not know, or he just wants to establish a talk with him.

However, although it is unlikely to imagine a situation in which people use language without conveying information, language is not always used primarily to impart or to request information. It is also used to maintain or to establish social relations.

Incidentally, Brown and Yule (1983b : 1) see language as serving primarily two functions : the transactional and interactional functions. As they indicate, it is unlikely that a natural language utterance would fulfil only one function to the total exclusion of the other. Brown and Yule describe the transactional function as that function which language serves in the expression of content and the interaction function as the one involved in expressing social and interpersonal attitudes.

As the two authors argue, this distinction corresponds to other linguists'dichotomies. They write :

> Our distinction,'transactional/interactional' ; stands in general correspondance to (...)'representative/expressive',found in Bühler (1934), 'referential/emotive' (Jakobson, 1960), 'ideational/interpersonal' (Halliday, 1970 b) and 'descriptive/social-expressive' (Lyons, 1977) (1983 b : 1

To illustrate the transactional use of language, Brown and Yule refer to a case concerning a policeman giving directions to a traveller, a doctor telling a nurse how to administer medicine to a patient etc... . As the one addresses the other, it matters that the transference of information be efficient. Otherwise, there will be unfortunate (even desastrous) concequences in the real world (...)' (1983 b : 2).

As for the interactional function of language, the illustrative example the two authors provide is as follows : one of two strangers standing shivering at a bus-stop turns to the other and says "My goodness, it's cold'. As the two authors argue, "It seems much more reasonable to suggest that the speaker is indicating a readiness to be friendly and to talk" than "to suppose that the primary intention of the speaker is to convey information" (1983 b : 3).

To come back to the speaker's/writer's purpose, it should be noted that, although necessary, this purpose is not sufficient for communication to take place. Besides the sender's purpose, the receiver must be in a state of readiness to receive the message. Lyons offers an explicit statement about the receiver's readiness and the sender's purpose in human communication. As concerns the latter, he writes :

> A signal is communicative(...) when it is intended by the sender to make the receiver aware of something he was not previously aware. Whether a signal is communicative or not rests then upon the possibility of choice, or selection, on the part of the sender. If the sender cannot but behave in a certain way (i.e. if he cannot choose between alternative kinds of behaviour), then he obviously cannot communicate anything by behaving in that way (1977 : 33).

It follows from this quotation that the sender of the message must give a series of alternatives among which, for his purpose, he selects what to say and how to say it.

As for the receiver's readiness, Lyons suggests that it accounts for his doubt as to what he receives and how it is said to him. As quoted in Johnson (1981), he explains the significance of the hearer's doubt as follows :

> If the hearer knows in advance that the speaker will inevitably produce particular utterances in a particular context, then it is obvious that the utterance will give him no information. When it occurs, no communication will take place (1968 : 413)

Lyons (1977) concludes that "communicative" means meaningful for the sender while "informative" means meaningful for the receiver. What is "communicative", therefore, supposes the intent or the purpose on the part of the sender just as what is "informative" supposes and doubt on the part of the receiver. Arguably, purpose and doubt are two facets of the same coin. In a sense, then, for communication to take place, a message must be informative and communicative : that is, meaningful for both the sender and the receiver.

Yet, as is the case with linguistic communication, not all the whole amount of information reaching the receiver is always intended by the sender. A part from these occasions the receiver

may not get entirely the intended message, the sender may sometimes provide unconsciously the information which is yet meaningful for the receiver. Indeed, as people are more concerned with what they say than how they say it, it may happen that they be impolite without meaning it. Similarly, our handwriting is so telling that it adds to the information carried out by what we write.

Besides, it will be noted that language as such is by no means the only means which is put into use when people speak. Rather, it activates other related systems. These have been referred to as "paralanguage" (Pennycook 1985) or as "paralinguistic features" (Lyons 1977). They cover

> not only certain feature of vocal signals (e. g. loudness and what may be described loosely as tone of voice), but in addition those gestures, facial expressions, eye-movements, etc..., which play a supporting role in normal communication by means of spoken language (Lyons 1977 : 61).

Lyons points out that these paralinguistic features, though non-communicative, are informative and are of so much importance in social interaction (1977 : 33-34).

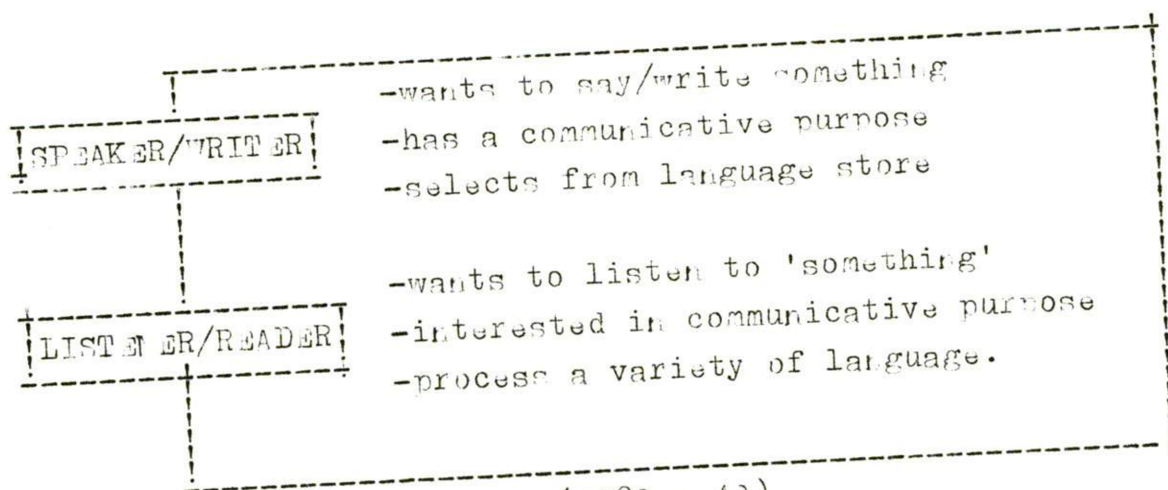
Harmer (1983) provides as well an insightful discussion of the nature of communication. He maintains that when two people are involved in communication, it is certain that the one who is speaking wants to do so. Even when one is forced to speak, he must still feel the desire to speak, otherwise, he would keep quiet. While speaking, the speaker has a purpose : to disagree, to charm, to flatter, to be rude, to give information or to express pleasure. In order to achieve this purpose, the speaker selects from his store of language that he thinks

will help him to achieve that purpose. In effective communication, it is likely that the listener will want to listen to what the speaker says and will be particularly interested in the speaker's purpose. Though he may have the idea about the direction of the conversation, he has to be ready to process a great variety of language so as to understand what is being said. Harmer admits that this applies equally to people writing and receiving letters, lectures giving talk, novelists and radio. announcers and their readers and listeners.

Thus, I will agree with Harmer to make the following generalization about the use of language for communication. The speaker/writer wants to speak/write, has a communicative purpose and selects from his language store. Similarly, the listener/reader wants to listen to/read something, is interested in the communicative purpose of what is being said or what has been written and processes a variety of language. Harmer presents the nature of communication as follows :

Figure 1

THE NATURE OF COMMUNICATION



(1983 : 43)

dotted lines indicate that there is exchange of roles for the participants in communication.

The purposive nature of communication makes it clear, to some extent, that the speaker wants to provoke a certain effect on the hearer. Indeed, as quoted in Brown and Yule, Bennet states that one of the function of communication is 'to enjoin some action upon the hearer" (1983 b : 2). When a person initiates communication, the hearer will react in one way or another, provided that he perceives that the message is intended for him (Fraser 1983 : 37). He may not want to react as the speaker wu wishes him to, but even if he refused to speak and opted for silence, the speaker would have established a certain contact with him.
As Brown has argued, communication effect may be observable as well as unobservable. He writes :

> Communication is not merely an event, something that happens : it is functional, purposive, and designed to bring about some effect-some change, however subtle or unobservable -on the environment of hearers and speakers (1980 : 193).

When the hearer re[illegible] however is the form of his response-which may be not necessarily verbal, one will say that there has been interaction between the hearer and the speaker, between participants in communication. Human interaction has thus been defined as "a process whereby two or more people engage in reciprocal action" (Celce-Murcia 1984 : 2). It is not only through the use of language that human beings interact, but through any element which causes them to react to actions enjoined upon them. As far as language is concerned, human interaction is generally undestood as :

> the set of actions and reactions which are realized by turns ('taking the floor'), in other words, the give-and-take wich

> characterizes this category of oral communication. We are dealing here with the interactional tactics : who speaks when and to whom ; in other words, how the turns are distributed (Riley 1985 : 50).

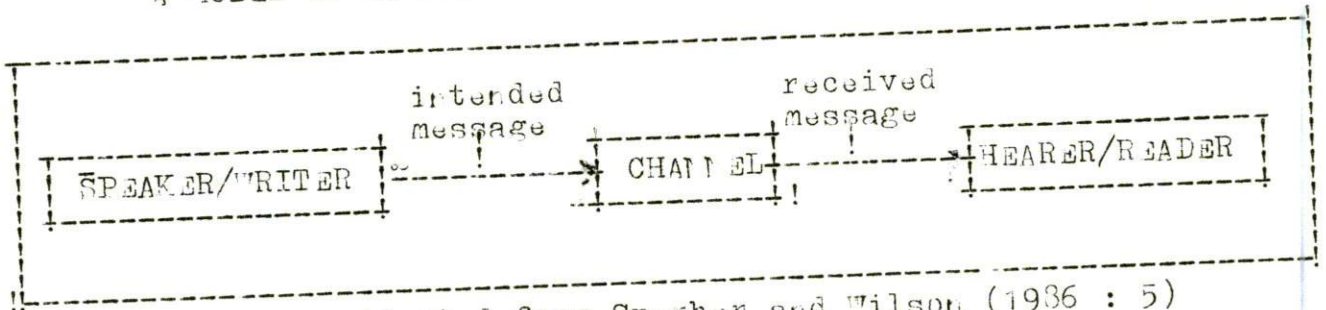
From this quotation, it can be inferred that interaction is not concerned with what someone says and how he says it but primarily with the way what is to be said is distributed among the participants in communication. The distribution of the floor during oral interaction implies different roles for the participants . Riley definies these roles as follows :

> 1. The role of speaker (S), who initiates and closes the minimal unit of interactive structure, the return.
> 2. The role of addressee (A) which consists in the acceptance of the turn-taking restraints imposed by S.
> 3. The role of talker (T), normally available only to the A of the previous turn and which differs from S in that there is no choice of interactive partner, who must be the previous S.
> 4. The role of listener (L), which might at first seem to be a purely negative role, since it consists in participating in an interaction without taking the floor, but of course any listener is a potential speaker or addresse, to say nothing of the ever-present possibility of interruption (such as floor-taking out of-turn, not anticipating one's turn). Morever, listeners have an indirect influence on the interaction via the contunual stream of information wich they communicate to S or A (approval, impatience, boredom, etc...) verbally ro non-verbally (1985 : 50-51).

Interaction will have started at the moment the speaker initiates communication. Obviously, the initiator may or may not succeed in bringing about the hearer's reaction. If the hearer does not react the speaker will be said to have failed to create interaction. This failure may stem from several factors among

Figure 2

A MODEL OF COMMUNICATION



Adapted from Sperber and Wilson (1986 : 5)

The interactive aspects of communication, on the other hand, involve the following actions :

- transmitting messages
- receiving messages, and
- giving feedback - i.e., the receiving party know that mitting party lets the transmitting party know that the message is being (has been) received (Celce Murcia 1984 : 2).

The situation can be represented as shown in figure 3.

Figure 3

INTERACTIVE ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATION

Now the question arises as to when communication is successful given that interaction does not necessarily lead to successful communication. Many a linguist has speculated on this issue and two views seem to arise from debates. For some, communication has takes place when the hearer has recognized the speaker's intention. Fraser expresses this view as follows :

> We succeed in linguistically communicating when we get the hearer to recognize what we have said and what attitude we hold toward the propositional content of our utterance. THE communicative effect on the hearer is not a new belief but rather, a recognition of what attitude I hold toward the proposition I have expressed. For example, if I make a request of you, my intention is to express my desire that you carry out the action specified in the utterance ; I have succefully communicated if you recognize this attitude on my part (1983 : 37).

Accordingly, success in communication rests on the hearer's perception of the message intended for him. That is, the underlying factor of successful communication is the hearer's understanding of the content of the information embedded in the message. Success here accounts for the hearer's recognition of the illocutionary force (what the message is about), as opposed to the perlocutionary force (the effect of the message on the hearer). Fraser states this as follows :

> Whether or not yo do in fact carry out the action after you recognize my intention to request is a different issue, not part of linguistic communication (1983 : 37).

Admittedly, with this view, it is difficult to ensure that the hearer has recognized the intention of the speaker or his attitude toward the proposition he has expressed. Success of communication is limited to the production and the perception of the message.

Other language specialists assess the success in communication in terms of its outcome. Among them, Lyons suggests that successful communication is indicated by the non linguistic result of the message.

He thus extends communication beyond the mere recognition of the illocutionary force by the hearer :

> Successful communication depends, not only upon the receiver's reception of the signal and his appreciation of the fact that it is intended for him rather than another, but also upon his recognition of the sender's communicative intendion and upon his making an appropriate behavioural or cognitive response to it (1977 : 34).

The logical implication of this statement is that communication is judged according to how the receiver responds to the message from the sender. If A intimates an order to B, it is not sufficient to say that communication has been successful by the mere fact that B has recognized that A has given him an order ; rather, it also is necessary that he either carries out the order, or he just shows that he will not carry it out at all.

This view of successful communication has been extended in language teaching pedagogy. Johnson (1981), for instance, is one illustrative case especially with the""Task-dependancy principle". According to this principle, transferance and conveyance of information is judged on successful completion of a non-linguistic task. It must be noted, however, that the non-linguistic result of communication does not always accout for successful use of language. As Acton argues, learners may

resort to whatever means they have to achieve their purpose. He illustrates this case as follows :

> A learner may attempt to complain about a defective appliance with the intent of getting a refund. If the learner walks out the door with the money, can we say that the desired outcome was achieved? Perhaps. (...) Just because the learner received a refund does not tell us whether or not the interaction was handled at all correctly. If the clerk was offended by the behavior of the learner to the extent that the money was returned just to get the 'nuisance' out the door, then it was a pyrrhic victory to be sure, both in terms of another trip to that shop and future attempts to use the same strategy in different contexts (1983 : 109-210).

