1978

Space, Time and Movement: The Context for Spoken Language

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"Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in Teaching degree at the School for International Training, Brattleboro, Vermont."

June 26, 1978

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Type of Project Research

Title and brief description

Space, Time and Movement: the context for Spoken Language.

In the first section of the paper, I will discuss two theories of meaning and give a few examples of difficulties encountered in teaching meaning across culture.

Section two will outline the major principles of general systems theory with specific reference to theses concerning the structure and organization of communication.

Section three will describe the stream and structure of non-verbal communication inbody movement(kinesics) and the organization of space and space as a context for communicative activity(proxemics). It will also show how an awareness of these is important in the teaching of English as a second language.

The paper will conclude with a few strategies for use in the ESL classroom.

Principal Project Advisor Alex Gibson

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The purpose of this project is to come to an understanding of how human behaviour takes on meaning and how an awareness of some of the factors involved can lead to greater success in cross-cultural communication. This paper will not deal with all the possible theories but will rather concentrate on one central point; that meaning is developed when behaviour occurs in a context. The context defines and limits behaviour, whether in a specific environment or in the realm of human behaviour.

As students of a second language, many of us memorized lists of vocabulary, rules of grammar and a few idiomatic phrases, and then believing that we had 'learned' the language were disappointed and frustrated by the fact that when confronted by a native speaker, we seemed unable to communicate. It wasn't that we didn't know the rules or even that the native speaker spoke faster than had the classroom teacher. It was because how people share meaning, how they communicate, is influenced by a large number of factors, only a few of which had been addressed by our language teachers.

These factors can be roughly divided into two categories; psychological and social or cultural.

Psychological factors may include the shared experience of the communicators, assumptions that they make about each other or the situation, their attitudes, motivations and so on that may influence what they actually mean beyond the words that they speak.

It is the cultural or social factors however that this paper will discuss. In examining two theories of meaning, it will show how vital it is to acknowledge the different meanings that the same 'vocabulary word' can have when it is carried across culture and language. It will then look at movement, space and time, to see how each one as a context for human communication, becomes an important consideration in the teaching of English as a second language.

Chapter one

Heinz Von Foerster in an article entitled 'From Stimulous to Symbol: The Economy of Biological Computation', attempts to establish clues as to the nature of meaning. He looks at how physical constraints in the environment at every level determine the manner in which we name things. The levels, the order of things, the relationship of parts to the whole, are determined by the strength of constraints that control the interaction of the elements that comprise the whole.

These constraints manifest themselves in the stuctures they produce.

Consider the series of elements atom,molecule,sap (bark,fiber),tree and forest.In order to distinguish units at various levels in the environment(and name them),we look at the constraints applied.How we define the levels depends on the tightness of these constraints and what we name at what level depends on the context that we define for that unit. Molecule is the context for atom,as sap is the context for molecule,tree for branch,and forest for the individual tree. The growth mechanism for each level is subject to a major constraint;we call the constraints at the level of the individual tree by the name forest.In spite of the great difference in the individual shapes of each tree,no difficulty arises in recognizing these forms at a glance,as trees.The one thing that is common to all these shapes is the constraint in their growth mechanism.The name we give to this constraint is'tree'.[1]

This theory of constraints is enlarged upon by general semanticists like Korzybski and by the anthropologist Gregory Bateson,who maintains that meaning does not exist

except in relationship.[2] In other words we could not name a set of constraints unless there were relationships among the elements that were themselves defined. By naming sets of constraints, one implies a 'content' name and what we are really naming is not a thing (or a content) but a set of relationships among the elements. Meaning exists in differences. Nothing exists unless it is different from something else, i.e. unless there is a distinction in the environment. Further, the distinction lies, not in the black or in the white, but in the relationship between them.

Our understanding moves then from naming a set of constraints, to realizing that the set of constraints themselves are sets of relationships which permit distinction.

Korzybski said the same thing in his statement, 'The map is not the territory.'[3] If the territory were uniform there would be nothing to put on the map except its boundaries -which is the point at which it stops being uniform against some greater matrix. What gets onto the map is difference- a difference in altitude, population, nationality, whatever. If we accept that the distinction or the difference is not in the black or the white but rather in the relationship, we

must recognize that difference is an abstract matter.