As is evident, the first account of success in communication delineates the act of communication from the production to the perception of the message while the second extends it to the feedback the receiver provides on the sender's intention. Logically, these two views are complementary and suggest that communication can be understood either as a one-way or a two-way process. By one-way process is meant that the receiver understands the message but does not respond ; as for two-way process, the receiver understands the message and provides a feedback to the sender.

Communication as above described has been used to describe language learning process. In effect, Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) distinguished three types of communication phases through which learners pass when learning a new language :

> In <u>one-way communication</u>, the learner listens to or reads the target language but does not respond. The communication is one-way, towards the learner, not fro the learner. Listening to speeches and radio

> programs [illegible] watching films and most television programs, and reading books and magazines are all examples of one-way communication.
>
> In <u>restricted two-way communication</u>, the learner responds orally to someone, but the learner does not use the target language. The response may be in the learner's first language and may include a non-verbal response such as nodding.
>
> In <u>full two-way communication</u>, the learner speaks in the target language, acting as both recipient and sender of verbal messages (1981 : 20-21).

Bisides these three authors, other language specialists, namely methodologists, have ponited out the features of communication which are relevant in language teaching. Taylor has summarized five among them :

> 1. Morrow (1981) has pointed out that in order to engage in real communication, participants must be able to deal with stretches of spontaneous language above the sentence level. Since the ability to manipulate the formal features of language in isolation does not necessarily imply the larger ability to be communicatively competent, a communicative teaching approach will need to provide students with the opportunity to engage in extended discourse in a real context.
>
> 2. Johnson (1979) and Morrow (1981) have proposed that one of the major purposes of communication is to bridge an information gap. If the speaker and hearer are both in possession of the same information, communication cannot, techically, be said to take place. Therefore a communicative methodology will need to create situations in which students share information not previously known by all participants in the communication.
>
> 3. Morrow (1981) has observed that real communication allows speaker choices to decide not only what they will say but also how they wil say it. In similar fashion, since there is always uncertainty about what a speaker will say, the hearer remains in doubt and must maintain

> a state of readiness (Johnson 1979, Morrow 1961). A communicative methodology, therefore, will need to provide learners with opportunities to engage in unrehearsed communication and thereby experience doubt and uncertainty, and learn to make appropriate content and linguistic choices accordingly.
>
> 4. Morrow (1981) has noted that most participants in real communication keep a goal in mind while they are speaking. That goal is usually the successful completion of some kind of real task. What speakers decide to say to each other and how they evaluate what is said to them are both determined by that goal. That is, what one speaker says to a second speaker is shaped not only by what the second speaker has just said, but also by what the first speaker wants to get out of the conversation (also see Johnson 1979). A communicative methodology, therefore, will need to provide learners with opportunities to negotiate conversations on topics which are goal-oriented and which the learners have a vested interest.
>
> 5. Johnson (1979) has suggested that the real communication requires that both the speaker and hearer attend to many factors quickly and at the same time. A communicative methodology, therefore, will need to provide students with opportunities to engage in extended discourse on real topics, using real language and, most importantly, in real time (1983 : 73-74).

To round out this point on communication and interaction, I will maintain that, communication in verbal interaction on the one hand, involves the transmission and reception of the message ; on the other hand, it keeps on going on when the receiver acknowledges that he has received the message. For this process to take place, there must be an intent or a purpose on the part of the sender ; in much the same, the receiver must be in a state of readiness and be able to comprehend the message on which he eventually provides a feedback. It should be added that, other features such as gestures, facial expressions intervene

in the making up and the interpretation of messages.

There are certainly other views of communication and interaction which provide as well an account of verbal communication. For the purpose of this study, I have limited the discussion to ideas presented by linguists and applied linguists. In so doing, I hope I have refined the understanding of the concept of communciation and interaction in second/foreign language teaching and learning. In the following, where the concern is in the role of communication and second language acquisition, interaction and communication will be used interchangeably unless otherwise specified by the context.

Drawing upon insights from recent researches in second language acquisition, it will be argued that interaction is a facilitating factor in language acquisition, especially when it brings about input modification. The modification of input during iteraction, hence the "interactionally modified input", is brought about by the mechanism called interactional modification (Pica, Young and Doughty 1987 : 737). Reporting Long and Daoughty explain how this mechanism takes place through interaction :

> Learners and their interlicutors negotiate the meaning of messages by modifying and resturcturing their interaction in order to reach mutual understanding. As a result of this negotiation, learners come to comprehend words and grammatical structures beyond their current level of competence and ultimately incorporate them in their own production (1987 : 740).

These authors also provide an example of interactional modificationalin native-nonnative speakers interactions (NS-NNS) (see figure 4).

Figure 4

Example of Interactional Modification in NS-NNS conversations

N S	N N S
And right on the roof of the truck, place the duck. The duck.	I to take it? Dog?[a]
Duck	Duck.
It's yellow and it's a small animal, it has two feet	I put where it?[b]
You take the duck and put it on top of the truck. Do you see the duck?[c]	Duck?[a]
Yeah. Quack, quack, quack, that one, The one that makes that sound.	Ah yes. I see in the- in the head of him.
	Put what?[b]
OK. See?[c]	Truck?[a]
OK. Put him on top of the truck. The bus. Where the boy is.	Ah yes.

[a]Confirmation checks : Moves by which one speaker seeks confirmation of the other's preceding utterance through repetition, with rising intonation, of what was perceived to be all or part of the preceding utterance.

[b]Clarification requests : Moves by which on speaker seeks assistance in understanding the other speaker's preceding the utterance through questions (including wh- polar, disjunctive, uninverted with rising intonation, or tag), statements such as I don't understand, or imperatives such as Please repeat.

[c]Comprehension checks : Moves by which one speaker attempts to determine whether the other speaker has understood a preceding passage. (Pica, Young and Daughty 1987 : 740)

Before considering the effect of communication on second/ foreign language acquisition, it is better to understand how this process takes place. For the purpose of this paper, two theories, namely Krashen's and associates (1981, 1982, 1983) and Bialystok's (1978), will be largely reviewed. It should be noted however, that these theories are presented here not that they are the only ones to account for language learning, but because they seem

to complete each other. In addition, the two theories illustrate well how second language acquisition research is contreversial and yet, offers relevant insights into language teaching.

As Richards and Rodgers (1986) have argued, studies in second/foreign language acquiqition have captured many variables affecting learning. In general, however, two questions seem to have mostly triggered off research studies so far :

> a) what are the psycholinguistic and cognitive process involved in language learning? and
>
> b) what are the conditions that need to be met in order for these learning process to be activated (1986 : 18)?

Thus, Krashen's model, commonly referred to as the monitor model, provides the conditions and the process of learning (Richards and Rodgers 1987 : 18). It consists in a set of five hypotheses : the acquisition/learning distinction, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the input hypothesis and the affective filter hypothesis.

1. The distinction Acquisition/Learning hypothesis claims that acquisition and learning are two segregated process s whereby learners develop competence in the target language. Acquisition is a process similar to the way children acquire their first language. It is a subconscious process whereby :

> Language acquirers are not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring l language, but are only aware of the fact that theyaare using the language for communication (Krashen 1982 : 10).

Krashen argues that the result of language acquisition is also unconscious. Generally, we are not conscious of rules of the language that we have acquired but we "feel" for corretness or uncorrectness, even if we do not know which rule has been violated (1982 : 10).

The learning process, conversely, is conscious and accounts for the knowledge of rules about the language. By this process, we become able to verbalize the knowledge about the form of language. Krashen expounds thes process as follows :

> we will use the term 'learning' henceforth to refer to conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them. In no-technical terms, learning is 'knowing about' language, known to most people as 'grammar' or 'rules' Some syronymes include formal knowlegde of a language or explicit learning (1982 : 10)

Krashen is categorical about the distinction between these two processes. Learning can never lead to acquisition. The knowledge we possess from having attended to form by reading about or listening to explanations of ruses and by having our errors corrected, cannot be internalized so as to become 'acquired knowledge". As a consequence, given that acquired knowledge is responsible for initiating both comprehension and production, we cannot redily use learned knowledge to perform automatically. As Krashen indicates, "conscious knowledge is not responsible for our fluency, it does not initiate utterances" (1982 : 83). The acquisition/learning distinction hypothesis is summarized as shown in figure 5.

Figure 5

THE ACQUISITION - LEARNING DISTINCTION

Acquisition	Learning
- similar to child first language acquisition	- formal knowledge of language
- picking up a language	- knowing about a language
- subconscious	- conscious
- Implicit knowledge	- Explicit knowledge
formal teaching does not help	- formal teaching helps

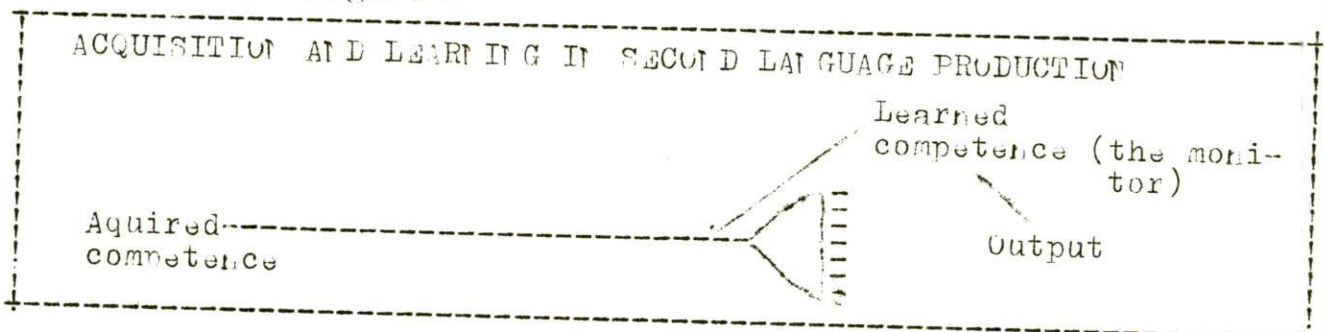
(Krashen and Terrel 1983 : 27)

2. The Monitor Hypothesis. Drawing on the above hypothesis, Krashen argues that it is the acquired knowledge which initiates production. The role of learned knowledge is only to monitor by editing, checking or repairing the output of the acquired system. He maintains that :

> Learning has only one function, and that is a Monitor, or editor. Learning comes into play only to make changes in the form of our utterances after it has been 'produced' by the acquired system. This can happen before we speak or write or after (self-correction) (1982 : 15).

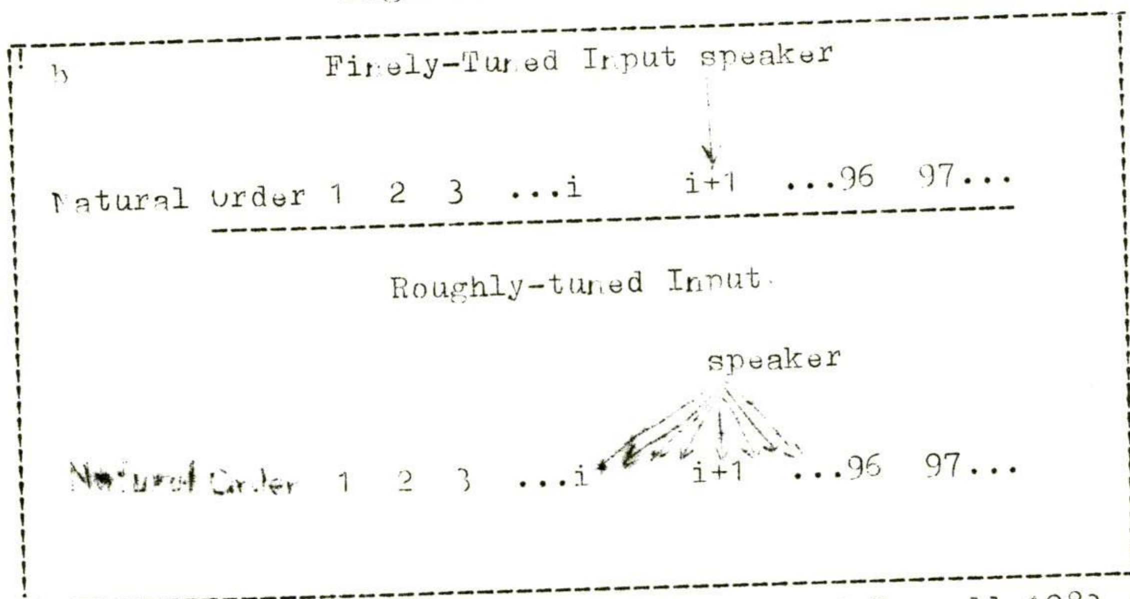
Krashen models the monitoring process as follows :

Figure 6



(Krashen 1982 : 16)

Figure 7



(Krashen and Terrell 1983 : 33)

As these authors explain,

> In the case of finely-tuned input, the speaker deliberately tries to include many examples of the student's i+1 (...). In the case of roughly-tuned input, the speaker only attempts to make himself or herself understood. When this is accomplished, the speaker will automatically 'cast a net' of structure that includes the acquirer's i+1 (the net hypothesis) (1983 : 33).