In the world of the hard sciences, effects are generally speaking caused by events or physical conditions. But in the world of communication, effects are brought about by 'differences.' The whole energy relation is different. In the world of the mind, nothing-that which is not-can be a cause. In fact the first axiom of communication is that 'One cannot not communicate.'[4] This is because 'nothing' is different from 'something' and in a world of differences can bring about an effect. What you do not say can have as much effect as what you do say.

Bateson suggests that we change our whole way of thinking about mental and communicational process. He maintains that the usual analogies of energy theory which people borrow from the hard sciences cannot be used in building theories about psychology and behaviour.

To support this theory, he uses Kant's assertion in Critique of Judgment[5] that the most elementary aesthetic act is the selection of a fact. He (Kant) argues that in anything-the paper that I write on for example-there are an infinite number of facts. The piece of paper can never entirely enter

into the communication because of this infinitude.What the sensory receptors do is to filter out certain facts about the object which become information.

Bateson modifies this statement to say that there are an infinite number of'differences'between the paper and its environment.And within the paper there are differences(in molecular structure)which render it different from another piece. From this infinitude,we select a limited number of facts which become information.Information then is'a difference which makes a difference.'

Bateson goes on to say that there is an important contrast between most pathways of information outside the body and the ones inside it.The differences between this paper and the desk behind it are first transformed into differences in the propagation of light and sound and travel in this form to the sensory organs.They are energized in the usual hard science way, from'behind'.But when the differences enter the body,their travel becomes energized at every atep by the metabolic energy latent in the protoplasm which receives the difference,re-creates it or transforms it,and passes it along.

He gives as example,striking the head of a nail with a

hammer,where we could say that an impulse is transmitted to its point.But he maintains that it is a semantic error to say that what travels in an axon is an'impulse'.It could more correctly be called,'news of a difference.'[6]

We commonly think of the external physical world as somehow separate from the internal'mental'world.He believes this to be based on the contrast in coding and transmission inside and outside the body.

The two theories about meaning as developed by Foerster and Bateson are directly related.Foerster finds distinction in difference in tightness of constraints and proceeds to name objects and things.Bateson broadens the theory by naming not the object(or the set of constraints)itself, but sets of relationships among the elements.

When dealing with communication by people whose native language is different it is important to realize that the constraints one culture places upon objects and the'differences that make a difference'which one culture may recognize,can be vastly different.Benjamin Lee Whorf,in his theory of linguistic relativity suggests that the same reality,both physical and social,can be variously structured or interpreted.

Speakers of the same language are in agreement to perceive and think of the world in a certain way-a way determined by the structure of the language they speak.He further hypothesizes that a man's language is the principle determinant of his mode of thought.In other words,the language he speaks not only embodies his view of the world,it perpetuates that view.Whorf sees the languages of the world as so many molds into which the minds of infants are poured,the mold determining the cognitive cast of the adult.[7]

It would seem that culture alone(as opposed to culture plus language)can bring about considerable disagreement on the interpretation of the same object or event. For example,in the culture of middle-class America,the word'dog'refers to a domesticated animal often thought ofoas a member of the family,whose place is in the home at his master's feet.Here he protects,gives affection(sometimes status) and is loved and cared for in return.InJamaice however,a dog does not belong within the sanctity of house and family.He remains outside the house and holds the very important job of announcing the approach of a stranger.If the owner comes out and tells his dog to be quiet,the visitor expects to be

welcomed. If no one calls the dog however, it is a clear indication that the household does not want to be disturbed and the caller should move on. The reason for the existence of this system is obvious. In a hot climate where buildings are constructed to allow access to surrounding light and air, where doors and windows are often left open for the same reason, some sort of a) alarm, and b) freedom from intrusion be granted.

It is also obvious however that if a Jamaican and a middle-class American use the word 'dog' in conversation together, the two might have very different ideas about the meaning implied. Though they speak the same language, they apply (by virtue of their different cultures) different constraints to the object 'dog', and come up with quite different information.