On the whole, the Input Hypothesis is to be understood as comprising four major points :

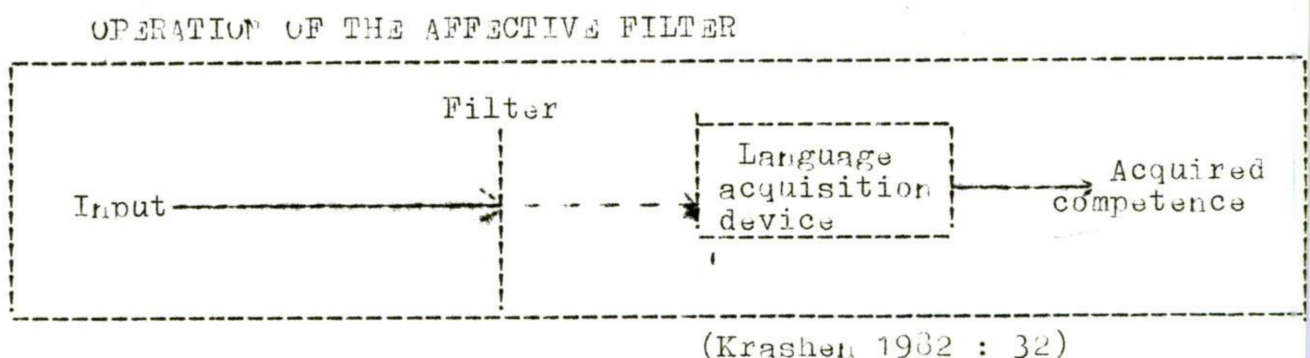
1. Relates to acquisition, not to learning.
2. We acquire by understanding language a bit beyond our current level of competence. This is done with the help of context.
3. Spoken fluency emerges gradually and is not taught directly.
4. When caretakers talk to acquirers so that the acquirers understand the message, input automatically contains 'i+1', the grammatical structures the acquirersis "ready" to acquire (Krashen and Terrell 1983 : 37).

5. The Affective Filter Hypotheses states that the whole amount of language to which the learner is exposed (input) does not become intake. As Rwagasana reports, the first distinction input-intake was made by Corder (1967), taking input as "the total language which surrounds a language learner and intake that portion which the learner perceives or comprehends" (1987 : 106-107). There is a filter which screens subconsciously the incoming language and which derives from such psychological factors as motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. These factors affect second language acquisition in the following way :

1. Motivation. Performers with high motivation generally do better in second language acquisition (usually, but not always (...)).
2. Self-confidence. Performers with self-confidence and a good self-image tend to do better in second language acquisition.
3. Anxiety. Low anxiety appears to be conducive to second language acquisition, whether measured as personal or classroom anxiety (Krashen 1982 : 31).

Figure 8

OPERATION OF THE AFFECTIVE FILTER



(Krashen 1982 : 32)

As Krashen and Terrell put it, the affective filter prevents input from being used for language acquisition. Acquirers with optimal attitudes have "low affective filters", and as a

consequence, they will (be encouraged to) "try to get more input, to interact with speakers of the target language with confidence, and also to be more receptive to the input they get" (1983 : 38).

All in all, the whole question of Krashen's and his associates' theory of learning, when applied to language teaching, can be summarized as follows :

1. As much comprehensible inmut as possible must be presented.
2. Whatever helps comprehension is important. Visual aids are useful, as is exposure to a wide range of vocabulary rather than study of syntactic structure.
3. The focus in the classroom shoud be on listening and reading : speaking shoud be allowed to 'emerge'.
4. In order to lower the affective filter, student work shoud center on meaningful rather than on form ; input should be interesting and so contribute to a relaxed classroom atmosphere (Richards and Rodgers 1986 : 133-134).

Before discussing Krashen's model in terms of the psycholinguistic processes it involves, a word needs to be said on the role of conversation in second language acquisition. Krashen maintains that "we acquire spoken fluency not by practicing talking but by understanding input, listening and reading" (1982 : 60). Referring to Lennerberg (1962), he also points out that it is possible to acquire language without ever talking. For Krashen, the contribution of the output to language acquisition is indirect and can be explained as follows : the more you talk, the more people talk to you! In so doing, the acquirer gets quantitatively and qualitatively. Thus, conversation is probably much more effective than 'eavesdropping", but plays an indirect role in acquisition".

Yet, when it comes to learning, the output plays a direct role which relates to the domain of error correction. The question Krashen raises is then whether language needs to be taught "primarily by encouraging production with little or no input, and correcting all errors". Such a technique, Krashen maintains, in addition to being maddening, relies entirely on students' ability to learn grammar, chich does not help in language acquisition.

However, as Rwagasana points out, a foreign environment goes against the above claim that speaking is unnecessary. Reporting Long and Porter (1985), he says that :

> Many researchers today agree upon the fact that learners must be put in a position of being able to negotiate the new input, thereby ensuring that the language in which it is heard is modified to exactly the level of comprehensibility they can manage (1987 : 108).

Thus, Krashen minimizes the role of interaction chich, in the mind of other researchers, is important although not the sole determinant in second language acquisition (Ellis 1985). As will be seen later, interaction turns out to be a facilitative factor, mainly in situations where the linguistic environment is not rich.

As concerns the psycholinguistic processes involved in second language acquisition, Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) postulate three mechanisms by which language input is processed. From the environment, learners get the input which is screened out by the filter. This input which is comprehensible is then submitted to the internal processing whereby it is integrated in the language system. The mechanism underlying this integration

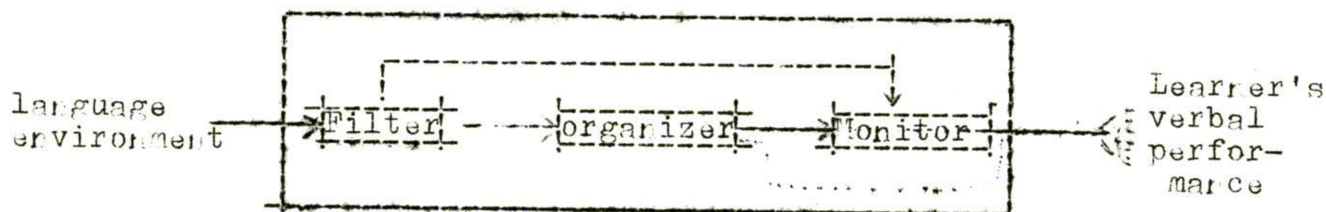
is due to the part of the learner's mind which works subconsciously to organize the new language system. Dulay, Burt and Krashen refer to it as the"organizer" or "creative constRuction" which they define as :

> a subconscious process by which language learners gradually organize the language they hear, according to rules that they construct to generate sentences (1982 : 11).

As these authors point out, Chomsky associates this mechanism with the existence of an innate device in the human brain, the Language acquisition device (LAD).

As it appears to be, both the organizer and the filter are subconscious. The only conscious mechanism is the monitor wich the learners use to process information. "Both the organizer and the monitor", Dulay et al. maintain, "are agent for acquisition of linguistic knowledge "(p.45). As they indicate, however, the organizer is probably language specific while the monitor may be a general cognitive processor that is used also in other areas of learning. So to speak, the filter, the organizer and the monitor are the three mechanisms (internal processors) which come into play during the acqusition process. They are represented as shown in figure 9.

Figure 9
INTERNAL PROCESSING



(Dulay, Burt and Krashen 1982 : 46)

Although the theory discussed above claims to rest on "hypotheses found to be consistent with significant amount of data" (Krashen 1982 : 2), it has known a number of severe criticisms. Among them, the most bitter have been directed against the acquisition/learning hypothesis and its implications to language teaching. According to some scholars, not only the distinction acquisition/learning has no evidence, but also it is difficult to verify (Mc Laughlin 1978). Others have argued against the emphasis the model puts on acquisition over learing. In lieu of ullustration, Abraham points out that :

> "While acquisition may indeed be the more important process, unfortunately, it does not always lead to the correctness in use that is required in some settings, especially in Colleges and Universities, where deviation from standard forms conveys an impression fo lack of education (1984 : 56).

Another criticism against this theory comes from Littlewood (1984). He points out the damages that can cause the implications of the learning/acquisition hypothesis in second/foreign language teaching. As he indicates, teachers can abandon much of their familial techniques and concentrate in providing comprehensible input.

Yet, despite these criticisms, Krashen's theory has provided resourceful insights into second/foreign language teaching. Nagle and Sanders (1986), for instance, agree that "The strong reception accorded to Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's work is due to the fact that their ideas are elaborated and that they fit with the experiences second language learners undergo. Such experiences, the two authors maintain, are for instance frustra-

Indeed, the model claims "to account for discrepancies both in individual achievement and achievement in different aspects of second language learning" (1978 : 69).

As is presented, Bialystok's model comprises three levels : the input, the knowledge and the output levels, corresponding respectively to language exposure, storage of information and utilization of that information through comprehension and production (see figure 10). The input level refers to any kind of language exposure which may be the classroom, books and so on. It also includes the conditions in which this input is provided.

BIALYSTOK 71

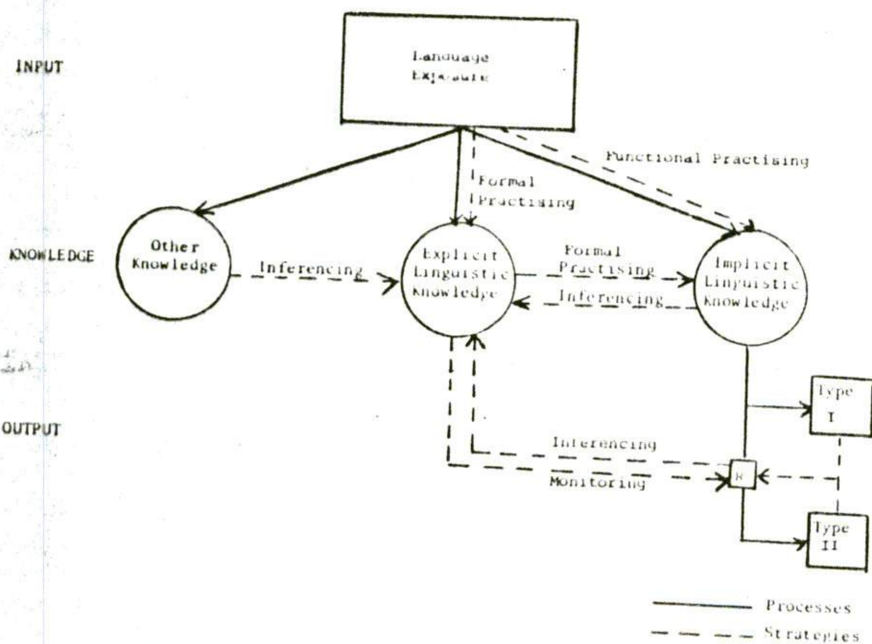


Figure 1. Model of Second Language Learning.

As Bialystok explains, solid lines refer to obligatory relationships between aspects of the model. They show the information transfer in the world into the knowledge level and its

output or response. Dotted lines represent learning strategies to which learners resort optionally for exploiting information to improve competence in a second language (1978 :70-71).

The knowledge level comprises the store of three kinds of information : "Other knowledge", "Explicit Linguistic Knowledge" and "Implicit Linguistic knowledge". The explicit linguistic knowledge includes conscious facts the learner has about the language. These may include grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation etc... The Implicit Linguistic Knowledge on the other hand, comprises the intuitive information that the learner resorts to produce responses (in comprehension as well as in production). This information, Bialystok suggests, can also concern grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary etc... As the author explains, it is in this sense that a language learner can, without evidence, judge the correctness of a sentence.

The difference between Implicit and Explicit Knowledge is a matter of function rather than a matter of content. In effect, the implicit knowledge stores only information for most spontaneous comprehension and production, whereas the explicit knowledge, besides storing information which remains explicit, plays the role of an explicit articulatory system". That is, if required, the implicit information may be made explicit or conscious :

> a native speaker of French may not be conscious of the rule governing the positioning of the indirect object pronoun although he consistently uses the rule in the formation of sentences. By examining a corpus of sentences he may notice that this pronoun precedes the auxiliary verb and thus becomes aware of the constraints which he had implicitly been honoring in his automatic language production (1978 : 73).

The other function of the Explicit linguistic knowledge is that of acting as "a buffer for new information about the language". In effect as the author points out, after continued use, the information may become automatic and transferred to the implicit linguistic knowledge store.

As for "Other Knowledge", it include information about other languages than the target and the knowledge of the world. The main difference between "Other Knowledge" source and the two others is that "linguistic knowledge contains information about the code while other knowledge contains related but not specifically linguistic information" (Bialystok 1978 : 74).

The output level consists in two types of responses given by the cell for response. Responses may be immediate and spontaneous (Type I), or deliberate and occur after a relative delay (Type II). In the latter case, ther is a way for the learner to modify the response by monitoring or inferencing. While monitoring consists in modifying the language output by using explicit knowledge, inferenceng is carried out by hypothesizing from several possible sources of knowledge in order to arrive at some explicit information about language.

Besides inferencing and monitoring, other strategies that the learner resorts to are formal and functional practice (Bialystok 1978 : 76). Formal practice refers to these occasions when a learner gets information about the formal system of the code through grammar exercises, drills and the like : this practice provokes a shift of information from explicit to implicit source.

Functional practice, on the other hand, refers to the situation in which the learner is exposed to language for communication.

In other words, in functional practice, meanings prime over forms as is the case a learner speaks with a native speaker, goes to movies, reads books and so forth. The information from functional practice is stored in the implicit linguistic knowledge store.

Contrally to Krashen's, Bialystok's model accounts for the interaction between explicit and implicit knowledge. Commenting on this model, Stern has pointed out that,

> it has the merit that it is designed to allow for all language output, comprehension as well as production, and it relates to learning in formal (classroom) as well as in informal or natural setting (1983 : 407).

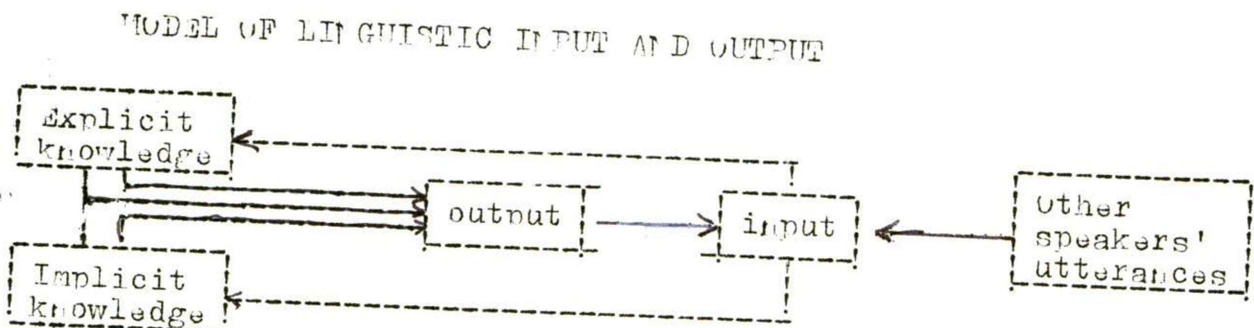
Bialystok's model of language learning illustrates what has been termed as "variability position" in second language-learning literature. According to this position, depending on the objective pursued, the type of instruction is matched with the type of learning. For instance, if the goal is to participate in natural conversation, the learner will need to acquire L_2 Knowledge which is automatic and unanalyzed by means of instruction which emphasizes communication in the classroom. This may be also achieved indirectly by a teaching that focuses on the code and at the same time creates opportunities to trigger the passage of knowledge from the explicit to implicit knowledge store. If the goal of instruction is to enable the learner to participate in discourse that requires a careful style, he will need to acquire the second language knowledge which is automatic and analyzed. Since this model allows for the explicit knowledge to become implicit and vice versa, one can acquire from learning (Krashen's sense)

This said, the two models discussed above help us to refine our understanding of the language learning process. The weaknesses of Krashen's model, in a sense, have been compensated by Bialystok's. What remains still unclear is how the learner benefits from his own output. As Krashen has maintained, the input the learner receives is from his interlocutors. Bialystok's model as well does not account for this issue. The model which seems to give an explanatory account of this issue has been provided by Sherwood-Smith (1981).