Anyone who has learned a foreign language to any degree of fluency has experienced the feeling of being another person when speaking the foreign tongue. As one becomes immersed in another culture and allows oneself to take that culture into his own psyche, there comes a point where one not only ceases to translate (i.e. begins to think in the new language) but also finds that "somehow a rock in Korean just

isn't the same as a rock here'. The words for'woman' in the middle east do not carry the same meaning as they do in most parts of the western world as any woman who has lived in both places will testify. 'House'in Japanese means something quite different from 'house'in America. The physical structure alone shows that a different interpretation of the functions a house serves(and how it'means')are being communicated. Clearly, successful communication is not simply a matter of translation.

Teachers of English as a second language must realize that when they insure their students'knowledge of vocabulary, they are touching only the surface of the problem that the foreign speaker faces in trying to communicate in a new culture. It may be that sensitivity to meaning can only be acquired by living in the target culture for an extended period of time, but if teachers can at least instill a concept and an acceptance of these differing interpretations of the world around us, their students will have a far greater chance of breaking through some of the barriers they experience in communicating in English.

Chapter two

In analyzing how people communicate one must attend not only to the lexical or linguistic modality. Participants in any communication must be viewed in the entire environment, including all people, all sound, all movement, all space and so on. Human behaviour as a system is governed by the principles of general systems theory and in understanding how humans communicate (in their own culture or across culture) it is important to understand the principles involved.

The first property of a system is Wholeness.[9] If every part of a system is so related to every other part that a change in a particular part causes a change in all the other parts and in the total system, the system is said to behave not as a simple composite of independant elemants, but coherently and as an inseparable whole. This principle can be better understood if contrasted with its polar opposite, summativity. If changes in one part do not effect the other parts or the whole then the parts are all independant of each other and constitute a whole that is no more complex than the sum of its elements. Systems then are always

characterized by some degree of wholeness.

Nonsummativity as a corrollary of wholeness provides a negative guideline for the definition of a system.[10] A system cannot be taken for the sum of its parts;it is necessary to neglect the parts for the gestalt.The most obvious example of this is found in the field of chemistry where relatively few of the known elements produce a huge variety of substances.

A second property of systems is equifinality.[11] In a circular or self-modifying system,'results'are not determined so much by initial conditions as bythe nature of the process or the system parameters.In other words the same results may spring from different origins because it is the nature of the organism that is determinate.A corollary of this principle is that different results may be produced by the same causes.

The third principle of general systems theory is homeostasis.[12] Homeostasis,which is equated with stability or equilibrium has actually two definitions.The first is as an end or a state,specifically the existence of constancy in the face of external change,and the second as a means:

the negative feedback mechanisms that act to minimize change. Because of confusion over the two meanings, it is generally clearer to refer to the steady state or stability of a system, which is usually maintained by negative feedback mechanism.

The final property of a system is feedback.[13] Feedbackmeans that a portion of output is fed back to the input to affect succeeding outputs. Since the birth of cybernetics and the 'discovrery' of feedback, it has been learned that circular and very complex relatedness is a different but no less scientific occurence than simpler and more orthodox causal notions. The nature of feedback is often more interesting than origin or outcome.

These four principles of general systems theory are very helpful in dealing with human communication. To illustrate this point, let us look at one 'system' of communication, the family.

The behaviour of every individual within the family is related to and dependant upon the behaviour of all the others. Specifically, it has been showm that the families of psychiatric patients often have considerable difficulty

accepting an improvement in the patient's health. Changes for the better or worse in the patient will usually have some effect on the other family members and family therapists who manage to help a patient relieve his complaint are often faced with a new crisis.

The principle of nonsummativity when applied to the family as a system means that the analysis of a family is not the same as the sum of the analyses of its individual members. There are interactional patterns that transcend the qualities of individual members. Many 'individual qualities' of family members are in fact peculiar to the system. For example, William F. Fry, in examining the marital context in which patients were exhibiting a syndrome of anxiety or phobia, found that in no case was there a successfully functioning spouse.[14] He gives as one of many examples, the wife who was labeled the patient because she had a fear of enclosed places and could not ride in elevators. Because of this fear the couple could not visit a cocktail lounge on the top of a high building. Only later was it discovered that the husband had a fear of high places which he never had to face because of the marital agreement which meant they

never went to high places due to the wife's fear of elevators.