In effect, as it has been reported by Ellis (1984), the model claims that the learner internalizes the language by attending to input which consists of the learner's output and other speakers' utterances. Storage is seen to consist of implicit and explicit knowledge sources. As he points out, performance can occur calling on each source separately or together. In this model, the author concludes, implicit knowledge converts into explicit knowledge via 'input' and vice versa. The model looks as shown in figure 11.

Figure 11

MODEL OF LINGUISTIC INPUT AND OUTPUT



(Ellis 1984 : 153)

In conlusion, participating in formal and functional practice and comprehending language input seem to ... the drift of second/foreign language learning. As I am concerned with communication, I set on to consider the provision of input through functional practice (Bialystók's sense).

As has already been pointed out, learners acquire when they are exposed to language used for communication ; they comprehend the input when it has been simplified or modified (see figure 2 for ullustration). Of course, most of the assumptions made by the models discussed above are purely theoretical. It is, therefore, the purpose of the following section to give an account of some findings of empirical studies which investigated the way language input is rendered comprehensible through functional practice or communication. In this respect, existing findings indicate that certain types of interactions and tasks are more likely to facilitate language acquisition than others. The following discussion is based on studies by Long and Porter (1985), Daughty and Pica (1986) and Pica, Young and Daughty(1987).

To begin with, Long and Porter (1985) purported to examine the effect of groupwork on second language acquisition and came to ascertain that the increase of language practice opportunities leads to the quality of learners' language. This is mainly due to the fact that the kind of feedback students provide among themselves is more effective than the one the teacher provides. Long and Porter noticed that students corrected one another more often in groupwork than in teacher fronted work (p. 222). The advantage of this peer-correction, the authors report, lies in the fact that, contrarily to teachers who pay

attention to errors of syntax and pronunciation, learners seem more apt to repair lexical errors ; and in so doing, they contribute more to the content of the message than do teachers when they provide syntactic and phonological repairs.

The second study, by Daughty and Pica (1986) was meant "to determine the effect of task type and participation pattern on language classroom interaction". Teacher fronted, small group and pair arrangements were compared in terms of interactional modifications that they brought about. When students had to speak without being required to exchange information, the results were such as there was no difference in the modification of input. This similarity was largely due to the fact that participants in the task were not required to "pull information known only to individual" (Daughty and Pica 1986 : 306). In those tasks whereby there was no exchange of unknown information, the teacher and the more fluent students monopolized the floor while the less proficient either followed the tide or just capitulated. As a result, ,the authors have been led to conclude that:

> The input generated by proficient students and teacher apparently was either beyond the processing capacity of weaker students, and hence incomprehensible to them or simply was at their current processing level, and therefore did not necessitate interactional modification (p. 308).

On the contrary, a great deal of modification was generated when participants had been required to use the information previously unknown to them for the completion of certain tasks. Yet whatever the pattern of interaction, Pica and Daughty remarked that the student produced a large number of ungrammatical utterances. They thus concluded that, the presence of the

teacher was crucial for the provision of grammatical input. As they argue, however, the way and the degree to which the teacher provides such an input depends so much on the goal of language instruction. If the goal is to develop students' communicative competence, a component of which is linguistic competence, the the teacher' presence is of significant importance.

The last study worth considering deals with the effect of interaction on comprehension (Pica, Young and Daughty 1987). This study addressed the question as to what actually makes the input comprehensible during interaction. More specifically,

> (...) the study (...) examined the effects on comprehension of two kinds of modified input: premodified input in the form of a linguistically simplified and more redundant version of a short lecture, and interactionally modifeed input, in the form of a linguistically unmodified lecture about which listeners coud seek clarification in one-to-one interaction with the speaker (Gaies 1987 : 615-616).

Results of this study have confirmed the assumption that redundancy of input is an important factor in comprehension and that interaction facilitates comprehension in the sense that it allows for confirmation and comprehension checks and clarification requests. This study, however, has an important observation concerning teacher talk. As the authors argue, "redundancy of teacher talk is not in itself enough to ensure comprehension". Instead, teachers shoud check on students' understanding and at the same requests for clarifications (1986 : 753-754).

Interactional modifications proved to be so important that, the authors were led to assert that other ways of making the input comprehensible are of limited utility in the absence

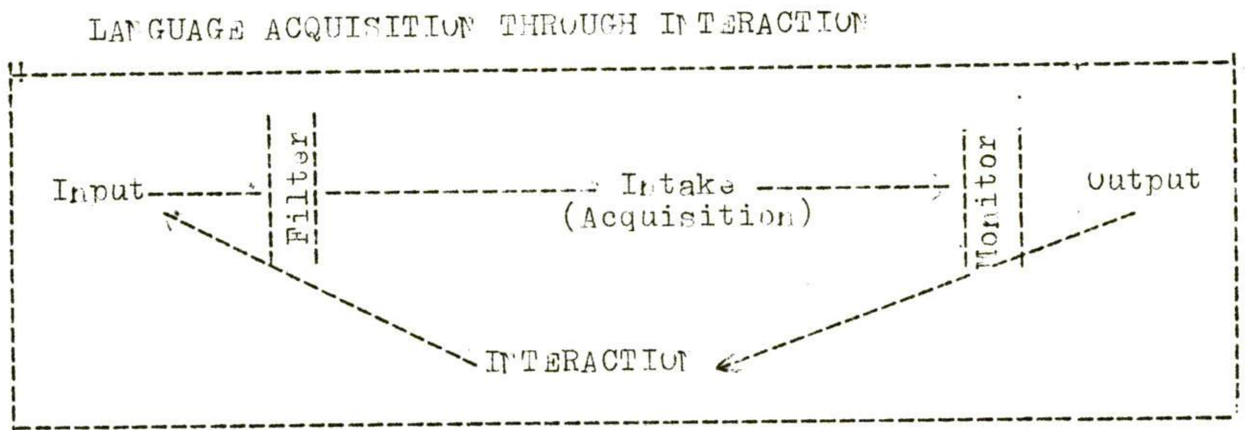
of spoken interaction. If oral interaction between students and teacher is encouraged, results will be far better than the premodification by teachers and curriculum designers in the form of graded syllabuses, simplified reading and tape recording.

Still, although the results of this study stress the importance of interactionally modified input in the classroom, more important is the realignment of the roles during classroom interactions. As Pica, Young and Daughty suggest, asking questions should no longer remain the teacher's prerogative ; students should also be given the opportunities to ask questions which serve to clarify and confirm input. And if the teacher is to ask questions, these should extend beyond student display and teacher's evaluation. Apparently, the making of input comprehensible through interaction does not rest in just setting students tasks in which they work in groups ; it also requires of the teacher to encourage the students to carry out different interactional roles, mainly by letting them initiate requests and checks for clarification.

Thus far, the studies reviewed above give a picture of what makes the input comprehensible during interaction. Yet, there is no clear indication about what is it that the input is made of. Contrarily to Krashen who argued that the learner's output only prompts more input from the interlocutors, Ellis (1984), following Sherwood-Smith (1981) suggested tht the lerner's output and his our interlocutors' (1984 : 153). If it is agreed that conversation plays an indirect role in acquisition through interaction will be represented as in figure 12.

Figure 12

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION THROUGH INTERACTION

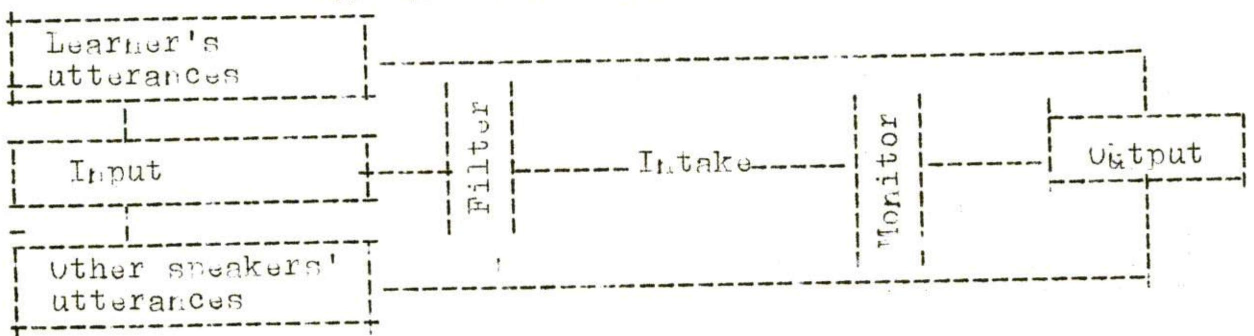


(Rwagasana 1987 : 108)

To my way of thinking, I tend to agree that the learner's output serves as input to his language processing mechanisms (Ellis 1984 : 94). This type of input can be explained in two ways. For one, Ellis points out that, by attending to the response they elicit, the learner works on his own utterances (output)as pardingly. For the other, the learner's output as part of the input to his language processing can be understood in terms of the way he tests hypotheses about the target language. As learners produce new utterances containing rules representing the hypotheses already formed, they assess their correctness in terms of the feedback they receive from interlocutors(Faerch and Kasper 1983). Following this line of argument, one would then represent language input through interaction as in figure 13.

Figure 13

LANGUAGE INPUT THROUGH INTERACTION



In this model, the language processing mechanisms are similar to those described in the model which allows for interaction between explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge. These processes are represented by solid lines, starting from input to the output. Solid lines connecting the learner's utterances and other speakers' utterances indicate the constituents of the learner's input during verbal interaction. As for dotted lines, they account for reciprocal influence between the learner's output and his subsequent utterances on the one hand, and on the other, between the learner's output and other speakers' utterances.

To wind up this section on the role of interaction on second language acquisition, three statements can be made about the language input learners receive in the classroom. First, research studies seem to be congruent about the role of interaction in second language acquisition. As has been pointed out, interaction brings about modified input expecially when students are working in groups or in pairs, exchanging unknown information. Second, the modification of input is prompted when students are allowed to take on all the interactional roles. Finally, during

interaction, it is much more likely that the input studdents process includes their own output and other speakers'.

All in all, this chapter has set out to examine the nature of communication and interaction with reference to language teaching and learning. Following this account has been the consideration of recent theories and empirical studies in second language acquisition. Yet, as is apparent, the discussion has focused one the role of communication in second language acquisition. In the following chapter, I discuss what it is to be acquired in order to be able to communicate in the target language with particular reference to the teaching of English in Rwanda high schools.

CHAPTER TWO

RWANDAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE : SEARCH FOR DEFINITION AND ACQUISITION PROCESS.

In the foregoing chapter, the focus has been on how second/foreign languages are learned. As has been pointed out, communication seems to have a facilitative effect on language acquisition. Accordingly, acquisition is likely to take place when language is used for real communication. If then one is to investigate language acquisition in the classroom, one will check on whether language is used for communicative purposes.

Thus, relying on the results of the questionnaire addressed to teachers of English, Classroom observation and the interviews I had with some teachers. this chapter investigates the extent to which Rwandan high school students acquire the knowledge and skills needed in order to communicate in the target language. In other words, this chapter examines the acquition of the communicative competence in English. It starts by defining this concept in general and then with particular reference to Rwandan high school students. Finally, the chapter will discuss the acquisition of the communicative competence as will have been defined.

To begin with, there seems to be a fuzziness around the meaning of the concept communicative competence. In effect, in the literature about language teaching and learning, this concept has acquired various definitions which are often confusing. Quoting from Savignon (1972), Acton states this case as follows :

> Collecting definitions of 'communicative competence' is fun. Teachers, methodologists and textbook writers have used the term in many interesting is confusing ways. Some use it assuredly, some tendentiously, others cautiously. Some still have trouble pronouncing it (1983 : 193)!

Incidentally, this notion is defined in relation to the purpose for which language is used. Krashen and Terrell, for instance, understand communicative competence as "the ability to use language to achieve a particular purpose (1983 : 166), implying that one proves to be a competent communicator according to "the outcome" of the act of communication he has initiated. Other linguists have extended the concept of communicative competence to the semiotic system available to man. In this respect, communicative competence covers a person's system available to him as a member of a given socio-cultural community" (Lyons 1977 : 573).

Actually, the term competence is associated primarily with Chomsky's early publications in linguistics, especially in his The Aspects of the Theory of Syntax (1965). In The Aspects of the theory of Syntax, Chomsky makes a distinction between competence and performance. By competence, he refers to the speaker's/hearer's tacit knowledge of the structure of his language · this knowledge enables his to produce and understand new sentences, to distinguish grammatical from ungrammatical sentences, and to recognize paraphrases. To put it crudely, competence refers to what is usually called knowledge about language : syntax, phonology and semantics.

The knowledge of syntax enables the speaker to produce grammatical sentences and to equate two or more sentences with the same grammatical structure. With this knowledge, ambiguous sentences are interpreted as deriving from several structures (deep and surface struvtures). By the knowledge of phonology, the speaker can produce and hear phonetic features and make a meaningful discrimination of them. The semantic system, in turn, enablesthe speaker/hearer to interprete the meaning of sentences. Thus, two structurally identical sentences will be distinguished in terms of their meanings. Furthermore, anomalous and ambiguous sentences will be identified although they might be grammatical.

As far as performance is concerned, it is to be understood as the actual production/perception of utterances.