Feedback and homeostasis are also reflected in the family system. Inputs(actions of the individual or of the environment)which are introduced into the family system are acted upon and modified by the system. Both the nature of the system and its feedback mechanism should be acknowledged as well as the nature of the input.(equifinality) Some families can handle crisis and even grow stronger in its wake;others find even minor disturbances upsetting. Even more extreme are the families of schizophrenic patients who sometimes find it difficult or impossible to accept the manifestations of maturity in their child.[15]

All families that stay together show some degree of negative feedback in withstanding the stresses imposed by the environment and by individual members. Disturbed families are particularly refractory to change and often show considerable ability in maintaining the status quo by predominately negative feedback.

There is however also learning and growing in the family anf it is there that the pure homeostasis model errs, for this process is closer to positive feedback. The

growth and departure of the children indicates that while from one point of view the family is balanced by homeostasis there are other important factors of change which must also be considered.

In outlining these processes of negative and positive feedback within a model of homeostasis it becomes obvious that what we are talking about is not pure homeostasis but rather a certain degree of'constancy within a defined range'.There is some fundamental stability in the possible variations-a more accurate term for this fixed range is calibration,the setting of the system.Any change in calibration is referred to as'step-function'.

In human affairs,there is a calibration of customary or acceptable behaviour-a family's rules or society's laws or cultural norm,within which groups or individuals operate. Any deviation in behaviour outside the accepted range is counteracted by discipline or change or some other solution. At another level,changes also occur over time(perhaps due to other deviations).These may eventually lead to a whole new setting for the system.(step-function)

'An individual does not communicate;he engages in or becomes part of communication.He may move,or make noises...but he does not communicate.In a parallel fashion,he may see,he may hear,smell,taste or feel-but he does not communicate.In other words he does not originate communication;he participates in it.Communication as a system then,is not to be understood as a simple model of action and reaction,however complexly stated.As a system,it is to be comprehended on the transactional level.'[16]

Chapter three

Much communication is unconscious.Much movement is about how some communication should be taken and because we rarely know it is happenning doesn't mean we don't do it as a part of an important communicative process.

Kinesics is the study of communicatively significant body movement.The most important contribution to the methodology of the study of body motion has come from Ray Birdwhistle,who in his association with the linguists,has isolated and named the various units of non-verbal behaviour.

As an anthropologist kinesicist he is concerned with'the learned and visually perceptible shifts in the body which contribute to the peculiar communication system of the particular societies.'[17] Kinesics is concerned with abstracting from the continual muscular shifts of any living being, those groupings of movements which are of significance to the communicational process.

The analog of kinesics is linguistics.Birdwhistle acknowledges that most of his work has beem focused on middle-class Americans and that findings will vary when analyzed in other cultures and sub-cultures.Like spoken language, body language has dialects and regional differences.

The voice has intonationa,qualifiers(intensity,pitch, height etc.,)qualities(tempo,resonance etc.,)which are called paralinguistic phenomena.There are also parakinesic phenomena.These are the motion qualifiers which modify small stretches of kinesic behaviour,or activity modifiers which describe an entire body in motion.Illustrative para-kinesic phenomena include 1)the degree of muscular tension involved in forming a movement pattern(intensity),2)the length of time involved in a movement(duration),and 3)the

extent of the movement(range).

Another parallel to linguistics concerns the smallest units of analysis.In vocal behaviour these are called allophones;in kinesics they are termed allokines.Allokines are the smallest structural building blocks of body language, the smallest and simplest unit of movement which can be discriminated as different from another movement.They are such minor differences that we rarely pay attention to the possibility that they exist,because they do not seem to have any bearing on how well we understand one another when we communicate.

Rather than trying to analyze this infinite number of allophones and allokines we move to a larger category which encompasses several of these units which are similar in nature.These larger groups are called phones(in linguistics) and kines(in kinesics).The two(t)sounds in 'butter'and'tea' represent two different ways of forming the (t)sound.They are both phones of the phoneme(t).All the phones(with their allophonic variations)go to make up a phoneme.A kineme is similar to a phoneme because it consists of a group of movements which are not identical but which may be used

interchangeably without affecting the social meaing.

Phonemes rarely occur in isolation;the same is true of kinemes.Sequences of phonemes constitute words and the minimum sequence of phonemes with communicational meaning is called a morpheme.A wink or gesture occurs as a part of a multi-movement complex and can be called a kinemorpheme;the exact nature of these is still under study.Several gestures performed insequence may be put together in the form of a sentence or even a paragraph.

Noe everyone agrees with Birdwhistle that kinesics forms a communication system which is the same as spoken language,but we do know that in looking at body language we are looking at a sytem which has some parallels to spoken language.Whether the linguistic-kinesic analogy can be carried through more complex dimensions such as grammar, paragraph and syntax remains to be seen.However,research on gesture,posture and other body movement indicates a wide range of communicative information.Various body movements can communicate like or dislike for someone,status, affective states or moods,quasi-courtship behaviour,need or desire for inclusion,deception clues and so on.Arms,

legs,posture,face,eyes and verbal output all work together in any given situation.

Humans also communicate non-verbally through their use of space,both social and personal.Edward Hall has coined the word Proxemics to describe the study of man's perception and use of space and has examined the inter-related observations and theories of man's use of space as a specialization of culture.He maintains that the principles laid down byBenjamin Whorf and his fellow linguists in relation to language as a major element in the formation of thought (as opposed to a medium for expressing thought)apply to the rest of human behaviour as well-in fact to all culture. Hall states that the assumption that all men share common experience and that it is always possible to somehow bypass language and culture and reach another human being through this shared experience in the world,becomes suspect when one takes into account the findings of proxemic research. People from different cultures not only speak different languages-they inhabit different sensory worlds.Each individual screens the available sensory data,admitting some information and filtering out other,so that experience as perceived through the senses of a member of one culture

can be considerably different from the experience perceived by a member of another culture. He did an interesting experiment to illustrate this point. Arab and American students were asked to arrange coins and pencils so they were 'close', 'far apart', 'side by side', and 'next to each other', and then to tell him whether they were 'together' or not. Arab students were either unwilling or unable to make a judgment on this question if the surrounding area was not specified. In other words 'Arabs saw the objects in a context; Americans saw the objects only in relation to each other'.[18] Since the sticks remained the same, we can assume that the difference lay in perception.

If the spacial experience is different because of different sensory patterning and selective attention and inattention to various aspects of the environment, it would follow that for example, what crowds one people does not necessarily crowd another. There is no universal measure of crowding. One can only determine to what extent the participants in the crowd are experiencing stress. Hall and other anthropologists have determined several research methods and strategies including experimental abstract situations structured interviews and their own observation supplemented by photo

by photography. Hall has also examined literature to determine whether spacial references might be used as specific data rather than simply as descriptions.

Research has led to various concepts and measures of space in which cultures can be examined and compared.

Fixed feature space is one of the basic ways of organizing the activities of individuals and groups. Buildings are one expression of the fixed feature pattern-as is the lay-out of villages, towns, cities and so on. Man's feeling about being properly oriented in space runs deep, and disorientation can render him anything from mildly uncomfortable to psychotic. One of the many basic differences between cultures is that they extend different anatomical and behavioural features of the organism. For example, Arabs coming to the United States find that their own fixed feature patterns do not fit American housing. The ceilings in America are too low, the rooms too small, privacy is lacking and they feel oppressed.

Semi-fixed feature space is divided into two categories: sociofugal spaces, which are organized to produce solitarity

and tend to keep people apart(railway waiting rooms for example)and sociopetal spaces which are conducive to communication(tables in a French cafe).What is sociopetal to one culture however,can be sociofugal to another.A small,panelled recreation room that is cozy to a German is found by an Arab to be very oppressive.

Interpersonal distance is usually treated as dynamic. Descriptions of four areas(intimate,personal,social and public)have been compiled from observations and interviews using mainly natives of the northeastern seaboard of the U.S.who are also categorized as non-contact,middle-class and healthy.Here,the specific distance between interlocutors depends on the transaction,the relationship of the interacting individuals,how they feel and what they are doing.In other parts of the world however,the crucial factors influencing relationships may be different,such as the family/non-family pattern common in Spain and Portugal or the caste/out-caste system of India.Differences in zones and the idea of space around man as extensions of his personalitybecame apparent in this culture only when Americans began interacting with foreigners who organize their senses differently.The ability to recognize these various zones

of involvement has now become extremely important both as a contribution to improved design of living and working structures and to facilitate intercultural understanding.