Scholars who analyzed the chomskyan dichotomy distinguisshed a strong and weak version of competence and performance. On the one hand, the weak version refers to competence as "the knowledge of grammar and other aspects of language" and to performance as "the actual use of language in concrete situations" Canale and Swain 1980 : 3). On the other hand, in the strong version, competence and performance are to be understood as follows :

> Competence refers to linguistic system (or grammar) that an ideal native speaker of a given language has internalized whereas performance mainly concerns the psychological factors that are involved in the perception and production of speech (Canale and Swain 1980 : 3).

Given this perspective, Canale and Swain note, a theory of competence is equivalent to a theory of grammar and concerns the grammatical (as opposed to ungrammatical) sentences of a

language. As far as a theory of performance is concerned, the focus is put on the acceptability of sentences in speech perception and production. Besides, such a theory is "a theory of grammar and the set of non-grammatical and psychological factors bearing on language use". To illustrate this case, the two authors the following example: (a) the was cheese green (ungrammatical)
(b) the cheese the rat the cat the dog saw chased ate was green (grammatical but unacceptable)
(c) the dog saw the cat that chased the rat that ate the cheese that was green (grammatical and acceptable)

And in the opinion of these authors, (a) differs from both (b) and (c) in terms of grammaticality but (b) and (c) differ with respect to acceptability : i.e. (b) is more difficult to interpret and to produce than (c).

Noticeally, Chomsky's notion of competence and performance does not take account of language in use. Instead, it is limited to whqt a native speaker can produce and understand as being grammatical or ungrammatical, acceptable or unacceptalle. Hymes (1972) and Campbell and Wales (1970) are reported to be among the first to point out Chomsky's account of competence is reductionist (Canale and Swain 1980). Not only must a senctence be grammatical and acceptable, but also it must fit the context in which it has been produced.

Moreover, there are some grammatical and acceptable sentences that people will tend not to use. Richards examplifies this point with sentences which, although generated in the C Chomskyan sense, are rarely used in communication. He notes :

> In telling the time, for example, we can say, <u>It's two forty</u>, or <u>It's twenty to three</u>, but not It's three minus twenty,

> It's ten after two thirty, or It's eight five after twenty. If I want you to post a letter for me, I may say, please post a letter for me, but I am unlikely to sy I request you to post this letter, or It's my desire that this letter be posted by you (1983 : 114).

As the author indicates, although these sentences can be generated by an ideal speaker, they have no status as potential 'utterances' within discourse in so far as they would never be used by a native-speaker of English (1983 :114).

Despite these deficiencies, however, Chomsky's theory of competence and performance refines our understanding of the kind of knowledge that the language user must possess if he is to produce and understand the target sentences. As will be observed, Chomsky's account of competence is reflected in the subsequent literature about these concepts.

What essentially lacks in Chomsky's theory, a scholar noted, is "the socio-cultural dimension thatiis essential to any study concerned with the communicative aspects of language" (Munby 1978 : 20). Among the studies which incorporate this dimension, Hymes' article" On Communicative Competence' is the most influential..As quoted in Brumfit and Johnson (1979 : 15) Hymes argues in that article that "There are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless".

For Hymes, rules of use require the speaker to know what to say, when, how where and for what purpose. As Conethard reports, Hymes maintains that "how something is said is part of what is said" (1985).

Hymes thus has made the distinction between linguistic

competence and communicative competence, with the latter subsuming the former. As Canale and Swain reports, this notion of communicative competence includes not only grammatical competence (or implicit knowledge of the rules of grammar) but also contextual or socio-linguistic competence (knowledge of the rules of language use). Hymes has proposed a theory of communicative competence which 'includes four types of knowledge :

1. Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible.
2. Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation ;
3. Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successfil) in relation to a context in wich it is used and evaluated ;
4. Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed, and what its doing entails (Quoted in Brumfit and Johnson 1979 : 19).

What is formally possible in this theory implies the grammaticality of a sentence when the means of communication is language. It thus refers to Chomsky's linguistic competence. The second component in Hymes's theory embodies the acceptability of a sencence and depends on the psychological readiness on the part of the speaker/hearer. For instance, the sentence (b) is formally possible, but as far as the human brain is concerned, it will be hardly processed. What is appropriate, in turn, refers to the socio-cultural context in which the utterance is produced. As already pointed out, the speaker must take acount of the context in which he is at the moment he produces or perceives utterances. It is his ability to contextualize that will reflect such a kind of knowledge. The last component in Hymes model sug-

gests the frequency of occurence in a situation. In other words, the knowledge about "whether and to what degree something is in fact done" accounts for the awareness of speakers about the "the commoness, rarity, previous occurrence or novelty of many features of speech" (Coulthald 1985 :34).

On the whole, Hymes' theory of communicative competence is an interaction of grammatical, psycholinguistic, sociocultural and probabilistic systems of competence (Canale and Swain 1980), and, undoubtedly, marks a shift in linguistics. Indeed, with Hymes's theory of communicative competence, language specialists cease to view language as merely a system of grammatical rules but also as a means of communication and as occurring in a socio-cultural context.

The problem with Hymes' theory, however, is that nobody can attend to all the factors which come into play during communication. Besides, as Widdowson and Allen point out,

> an utterance can take on an enormously wide range of meaning in different contexts (...), not only is there a difficulty in establishing how many contexts to consider when specifying the range of appropriateness of an utterance, but there is the problem of knowing how much of context is relevant (1975 : 17).

To put it another way, the main problem in Hymes' model of communicative competence derives from the fact that it is almost impossible to relate functions to grammatical forms and/or to specify how socials contexts (which may determine the function of an utterance) interact with the grammatical structures to make up the meaning of an utterance.

Among other writers reported to have dealt with the theory of communicative competence are Savignon (1972) and Stern (1978,1979). As Rwagasana (1987) maintains, these authors are worth mentioning because they have introduced the notion of communication strategies which are used by speakers to handle communication. These strategies concern social, grammatical and psychological variables and relate to

> how to deal with false strarts, hesitations, and other performance factors, how to avoid grmmmatical forms that have not been mastered fully, how to address strangers when unsure of their social status-in short, how to cope in with authentic communication situation and how to keep the channel open (Canale and Swain 1980 : 25).

Yet, despite the amount of literature on the concept of communicative competence, there seem to be a disagreement on this concept (Rwagasana 1987), while Savignon recognizes the existence of this divergent conception of the communicative competence, she points out that its meaning is generally understood as including far more than grammatical sentence. As cited in Rwagasana (1987), Savignon maintains that, in addition to the knowledge of grammar, other components include sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence which require respectively an understanding of the social context in which language is used, an understanding of how utterances are strung together to form a text, and strategies for making the best use of the knowledge one has about how a language works in order to interpret, express, and negotiate meaning in a given context.

Savignon's statement echoes what Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) have identified as the minimal components of the communicative competence. In effect,for Canale and Swain(1980),

communicative competence was understood as comprising three areas of competence : the grammatical competence (including the knowledge of lexical items and other rules of morphology, syntax, semantics and phonology), the sociolinguistic competence (made up of socio-cultural rules of use and rules of discourse) and strategic competence (including verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate breakdowns in communication. Later on, in Canale (1983), this model of communicative competence was extended to four minimal components with the separation of the discourse competence from the sociolinguistic competence. Thus, communicative competence came to be understood as minimally including four areas of competence.

1. Grammatical competence. As Canale (1985) maintains, this type of competence includes the knowledge and the skills required to understand and express accurately the literal meaning of utterances. More specifically, it involes the knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics and phonology.

2. Sociolinguistic competence. This type of competence, Canale states, addresses the extent to which utterances are produced and understood appropriately, depending on contextual factors. Appropriateness of utterances, he maintains, concerns both the form and meaning. About the latter, he says :

> Appropriateness of meaning concerns the extent to which a particular communicative function (e.g. commanding, complaining and inviting), attitudes (including politeness and formality) and ideas are judged to be proper in a given situation (1983 : 7).

As Canale illustrates, it would be generally inappropriate for a waiter in a restaurant to command a customer to order a certain menu item ragardless of how the utterance and communicative function(a command were expressed grammatically).

As for the appropriateness of form, Canale has this to say :

> Appropriateness of form concerns the extent to which a given meaning (including communicative functions, attitudes and proposition/ideas) is represented in a verbal and/or non-verbal form that is proper in a given sociolinguistic content (1983 : 7).

For instance, it would be inappropriate if a waiter trying to be polite were to ask, "O.K., chump, what are you and this broad gonna eat?' (Canale 1983 : 7).

Thus, sociolinguistic competence involves both rules of use and grammatical rules. It is the combination of these ruses that Canale and Swain overstated when they argued that,

> Just as Hymes (1972) was able to say that there are rules of grammar that would be useless without rules of language use, so we feel that there are rules of use that would be useless without rules of grammar (1980 : 5).

3. <u>Discourse competence.</u> Canale suggests that this type of competence concerns the mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres. By genre, he means the type of text : oral and written narratives, an argumentative essay, a scientific report, a business letter, and a set of instructions. The unity of a text, Canale mentions, is achieved through <u>cohesion</u> in form and <u>coherence</u> in meaning. He expounds the two terms as follows :

> Cohesion deals with how utterances are linked structurally and facilitates interpretation of a text. For example, the use of cohesion devices such as pronouns, synonyms, ellipses, conjunctions and parallel structures serve to relate individual utterances and to indicate how a group of utterances is to be understood (...) as a text. Coherence refers to the relationships among the different meanings in a text where these meanings may be literal meanings, communicative functions, and attitudes (1983 : 9).

To illustrate the concept of coherence, Canale helds from Widdowson the following example :

speaker A : That's the telephone.
speaker B : I'm in the bath
speaker A : OK.

As Canale reports, although there is no overt signal of cohesion among these utterances, they form a coherent discourse in the sense that A's final remark functions as an acceptance of B's excuse.

4. Strategic competence. This component involves the mastery of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may help compensate breakdowns in communication. Such breakdowns, Canal maintains, are due to performance factors and to insufficient competence. Communication strategies relate to the grammatical, sociolinguistic and discourse competence. Moreover, some strategies are used to enhance effectiveness of communication as when slowering and raising the voice deliberately.

As such, the model of communicative competence which is presented by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) has some important bearings on language teaching. Any language teaching which aims at developing students' communicative competence should include at least all the four areas of competence. As Canale

argues, these areas are equally importantt and none of them should be emphasized over the others.

> There is no evidence for the view that grammatical competence is any more or less crucial to successful communication than is sociolinguistic, discourse or strategic competence (1983 : 18).

In addition to catering for all these four areas in language teaching, Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) propose four principles which must guide a teaching geared to developing learners' communicative competence.

Thus, the second/foregn teaching must be based on the learners' needs and interests. These needs must be specified with respect to grammatical competence (e.g. the levels of grammatical sccuracy that are required in oral and written communication), sociolinguistic competence (e.g. needs relating to the settings, topics and communicative functions), discourse competence (e.g. the type of text to be dealt with) and strategic competence (e.g. verbal compensatory strategies for paraphrasing lexical items that have not been mastered sufficiently).

Equally important are the opportunities which must be offered to the learners to take part in meaningful communicative interaction with competent speakers. As Canale indicates, this principle is as important with respect to teaching as it is with testing. To this point, I side with Rwagasana (1987) who recognizes that, given the kind of environment in which English is taught in Rwanda it is the teachers' and program designers' role to provide students with opportunities to be exposed to real communication to accomplish specific goals.

Another principle that must be followed relates to the communicative resources offered by the native language which must be exploited particularly at the early stage of second/foreign language learning. As the last principle, Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) suggest that, in addition to the native language input, the whole program of language should cater for the knowledge of language in general. In other words, learners should be taught about language, drawing as much as possible upon the first language program and the second culture. This would be only feasible, however, in a milieu where the target language is the language of instruction.

In sum, the model of communicative competence presented by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) indicates cleary the constituents of a competence required for learners to communicate in the target language. It increases our ability to specify at least the types of input which learners must acquire if they are to produce and understand messages in the target language.

This framework also make it clear that, depending on the level of proficiency to be achieved, the meaning of the concept communicative competence vary according to the specific group of learners. Thus, as Mc Groarty points out :

> Communicative competence is not the same for adults in a job training program, the University teaching assistant, or the child in bilingual classroom. Each situation demands a particular kind of competence, or demonstrated skills, from the participants (1984 : 258).

As far as Rwandan high school students are concerned, their communicative competence is more or less determined by

the school orientation. Therefore, in order to define the communicative competence for Rwandan high school students, it is necessary to consider the kinds of situations awaiting them after high school education. Obviously, the knowledge and skills needed will be reflected through the curricula designed for the different schools and through the exams given to students.

As is the case in Rwandan educational system, it seems logical to assume that the job and studies at the university level are the two main settings awaiting the students. In the first case, the students who are likely to get jobs whereby English is mostly used are those who attend schools of letters, secretarial major and schools of economics and trade. But, other students such as those attending medical, nursery and teacher training schools, perform tasks which are relevant to situations which they are likely to meet during their career. For instance, as concerns the reading skills, medical school students are entitled to "read and understand simple medical labels" while those attending teacher training schools will "read and understand simple texts or documents dealing with education for information" (English curriculum, 5th year).

Similarly, it is quite noticeable that student who are likely to major in English at a higher level will have developed an appropriate competence in order to cope with the situation at that level. Evidence for this case is found in the following statement about the starting-out point for 6th year students English curriculum (Literary sections, secretarial major, economics and trade sections.) :

> At this final stage of language learning
> in secondary school, it may be useful to
> pursue the more systematic approach of
> English structures, already recommended in
> the English curriculum. Making (the) stu-
> dents aware of the mechanisms of the
> patterns they have been trained to use in
> listening, speaking and writing activities
> will stimulate their curiosity and initi-
> ate them into theories and techiques they
> will need at university level.

Apart from the above factors, the other influential
element to which communicative competence depends relates to the
types of exams given to students. In effect, for both the teacher
and students, exams seem to be the ultimate goal for teaching
and learning. Demonstrably, the content of exams influences the
teachers' selection of the competence to be imparted to students.
After having noticed that oral skills are not tested during
national exams, teachers tend to focus on grammar, text compre-
hension, vacabulary etc... . As it was brought to my attention,
teachers find it almost a waste of time to teach things which
will not figure in the national exam.