'Social mening exists in communication. Social meaning does not exist in a linguistic form, social meaning does not exist in a kinesic form. Structural meaning exists in a kinesic or in a linguistic form.'[19]

I'm not sure that I agree entirely that social meaning in fact does not exist in linguistic of kinesic form, but I think that Birdwhistle is touching upon an idea which teachers of English as a second language often ignore-that human communication is made up of far more than the phonology, morphology and syntax that we customarily address in the classroom. To assume that linguistic control of the target language will enable our students to communicate with total accuracy in a foreign culture is to do them a great disservice. Any visitor to a foreign country is subject to the foreign culture's interpretation of the host-guest relationship as well as numerous other considerations. In preparing individuals for cross cultural contact it is important to

acknowledge these areas.If we examine non-verbal communication within the context of space,any two person encounter can be seen to be influenced by at least seven different forces including demographic characteristics,characteristics of the interpersonal relationship,the setting,the topic or subject under discussion ,physical characteristics of the interlocutors,attitudinal and personality characteristics abd behavioural factors.

Hall's literature is full of examples of proxemics in a cross cultural context.The way people order space,how they determine territory and privacy,how fixed and semi-fixed feature space varies across culture are all matters to which ESL teachers might address their interests.If we examine the great disparity between two English speaking cultures ,the educated(public school)English and the middle-class American,we can begin to appreciate tha difficulties involved when a different linguistic base is added to the picture. Though man may be physiologically,genetically(or even linguistically)one species,the proxemic patterns between one culture and another can be srikingly disparate.

As an English teacher in Iran,I was both intoxicated and overwhelmed by the sensory explosion of smells,colours, noise and activity of public places.Pushing and shoving in public places is characteristic of Middle Eastern culture, yet the Americam assuption that this stems from the fact that Middle Easterners are just pushy and rude,is clearly not the case.Nor is it always right to assume(as the American woman often does)that proximity is tantamount to a sexual advance.In America,if a person stops or is seated in a public place there automatically appears around him a sphere of privacy that is considered inviolate.The size of the sphere varies with the degree of crowding,the age,sex and importance of the person and so on,but the zone always exists. Hall describes an incidence[20] where he was seated alone in a large and deserted lobby,only to have a total stranger walk up to where he was seated.The man was close enough to touch;Hall could even hear him breathing.The fact that the lobby was empty made Hall very uncomfortable by the man's behaviour and he was relieved when a group of people arrived and his'tormento'joined them.At this point he recognized their speech as Arabic.Later he described the incident to an Arab colleague,in hopes of discovering

just what had gone on. The colleague was puzzled over Hall's feelings of privacy and offered, 'After all, it's a public place, isn't it?' The discovery that Hall proceeded to make was that for the Arab there is no such thing as an intrusion in public. I now realize that when I was standing on a corner in Tehran in a position which enabled me to occupy shade and yet still keep an eye on the bus stop, it was perfectly within the rights of some one with similar needs, to come along and attempt to move me from my spot, in order that he might occupy it instead. By revealing any feelings of discomfort at the 'invasion' I was only encouraging the newcomer. He felt he was about to get me to move.

Anyone who has spent even a brief period of time in a foreign culture has experienced the kind of confusing or threatening behaviour described above. It behooves us to give our students the kind of equipment necessary to cope with this sort of encounter. Even if all the specifics of spacial concepts of a given culture cannot be imparted, an awareness that differences do exist and that one should not immediately jump to conclusions over behaviour which does not seem quite appropriate, can alleviate some of the strain.

The notion of teaching some awareness of paralanguage and gesture(the stereo-typed aspects of kinemorphs)is not new to ESL teachers.Gestures such as pointing,nodding,shaking the head etc.,are often a clear substitute for linguistic behaviour and the fact that the gesture that means'get lost' in the East is used for thumbing a ride in the West,is seldom overlooked in the ESL classroom.This is however,hardly enough. To begin with,gestures do not exist in isolation.Nor are they easily categorized.There are those that are universal(such as expressions of fear,surprise or happiness),those that are culturally determined(such as the gesture meaning'he's crazy' or gestures of obsenity)and those that are psychologically motivated and may be unconscious(aggression,flirtation,etc.,). The'social meaning'of a gesture'must be viewed contextually in two senses;the situational context within a given cultural setting,and the context provided by the paralinguistic and kinesic material which may or may not be present.'[21] Materials on cross-cultural gesture comparison are few,but if even these were made available to the ESL teacher,they would provide a possible point of departure for the study fo communicatively significant body movement.