In much the same way, students may come to the conclusion
that, oral skills are useless in so far as they are not tested
during the end-of-term or the end-of-year exams. In this case,
unless there is another motivating factor, the students'motiva-
tion to participate in oral activities will slaken. It is,
therefore incumbent to teachers and examinators to incorpo-
rate communicative tasks in the exams. Otherwise, as Ellis
says,

> It is (...) difficult to fool students [illegible]
> that they should develop are skills for
> participating in unplanned discourse if
> the kind of skills demanded by examination
> they are studying for are those relating
> to planned discourse (1984 : 195).

[illegible]

[illegible]

Thus, considering how exams constitute a powerful source of motivation for the students to learn and for the teacher to select the skills which are appropriate for developing students' communicative competence, it is high time oral communication tasks were included in exams.

Among other elements which contribute to the making up of students' communicative competence is the teacher. Even though Rwandan teachers have no important role in deciding what to teach, they decide about the method they use. (Incidentally, I refer to Kagaba (1988) for detailed information on the methods used by Rwandan teachers of English in preparation). The communicative approach, it is believed, is more likely to develop students' ability to communicate in the target language whereas the audiolingual method develops more students' knowledge of the language than their ability to communicate.

Related to the method are the knowledge and ideas teachers have about certain concepts in language teaching. In effect, for some teachers, the concept communicative competence seems to be equated with speaking abilities. As a result, whenever they switch to activities whereby students speak, they assume that they are developing the whole of the communicative competence. It is to this point that I want to define Rwandan high school students' communicative competence.

As is shown in the English curricula, the teaching of English to Rwandan high school students is geared not only to developing the students' knowledge of the English code, but also their ability to use that code in the nationa/international community. In fact, in the curricula, it is stated that, English

is taught in order

> to develop into the student a series of behaviours. Not only the student acquires the knowledge he is taught but he also acquires attitudes necessary for his evolution in the national and the international community.

Among the attitudes to be developed, the curricula suggests for instance the easiness with and openness to other people. Consequently, the objective in teaching is to enable the students to communicate with other speakers, adapting themselves to different situations and selecting appropriate corresponding language, both in written and oral language (Following the English Curricula).

Taking into account this objective, one can argue that communicative competence for Rwandan high school students does not consist only in exchanging oral messages but also in understanding and producing written messages. It is at this point that I agree with Rwagasana, who, referring to Berns, defines the communicative competence for Rwandan high school students as :

> The ability to make oneself understood, without hesitation and inhibitions, by linguistic means which the individual comprehends and has learned to access in terms of their effects, and the ability to comprehend communicative intentions even when they are expressed in a code which the speaker him or herself does not yet know well enough to use and is only partially available in his or her own dialect (1987 : 48).

Noticeably, this definition draws much on the one presented by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) and allows for the difference in learners' level of proficeency.

If then the communicative competence to be imparted to

Rwandan high school students comprises the grammatical, socio-linguistic, discourse and strategic competence, how are these competences acquired in the classroom? To account for this issue, I have relied on the inquiry I made into communication in the classroom. Thus, the acquisition of the communicative competence was checked against the communicativeness of the situation in which the input was provided to the students.

As it appears to be, grammatical competence seems to be overemphasized in comparison to sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence. The reason underlying this emphasis, it has already been hinted at, is largely rooted in the content of the curricula and the demands made upon the students during examinations. As has been said, some teachers do not see the importance of teaching the skills which are not tested. Some others, however, are aware of the fact that, apart from the need to pass the exams, the students may need English for communication once they have left the high school. Such teachers then try to incorporate a communicative component in their teaching of grammatical forms.

To ullustrate this point, I refer to a lesson I happened to observe in a literary section (5th year) whereby the students were to use the conditional clauses. The activity came in as a conclusion to the study of a text from Ngugi's Secret Lives. It consisted of thinking about what bad things would happen if a wife were left alone for years. The students were to team up in groups and to discuss various possibilities. After each group's spokesman had presented the report to the class, the teacher, who had been recording the students' errors, decided to have

the students practice the conditional clause. He set up such situations as "what would you be if you were an animal?" and the students carried out the activity lively. In this particular instance, I think that acquisition was taking place because the liveliness of the activity made it clear that the students did think more on the message than on the form which they were using.

Unfortunately, there are some teachers who introduce the new language form by using only a model sentence. Without denying the validity of such practice, I nonetheless find it unhelpful for the acquisition of certain meanings of the grammatical form presented in that way. In fact, as Larsen-Freeman suggests, any language teaching should cater for "the three dimensions of language" : form, function and meaning. As she argues, if a teacher were using a structural syllabus and the unity on the passive, the teacher must teach not only the form but also the meaning. Larsen-Freeman righteously maintains that the passive form has'a grammatical meaning'of putting the focus or the theme rather than on the agent. At the same time, the function of this form, i.e. when it should be used, should also be taught. She continues saying that,

> The same would be true if one were teaching the function of apologizing, for example, and wanted students to end up with more than some memorized formulae for apologizing, suh as they might get from a phrase book, the teacher would have to work with the students on the grammatical form and meaning of the apologies (1987 : 4).

Yet, if some grammatical forms can be presented in meaningful contexts, there are such aspects of the grammatical competence

as tone, rythm and stress that still puzzle teachers. In fact, the problem arises as to how these features can be incorporated in a communicative language teaching framework. As I noticed, teachers still divorce the above aspects from other aspects of language in use. In so doing, I think, they do not show the students how the tone, stress or intonation can affect the meaning of an utterance. Since "sounds are fundemental part of the process by which we communicate and comprehend lexical grammatical and sociolinguistic meaning" (Richards and Pennington 1986 : 208), pronunciation should not be seen only as the production of sounds but also as a means of conveying certain meanings.

Nor is pronunciation to be understood as the oral production of sentences in a way native speakers pronounce. Without wishing to push the issue further I will only recommend that pronunciation be integrated into other skills such as listening or study of vocabulary. For instance, I observed a lesson whereby the concern was to put the sencodary and primary stress on some words and on occasion, the teacher could specified the different meanings that a word takes on depending on where the stress is put. Incidentally, it is worth mentioning that some teachers bring radios and tapes to just have their students listen to real English. As will be seen later, this practice, when it is adoptence from the early stage, familializes the students with the English stress, rythm and intonation.

If then the grammatical forms should be as related as possible to their meanings and functions, how are the students to get the input which enables them to express and interprete these functions and meanings? This brings me to speak of the acquisi-

tion of the sociolinguistic competence in the classroom.

As I could infer from the responses I got from teachers, appropriateness of meanings and situation is dealt with through role-plays, dialogues etc... Or, in some cases, the teacher tells the students what is normally said in such or such case. What seems to be a problem relates mainly to the cultural norms which intervene during communication.

In effect, in Rwandan high schools, the problem arises as to which system of non-verbal communication should be used during an English lesson. Some teachers see no danger in using norms related to either Rwandan or to English culture. Yet, where there is differnce between the two, it should be brought to the students' attention and eventually practiced through role-plays, simulation dialogues etc...

Still, there is a great danger in confusing these cultural aspects especially when one is interacting with a native speaker. As some teachers reported to me, native speakers may misinterprete foreigners as being "American" or"British", or"smart" when they use typical american or british gestures. Sometimes even, joking can be interpreted as a way of showing off.

Although such unhappy experiences may happen, the case may be worse for foreign speakers who simply ignore the target cultural aspects. When it comes to teaching, teachers should avoid leaving things out. It is what Pennycook states when he maintains that,

> We should be asking ourselves if what we choose to teach is more useful than what we choose not to teach and among the latter, paralinguistic features are of crucial importance in the learning process (1985 : 276).

As concern the discourse competence, it seems that it can not be explicitely taught. If students acquire it, it is via textual analysis whereby teachers provide input which relates to cohesion and coherence. In the first case, the students may be presented with a text where they can deal with lexical cohesion such as repetition of lexical items, use of grammatical cohesion devices like pronouns, ellipsis, logical connectors and so forth. In the second case, students may deal with the normal progression of meanings in conversation or in a business letter, a short story etc...

Like the discourse competence, the acquisition of the strategic competence is not evident except through the correction the teacher provides when communication among the students is about to break down. In this case, the teacher provides the students with some strategies which are used in real life.

As Murphy (1986) suggests, the teacher should present first the explanations about the importance of communication strategies with special attention to the fact that these strategies do also exist in the mother tongue. As the students interact, the teacher may inspire some gambits which can be used in the appropriate situations. For instance, the teacher may refer to the use of "well","ehr", "but er", "you know", "I mean" etc... while a speaker is searching for other ideas. Similarly, instead of remainging silent, a speaker may say, "I don't see what you mean", "Do you mean", and so forth. To this point, I refer to Twagilimana (1986) who elaborates on the meaning of discourse particles.

To conclude this chapted, in Rwandan high schools, there is still an unbalance between the acquisition of grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competence, with only the first being the most emphasized. The emphasis on the grammatical competence largely from the nature of the syllabus which is followed and the demands made upon the students during examanations. Without implying that all the four components of the communucative competence should be equally catered for, I think that the present unbalance among these components in Rwandan high school classrooms is impedes the development of the students' communicative abilities. Not only the program should be re-organized so as to include a content which relates to all the four competences, but also teachers should try to resort to some ways thought of to prompt communication in the classroom. These ways are the object of the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND ACTIVITIES FOSTERING LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

So far, the point has been made about the relationship between communication and second/foreign language acquisition on the one hand, and the kinds of input needed in order to communicate in the target language on the other. The present chapter considers in which ways the teacher can manage to set up conditions wich provide students with that input. More specifically, this chapter examines the strategies the teachers can use in order to create conditions which are more likely to be conducive to acquisition. These strategies mainly relate to classroom management and activities through which students use the target language for real communication. In each case, particular attention will be paid to the role of the teacher in ensuring that the input that the students receive is comprehensible.

To begin with, there seems to be three main sources of input in a Rwandan high school classroom : the teacher, the classmates and the reading and listening material. Through this material, the students get a certain quantity of input especially when they freely explore them. As some teachers reported to me, apart from the materials from the English section of the Direction des Programmes de l'Enseignement Secondaire, (DPES) they try to diversify the source of input for mainly reading and listening skills.

Indeed, they bring their own tapes and radios in the classroom and have their students listen to songs, news and interviews. In so doing, teachers get students acquainted with real English language. In other words, students are exposed to the English language as it is used by its various speakers, native as well as nonnative speakers alike. In this particular instance, students may realize that there are many varieties of English of which the one they speak in the classroom is no less English than any other.

As far as the reading materials are concerned, teachers encourage students to read other materials than those from the DPES, especially in upper levels. These are mainly newspapers, magazines and some experpts from novels or short stories. Sometimes, students are assigned to read from these materials and to present a report to the class individually or in pannel. Since other students ask questions about the meaning of one or another word, it is more likely that students make sure that they understand the text before classroom presentation. In so doing, therefore, they are more likely to benefit from that kind of reading.

Apart from the input from the aforementioned source, students get input from the various types of interaction during which English is used for communication. Scholars who have concerned themselves with classroom interaction have distinguished : Teacher-student, Teacher-class, Teacher-group and student(s)-student(s) interaction (Ellis 1984). During these interactions, three goals in the real use of the target language have also been distinguished : the socializing language, the

instructional language and the managerial-or organizational language.

In effect, scholars have revealed that the whole language used in a second/foreign classroom is not used communicatively. Coulthard states this as follows :

> Much of what goes on in the foreign language classroom is not genuinely communicative. Apart from those occasions when teacher is organizing the classroom and the lesson, 'open the window/close your books', instructing, 'a noun is ...', and socializing, 'Hello Suzsan...', all the language used is more or less artificial because it arises not from a need to use the language but from a requirement by the teacher to produce language (1985 : 157, my emphasis).

In a second/foreign language classroom, therefore, acquisition is more likely to take place when the teacher exploits advantageously these moments when language is used as a means of organizing the classroom, instructing, and interacting with students as individuals who, as Willis (1987) suggests, have a life of their own outside the classroom.

Less time needs be spent on the latter point because, fortunately, all the teachers have adopted English as the main means of communication during English lessons, what I want to suggest is that teachers be examplar in attending to this requirement. Indeed, it so happens that a teacher loses control of himself and uses Kinyarwanda or French for maintaining [illegible] in the classroom. In so doing, after all, be obviously creates a negative attitude toward English as far as genuine communication is concerned. On the contrary, teachers should not limit the use of the English language only to pedagogical reasons, rather, as far as possible, they should seek to use it for all interac-

tions occurring in the classroom (Ellis 1987).

While organizing the class, the teacher will make sure that he simplifies the input and, at the same time, he has it roughly-tuned for acquisition to take place. In our high schools, there seems to be three main ways by which teachers manage to provide comprehensible input while organizing the class : by using Kinyarwanda or French, by simplifying their English so as to adapt it to the level of their students and by using a natural language but with rephrasing, repeating, checking comprehension etc...

As regards the use of Kinyarwanda/French for classroom management, there are some moments in which the practice is helpful and some others it is detrimental for acquisition. The use of Kinyarwanda/French is at best when it's the only way to get students catch the message. It is better that the message should have initailly been delivered in English before the teacher attemps to transmit it in Kinyarwanda or French. In this case, students might have processed some of its elements but failed to process some others. If the message is reformulated in Kinyarwanda or in French and then rephrased in English, it is likely that acquisition will take place.

Yet, for beginners, it is almost impossible to ask them to rephrase the message in English. Not only this is time consuming, but also students' ability in English are as yet developed. However, even though the teacher can resort to Kinyarwanda or French, he should ensure that students do not always wait for him to do so before they show the appropriate behavior.

If for instance the teacher wants the students to team in groups, the important thing is that some of them do so. There will certainly be some others who will remain perplexed as to what to do and who will eventually join others just by imitation ; but after many practice., they will have grasped what the teacher means when he says : "I want you in pairs", "Move forward", "Turn round and look at the person next you" etc...

As has already been said, teachers should use other languages than English after that other means have been tried out. If they always organize the class for instance in Kinyarwanda, they will end up with fostering a negative attitude toward English, and as a result the latter will be seen as merely a subject matter rather than an additional and powerful means of communication. Quite to the contrary, students will feel confident when they realize that they are showing appropriate behavior to messages given in another language than their mother tongue.

Just as the teacher resorts to French or Kinyarwanda to make his message more clear, the students may also be allowed to do so. It happens, after all, while answering teachers' questions, that the students do not find the right word in English so that it becomes necessary to use French or Kinyarwanda, with the latter being less favored than the former. This has, perhaps, the advantage that French is more similar to Englilh than to Kinyarwanda and as a result, students may find it easier to integrate a French word in their utterances than it is with Kinyarwanda words. Repeatedly, however, students ...

should be familialized with the use of English as an effective means of communication, this from the very start.

As concerns the instructional language, the input coming in to the student is more likely to become intake when "it occurs as a <u>response</u> to something the pupils have said rather than as a pre-planned teacher-initiated exchange" Ellis (1984 : 106). In any case, it is important that the teacher adheres to the "here-and-now principle" by using the language which refers to immediate and concret referents. As Ellis puts it, "the underlying premise is that the language that relates to the immediate content is easier to use (...) than the language which relates to displaced activity" (1984 ; 217).

It is particularly to this point that I want to discuss the concept of adapting language to the level of the students. It has already been suggested that students are motivated when they realize that they can understand messages in a new language. In adapting their language so that the students understand it, therefore, teachers are more likely to foster language acquisition. In effect, when students are exposed to the language which is higher than they actually can process, they end up in boredom and overburdening. Yet, in much the same way, it should be recalled that, when the students get the input which is under their current level, acquisition is less likely to take place.

Thus, to adapt language to the level of the students is to be understood as different from providing finely-tuned input. In the first case, one will adapt his language to any kind of audience but, at the same time, he may provide either roughly-

tuned or finely-tuned input. To take up the example similar to the one given in the foregoing chapter, a teacher is likely to include in his language "would it be possible for you to lend me your pen, please?" in a 5th year English lesson, and while he is in the lower forms, he will probably be limited to such simple forms as "Lend me a pen","give me a pen" etc... But, in both cases, he will have adapted his language to the level of the students.

Contrarily to what some teachers think, language adaptation does not exclude the normal use of language. For sure, teachers who deliberately speak too slowly, syllable by syllable, illude themselves in as much as they are exposing students to a somewhat reduced language. And as nothing which is said by the teacher is rarely meaningless to students, the latter will be accustomed to that simplified and twisted language which they probably will use when they have to communicate in English. One way to cope with this problem of adapting language and at the same time to provide roughly-tuned input is to speak naturally and to allow oneself some repetitions and paraphrases. Another way is, ultimately, to check on students' comprehension.

Comprehension checking, however, needs be handled carefully. Constant checks on comprehension can eventually generate into a boring classroom atmosphere. Teachers who, at any rate, are uttering such formulaic chunks as "O.K?" "Right?" or "Have you understood?" address less students than themselves. There seems to be some teachers, in effect, who do not even expect any answer after "Have you understood?". Just as they utter the last syllables of the word" understood", they add"Right!" or

the students have actually readone another's copy, the teacher may require them to comment on the text, or, in case of a letter, to reply. In so doing, the students will surely attend more to the meaning than to the form of what they read.

Yet, with peer-evalution there seems to be objections. As Dangerfield has pointed out, "this method does have the disadvantage in that students may wrongly identify mistakes and reinforce the mistaken ideas" (1985 : 195). He also raises the problem teachers have when they have to build up an assessment of individual students. This is a sound remark, but it should be noted that teachers will not always limit themselves to this kind of correction.

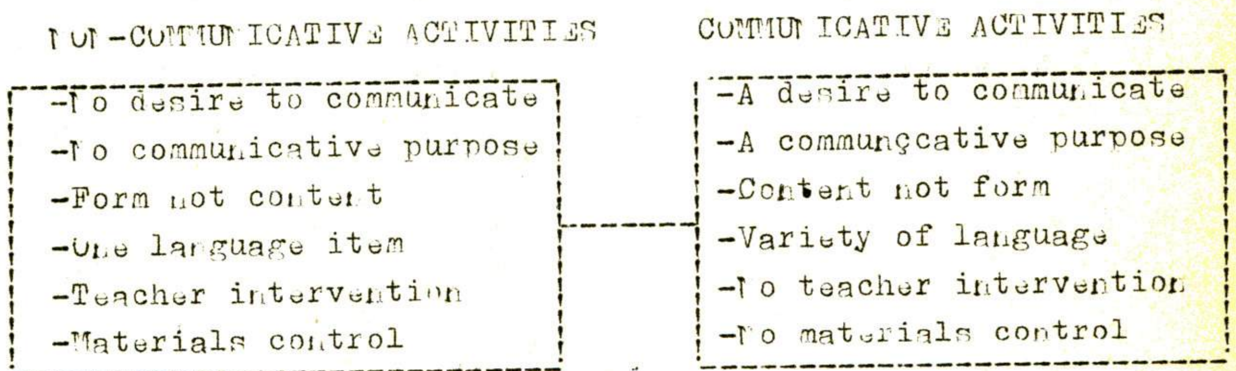
Besides the input coming in from peer-evaluation, equally important is the one from student(s)-student(s) oral interaction. As has already been suggested, language acquisition is more likely to take place when students are engaged in activities whereby they produce and exchange messages using the target language. These activities have been termed "communicative activities". As they have been largely documented elsewhere (among others, Kazanenda(1986), Magambo (1986) and Rwagasana (1987), I will focus on what the term 'communicative' entails in these activities.

Harmer (1983) considers the nature of communication in the language classroom as a continuum whereby one extreme includes non-communicative activities, the other communicative activities. As he states, during communicative activities students must have a desire to communciate and there must be a

communicative purpose. The existence of a communicative purpose makes it that students will use all the resources available to them in order to achieve that purpose. As a result, attention will be paid to the content rather than to the form of what the students sayand the teacher will not intervene to tell them that they have made mistakes or correct their their pronunciation. Ultimately, the material used will not be limited to a restricted language.

During communicative activities, on the one hand, language production is motivated by the need to attain accuracy ; the emphasis is put on the form rather than on the content. The teacher intervenes only to provide the right form and the material is so designed as to concentrate on a particular item. The distinction communicative/non-communicative is represented by Harmer as follows :

Figure 13



On the same continuum, Littlewood (1981) has distinguished pre-communicative and communicative activities. Pre-communicative activities comprise structural activities and quasi-communicative activities. As Littlewood explains, quasi-communicative activities take into account the communicative as well as the structural facts about language. They are contrasted with struc-

tural activities such as drills verb paradigm etc... As in shown in the example below , quasi-communicative activities can be subsumed under what Harmer calls non-communicative activities. The example Littlewood provides is as follows :

> P : By the way, has John written the letter yet?
> R : Yes, he wrote it yesterday.
> P : Has he seen the film yet?
> R : Yes, he saw it yesterday.
>
> P : promp
> R : responde
> (Litterwood 1981)

Even drills that are based on the exchange of information are non-communicative in Harmer's opinion and I tend to agree with him in as much as drills are centred on the form of the language rather than the content.

On the other hand, Littlewood (1981) divides communicative activities into functional communication activities and social interaction activities. Richards and Rodgers summarize the two types of activities as follows :

> Functional communication activities include such tasks as learners comparing sets of pictures and noting similarities and differences ; working out a likely sequence of events in a set of pictures ; discovering missing features in ammap or picture ; one learner communicating behind a screen to another learner and giving instructions on how to draw a picture or shape, or how to complete a map ; following directions ; and solving problems from shared clues. Social interaction activities include concersation and discution sessions, dialogues and role plays, simulations, skits, improviation, and debates (1986 : 76).

Another interesting discussion of communicative activities is reported from Willis (1983) by Coulthard (1985). As Coulthard puts it, Willis groups all classroom language activities into three kinds : citation, simulation and replication, with only the third being in any real sense communicative (1985 : 158). Citation activities include formal exercises like repeating, combining and transforming as in the following :

T : What is this? T : Whatiss this?
P : It is a red pen. P : It is a blue book.
(Coulthard 1985 : 158).

Simulation activities, the author maintains, comprise such activities as discussion and role play and are often regarded as communicative but are not genuinely so. As Coulthard reports, these activities qre not genuinely communicative because :

> (...) it is only when an activity has an outcome that it is truly communicative- 'one of the feature of communication is that the communicative decisions we take carry rewards and penalties whereas in 'role play' there are no penalties -(...) in a role-playing situation'the shopkeeper' can treat his 'customers' in a surely monosyllabic manner with no risk of his losing their custom' (...), and it matters little to the customer if he pays 2 p or £2 a dozen for his eggs ; in simulation activities as in citation activities success is measured linguistically (1985 : 158).

The third type of activity that Coulthard reports is replication and encompasse those activities whereby there is a real need to communicate in order to achieve something else such as to solve a problem or play a game. As he indicates, replication activity is the closest we can get to genuine communication in the classroom with only "the artificality being that

opinion gap) can be taken as communicative. Moreover in speaking of communicative activities, we should also condi-der the goal that we want to achieve. What indeed is the aim of communicative activities if not to train students to use the target language for real communication? In other words, communicative activities are meant to help student "learn more communicative strategies" (Coulthard 1985) or to develop "fluency" defined by Brumfit as "the rapid,natural production and reception of contextualized, meaningful language" (1980 : 126).

In light of the above discussion of communicative activities, it should be repeated that no language activity is communicative per se (Ellis;1984). It becomes communicative depending on the role the teacher takes on,and consequently, the feedback he provides during such activities. As Ellis suggests, if teachers are to give up their traditional roles of "knower" and students to cease to be "information seekers", they remains two main alternative choices : he will act as "onlooker and partner" (1984 : 212).

The teacher 'as onlooker' withdraws from the scene in favor of stuendent(s)-students() interaction. The importance of this withdrawl is that the students are able to""determine the relevance of their own utterances" (Ellis 1984 : 212). Yet, this withdrawl has some disadvantages. First, students will not receive sufficient and rich input concerning the language they have to acquire. And because they are restricted to the output of the other students, they language may pidginize (Ellis 1907 : 213). The pidginzzation, however, is less likely to occur because, as has alredy pointed out, not all the students

are on the same level of proficiency. Therefore, the input some receive is higher than their level. Teachers, in turn, may cope with this by grouping students with mixed abilities.

The second advantage taht Ellis points out is that, the reduction of the teacher's control over the students' output may result in insecurity and lack of confidence wich, eventually, can be passed on to the students. To this point, the author indicates that this is likely not to be the case in as mach as "the teacher will be called upon to play a major role in organizing (...) activities" (1984 : 213). And for Medgyes to add that "In return for their much reduced role, they will allegedly find plenty solace and reward in the rapid development of their students" (1986 : 109).

More intersting is the point Medgyes makes on the teacher's withdrawl. As he indicates, this retreat does not mean relinguishing control over the class, since it would undermine the students' need for security. Indeed the learner's initiative and the teacher's control do not work in opposite directions ; nor is the success of language teaching graranteed by maintaining a balance between them. Referring to Stevick (1980), He suggests that "there must be a way which will alow the teacher to keep nearly 100 percent of the 'control', while at the same time the learner is exercising nearly 100percent of the 'initiative'" (1986 : 110).

On the other hand, the partner role, Ellis (1978) suggests, requiresoof the teacher to provide only samples of the second language and guisance rules. As he points out, the size of the

class may preclude this role . However, this is not important because the teacher will intervene only to "provide an appropriate level of input" ; that is, after he had seen and diagnosed students' difficulty. To cope with this problem of the size of the classroom, Ellis suggests that the class be divided into groups.

Closely related to this new roles of the teacher is the feedback he is entitled to provide during classroom language activities. As Ellis notes, "the teacher as a 'knower' conceives feedback in terms of identification and correction of learners' errors and the positive reinforcement of correct utterances". In communicative activities, this is likely not to be the case. Quite to the contrary, attention should be drawn on these moments communication . . is more likely to break down rather than on formal errors (Ellis 1984 : 215). Murphy has provided insights into these moments communication may break down. As he says, he finds it better to intervene and comment on why communication has broken down. This may occur when some learners are unable to take their turn to speak, everyone is avoiding to speak etc... In such cases, learners are said to be making errors of fluency. Murphy enumerates some other cases in which communication is likely to break sown. He writes :

> They are making an error of fluency, and are not handling turn-taking appropriately. And they are not giving the speaker any feedbakk, which is also evident if learners in group do not understand the speaker and fail to say so. This is another error of fuuency. Ironicalyy, this last kind of breakdown can be caused by an error of accuracy on the part of the speaker, though not one of the order <u>he go</u> instead of <u>he goes</u> : this sort of mistake, hich so

> irritates teachers, does not impede communication and can be corrected later (1986 : 146-147).

Thus, what is instructive from the above considerations is that, although difficult to reach a consensus on the way errors should be dealt with, teachers should assess when to correct and when not to. As the guiding principle I side with Mc Donough who suggests that learners' utterances be evaluated for their communicative success" (1982 : 124). Given that communicative activities are among these few moments the English language acquisition is more likely to take plqce in our high schools, teachers should make sure that they do not themselves spoil them by needless corrections.

In conclusion, this chapter has set out to suggest how the teacher can set up conditions which are likely to foster acquisition in the classroom. As has been noticed, there seems to be considerable possibilities which can be advantageously exploited in order to make the language input comprehensible to students. Foremost among these possibilities is the use of English for all kinds of interaction in the classroom (Ellis 1984). It has also been suggested that the use of English should not be limited to pedagogical goal, but also it should be put to social and organizational use of language in the classroom. Other possibilities relate to the adoption of communicative activities, ranking from dialogues, role plays, simulations, problem solving, discussion to language games. Although these activities are not readily communicative, they can be resorted to in order to get the students acquainted with some aspects of language in communciation. In such activities, the teacher's

role becomes that of onlooker and partner rather than that of "knower". And as a consequence, the teacher provides feedback without interfering with communication among students.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Throughout this paper, the concern has been to suggest a view of English language teaching in Rwandan high schools which takes account of theoretical considerations on second/language acquisition. I have paid particular attention to the role of communication especially in a second/foreign language classroom This idea grew out of the concern to keep our English language teaching abreast of recent research in the fields of language acquisition and to contribute to its improvement in light of the implications that research has in language teaching.

At the outset, I have opted for a somewhat all-encompassing position towards new theoretical statements in second/foreign language learning and teaching. Thus, agreeing with Krashen on the role of comprehensible input, I have nonetheless admitted that learners' output derives from both acquired and learned linguistic knowledge as there is a seepage between the two. Similarly, the learners' input seems to be composed of their own output and that of their interlocutors.

The eclectic approach I advocate is also reflected in the view of the acquisition of the competence prior to the successful use of the target language in real life communication. Thus, addressing the concept of the communicative competence and what it entails for different groups of Rwandan high school students, I have argued for a teaching which would cater for all the types of knowledge and skills it involves, yet taking into account the different demands made on the students.

It is now a known fact that English has acquired a viable role in the Rwandan communication network. The motivation to learn it for outside interaction is as likely to be great as it has come to fulfill educationally and economically related needs. It is, therefore, incumbent to teachers to provide the input which prepares students to communicate in English outside the classroom. Unfortunately, the interactions through which such input is likely to be available are not fully catered for. And when it comes to testing, the demands made upon the students conflict with the teacher's yet timid enterprise to prepare students to use the target language for communication.

A look into different sources of classroom linguistic input has led to the suggestion that teachers need to ensure that learners get the input coming in to them from these moments the target language is used for genuine communication in the classroom. These moments are those in which English is used mainly for other goals than the pedagogic ones. Instructive to teachers, therefore, is the idea that English be used for all kinds of interaction occuring in the classroom. If French and Kinyarwanda can also be used, this will only be helpful after all the means have been tried out in English.

Other moments in which English is used to some extent for genuine communication relate to communicative activities. Implementing such activities in high schools is not only confronted with lack of material and unsuitable program, but also, with the fact that teachers seem to be unclear as to which activity is communicative or non-communicative. What is instructive is that there is no activity which is communicative as such.

It is by allowing students to communicate freely and yet to assist them in handling communication that teachers contribute to the communicativeness of such activities. In much the same way, the teacher's provision of feedback to the students' output has been shown to play a great role in language acquisition, particularly during communicative activities. It thus has been my urge to persuade teachers to treat students' errors naturally but not so leniently as to diverge from their main objective : to enable students to know and use the English language code.

I do not pretend to have exhaustively investigated all the aspects of language acquisition in the classroom. Some points have been left unexplored for some constraints. For instance, aspects of communication which relate to the written language have been unfairly dealt with and all the language skills have not been fully touched on. A study which would investigate all these aspects is expected. Yet, my bias toward oral communication is as justifiable as Rwandan high school students' proficiency in English shows a great discrepancy between speaking and writing abilities, with the latter being in any real sense more viable than the former.

I hope that the view I have developed will lead teachers to think afresh about their everyday work. Far from challenging the traditions of individual teachers, my aim has been to contribute to the improvement of our English language teaching by suggesting some ways to keep it abreast of recent findings in language pedagogy. In common with previous researchers, I believe

that ultimate success of our English language teaching largely depends on the information teachers receive about research into the field of language acquisition and implications for language teaching. In addition to "stages" and seminars which have been already proposed, that information would be available a journal whereby teachers of English to Rwandans would exchange ideas and personal experiences.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abraham, R. (1984). "Patterns in the use of the present tense third person singular -S by university - level ESL speakers." TESOL Quarterly 18/1 : 55-69

Acton, W.(1983). "Second language interpersonal communication : paradigm and praxis." Language Learning 33/5 : 193-215.

Alatis, J.E., Altman, H.B. and Alatis,P.M.(eds.)(1981). The Second Language Classroom : Directions for the 1980'S. Oxford : O.U.P.

Bialystok,E.(1978)."A Theoretical model of second language learning.""Language Learning 28/1 : 69-83.

Brock,C.(1986). "The effect of referential questions on ESL classroom discourse." TESOL Quarterly 20/1 : 47-59.

Brown,G. and Yule,G.(1983b).Discourse Analysis. Cambridge : C.U.P.

Brown,G. and Yule,G.(1983a).Teaching the Spoken Language. Cambridge : C.U.P.

Brown,H.D.(1975)."The next 25years : shaping the revolution". in M. Burt and H. Dulay (eds.)(1975).

Brown,H.D.(1980).Principles of Language Learning and Teaching. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.:Prentice-Hall.

Brumfit,C.J.and Johnson,K.(eds.)(1979). The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching. Oxford : O.U.P.

Burt,M.and Dulay,H.(eds.)(1975). New Directions in Second Language Learning, Teaching an Bilingual Education. Washington,D.C. : TESOL.

Canale,M.(1983). "From communicative competence to language pedagogy." in J.C.Richards and R.W.Schmidt (eds.)(1983).

Canale,M.and Swaine,M.(1980). "Theoretical basis of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing." Applied Linguistics 1 : 1-47.

Celce-Murcia,M.(1984). "Interaction and communication in the ESL classroom." English Teaching Forum 22/2 : 2-7.

Coulthard,M.(1985). An Introduction to Discourse Analysis. London : Longman.

Dulay,H., Burt,M. and Krashen,S.(1982). Language Two. Oxford : O.U.P.

Ellis,R.(1984). Classroom Second Language Development. Oxford : Pergamon Press.

Ellis,R.(1985).Understanding Second Language Acquisition. Oxford : O.U.P.

Fraser,B.(1983). "The domaine of pragmatics." in J.C.Richards and R.W.Schmidt(eds.)(1983).

Gaies,S.(1987). "In this issue." TESOL Quarterly 21/4 : 613-616.

Gasinzigwa,M.(1986). Teaching Writing in Rwandan Secondary Schools : A Didactic Approach. (Mémoire)

Gasinzigwa,M.(1986). TeachingReading English in Secondary School : A Didactic Approach. (Mémoire)UNR-Ruhengeri.

Harmer,J.(1983). The Practice of English Language Teaching. London : Longman.

Herriot,P.(1971). Language and Teaching : A Psychological view. Cambridge : Methuen.

Howatt, A.P.R. (1984). A History of English Language Teaching. Oxford : O.U.P.

Johnson, K. (1982). Communicative Syllabus Design and Methodology. Oxford : Pergamon Press.

Karake M. (1986). The Teaching of Listening Comprehension in Rwandan Secondary Schools in the light of the Communicative Approach. (Mémoire) UNR-Ruhengeli.

Kazanenda, J. (1986). Teaching English Through Groupwork at Secondary School (Mémoire) UNR-Ruhengeri.

Krashen, S.D. (1981). "Effective Second language acquisition : insight from research." in J.E. Alatis, H.B. Altman and P.M. Alatis (eds.)(1981).

Krashen, S.D. and Terrell, t. (1983). The Natural Approach : Language Acquisition in the Classroom.

Krashen, S.D. (1982). Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition. Oxford : Pergamon Press.

Lado, R. (1981). "Materials design : issues for the 1980'S, an american point of view". in J.E. Alatis, H.B. Altman and P.M. Alatis (ed.)(1981).

Larsen-Freeman, D. (1987). "From unity to diversity : twenty-five years of language-teaching methodology." English Teaching Forum 24/4 : 2-10.

Littlewood, W. (1981). Communicative Language Teaching : An Introduction. Cambridge : C.U.P.

Littlewood, W. (1984). "Review of the Natural Approach : Language Acquisition in the classroom, by S. Krashen and Terrell". ELT Journal 38/3 : 217-218.

Long,M.H.and Porter,P.(1985)."Group work, interlanguage talk, and second language acquisition." TESOL Quarterly 19/2 : 207-209.

Lyons,J.(1977). Semantics. Cambridge : C.U.P.

Magambo,J.(1986). Teaching Communicative English Through Dramatic Activities in Rwandan Secondary Schools. (Mémoire) UNR-Ruhengeri.

Mc Donough,S.H.(1981). Psychology in Foreign Language Teaching. London : George Allen and Unwin.

Mc Groarty,M.(1984). "Some meanings of communicative competence for second language students." TESOL Quarterly. 18/2 : 257-72.

Medgyes,P.(1986)."Querries from a communicative teacher." ELT Journal 40/2 : 106-12.

Munby,J.(1978). Communicative Syllabus Design. Cambridge: CUP

Munby,J.(1978). Communicative Syllabus Design. Oxford : C.U.P.

Murphy,D.(1986). "Communication and correction in the class-room." ELT Journal 40/2 : 146-51.

Nagle,S.and Sanders,S.(1986). "Comprehension theory and second language pedagogy." TESOL Quarterly 20/1 : 9-26.

Pennycook,A.(1985)."Actions speak louder than words : para-language, communication and education." TESOL Quarterly 19/2 : 259-282.

Pennington,M.and Richards,J.C.(1986). "Pronunciation revisited." TESOL Quarterly 20/2 : 207-224.

Pica,T.,Young,R.and Daughty,C.(1987)."The impact of interaction on comprehension." TESOL Quarterly 21/4 : 737-758.

Pica,T.and Daughty,C.(1986). "Information-gap' tasks : do they facilitate second language acquisition?" TESOL Quarterly 20/2 : 305-325.

Richards,J.C.and Schmidt,R.W.(eds.)(1983). Language and Communication. London : Longman.

Richards,J.C.and Rodgers,T.S.(1986).Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching : A Description and Analysis. Cambridge : C.U.P.

Richards,J.(1985). (Communicative needs in foreign language teaching." ELT Journal 37/2 : 111-20.

Richards,J.C.(1984). "The secret life of methods". TESOL Quarterly 18/1 : 16-44.

Riley,P.(ed.)(1985). Discourse and Learning. London : Longman.

Riley,P.(1985). "When communication breaks down : levels of coherence in discourse." in P.Riley (ed.)(1985).

Ruzigamanzi,A.(1984). The Teaching of Commercial English in Rwanda. (Mémoire) UNR-Ruhengiei.

Rwagasana,E.(1987).ESL Syllabus Design for Rwanda.(M.A.thesis) Eastern Washington University.

Sidwell,D.(1984). "Sequencing communicative language teaching." British Journal of Language Teaching 22/3 : 141-49.

Sperber,D. and Wilson,D.(1986). Relevance : Communication and cognition. Oxford : Blackwell.

Stern,H.H.(1981). "Communicative language teaching and le learning : toward a synthesis." in J.E.Alatis,H.B. Altman and P.M.Alatis(eds.)(1981).

Stern,H.H.(1983). Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching. Oxford : O.U.P.

Stevick,E.W.(1982). Teaching and Learning Languages. Cambridge : C.U.P.

Taylor,B.(1983). "Teaching ESL : incorporating a communicative, student-centered component." TESOL Quarterly 17/1 : 69-83.

Twagilimana,A.(1986). Conversational Implicature in English and Kinyarwanda : A Comparative Pragmatic Study. (Mémoire) UNR-Ruhengeri.

Widdowson,H.G.(1979). Explorations in Applied Linguistics. Oxford : O.U.P.

Yalden,J.(1985). The Communicative Syllabus : Evolutions, Design and Implementation. Oxford : Pergamon Press.

A N N E X

Questionnaire on Communication in the Classroom.

I. Identification:

1. Section : ....
2. Qualification of the teacher :

   Bachelor of Arts ....

   Licence ....

   Other (Specify please) ....
3. Where did you study English?

   I.P.N. : From 19...to 19...

   U.N.R. : From 19...to 19...

   Elsewhere : Specify please ....

   From 19... to 19...
4. Which classes do you teach?

Level of English	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	5th year
Number of students in each class					

5. How long have you been teaching English? ....

II. Communication in the Classroom

1. a) On which criteria do you base the selection and the gradation of grammatical structures within the function to be taught? ....

   ....

   ....

   b) How does the level of students affect the balance between the linguistic forms and the communicative functions? ....

   ....

   ....

2. How do you introduce the new language? Does the level of your students affect the way you introduce the new language? ....
....
....

3. Which activities ans materials do you use to teach language functions? ....
....
....
....

4. How do you cope with the pre-established teaching orde of grammar points when you have to teach the formal exponent of a function? ....
....
....

5. How is the cultural content of communication taught? Would there be any danger to use non-verbal aspects of communication (gestures, facial expressions...) of Kinyarwanda while speaking English? ....
....
....
....
....

6. What kind of activities do you use in order to enable students to use grammatical forms appropriately to communicate in various contexts? ....
....
....
....

7. How authentic are the materials proposed to you? How do you provide your students with autentctc materials for reading/listening activities? ....
....
....
....
....

8. a) When is advantageously possible to use Kinyarwanda for classroom management?..............................
....
....

b) Do you allow students to answer in Kinyarwanda? If you do, why and at which level? ....
....
....

c) Dou you adapt your language to what you think is the level or your students? What are the advantages and/or the disadvantages in so doing? ....
....
....

9. Do you ever use peer-evaluation in writing activities?
-If yes, what are the advantages and/or the disadvantages of peer-evaluation?
-If no, what do you think would be the disadvantages of peer-evaluation.
....
....
....
....

10. During student(s)-student(s) interaction, should all errors be corrected? If no, what kind of errors do you think it is important to correct? ....
....
....
....

11. Do you use any of the following? Show the level of the students (the year of English) to which you think the activity is suitable. You might indicate another activity similar to the one I have poposed, specifying the medium (written and/ or oral) in which it is carried out. In any case, your comments and suggestions will be of valuable importance.

a) The students follow instructions from the teacher.

Yes [ ] No [ ] Comment ....

b) The students follow oral/written instructions from other students.

Yes [ ] No [ ] Comment ....

c) The students listen to a tape recorder and take notes that they use in written and/or oral reports.

Yes [ ] No [ ] Comment ....

d) The students read a text and make a summary (oral/written).

Yes [ ] No [ ] Comment ....

e) Discussion in the class follwed by a writing activity.

Yes [ ] No [ ] Comment ....

f) Discussion in groups followed by an oral report.

Yes [ ] No [ ] Comment ....

g) The students extract information from diagram, chart,... and reproduce itiin oral/written reports.

Yes [ ] No [ ] Comment ....

....

....

....

h) The students interview each other/in groups and make an oral or a written report.

Yes [ ] No [ ] Comment ....

....

....

....

i) The students make up a dialogue using cue-cards.

Yes [ ] No [ ] Comment ....

....

....

....

j) The teacher uses visuals(e.g. : pictures, drawings, ...) to get students talking.

Yes [ ] No [ ] Comment ....

....

....

k) Do you use games in your lessons? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Comment ....

....

....

12. How do you evaluate the students' communicative performance?

....

....

....

....