Traditionally, teachers have used a variety of methods to provide their students with examples of how a native speaker operates non-verbally in his culture. Perhaps the most common has been to have a native speaker address the class. A real French person in the classroom for an hour can reaaly create a French atmosphere because of the way he behaves, speaks, moves his arms and so on. Afterwards the teacher can analyze with the students just what it was that made this person so French.

A second method has been to use foreign films as a basis of discussion on what makes them represent so typically the culture they depict. There is a real need for three to four minute films in which dialogues on situationally oriented material could be presented by native speakers. It is not necessary to analyze the kinesic behaviour as systematically as would a kinesicist. Most students who are aware of what they are looking for, would be able to observe a fair amount of behaviour typical to the target culture.

One aspect of body movement and paralanguage that should be stressed is the set of postures, gestures, gruntings and other support noises which allow the interlocutors to continue to emit. Many times one can convince a foreign speaker that he is almost fluent just by nodding, agreeing and encouraging the speaker to

go on with what he is saying. One thing that we might bear in mind however, is that these gestures, postures and so on are easily overdone and the line between effective communication and offensive behaviour is easily over-stepped. It is next to impossible for the foreign student of English to know just how far he can imitate without appearing ridiculous and teachers must be careful in encouraging the non-verbal aspects of language learning, to exercise good taste.

This paper has attempted to provide teachers of English as a second language with an overview of the factors influencing human behaviour. In speech alone, there can be considerable confusion in meaning when words are translated directly from one language to another without regard for cultural differences in the interpretation of meaning. Non-verbal behaviour also influences how we are received and how we are understood, whether in our own culture or in another culture where non-verbal behaviour in body language or the use of space may be strikingly different from our own. It is my feeling that teachers of English as a second language should attend not only to grammar exercises,

reading,writing and discussion,but to the other factors influencing human behaviour as well.The success of their students'encounter with a foreign culture,depends upon their familiarity with these aspects of communication.

Some Strategies for use in ESL classes

one

Have each student make up a 'non-sense'language of at most 75 to 100 words.Ask them to use their new language to communicate something to the class,who must then try to determine what it is they are trying to say.

Afterwards,discuss what clues to meaning they found in body language,paralinguistic phenomena etc.

Have the students experiment with arbitrarily changing interpersonal distance in their day to day encounters.

a)Have them observe the reactions

b)Have a third person observe and record the reactions

c)Have the students interview the targets of the above exercise

three

An exercise in how context influences meaning

Give the students a sentence and have them(individually) describe the context.

e.g.'Sure,I'll get the Jaguar for you.'

1)But don't come to me for anything else this year.'

2)'And I'll buy a house for your brother and a new Boeing for your little sister ha ha ha.'

3)'Do you want your stuffed elephant too?'

Give some attention to advertisements, especially those using children. Look at the poses, for example, a child with her head cocked to one side in a look that would be read as 'flirtatious' in a woman. Have the students determine what age this non-verbal behaviour is learned in a) American society and b) their own society.

Obviously sexist advertisements are also useful. Have the students collect photos from magazines and discuss in class how the meaning comes across. For example, why does the Marlboro man seem strong? Is it his clothes? Because his back is straight?

Read the article 'How to Read Body Language' from the book Developing Reading Skills, by Louise Hirasawa and Linda Markstein. The topics for discussion, listed below are from that article, but could also be used on their own, if the article is not available to the class.

1) What kind of body language is used in your country or area of the country? Give examples.
2) ....body language varies from country to country and even from region to region within a single country. What differences have you noticed, for example, in gestures, facial expressions, keeping distance, embracing, shaking hands, or eye behaviour?
3) Cultural differences also occur in the attitude of people toward time. For example, being 'on time' is important in some countries, but, in other countries, people tend to be more casual about time. How do people in your country or your area of the country feel about time? What significance do they give to lateness, punctuality, telling time, using watches and calendars, and store hours? Do you think people from urban areas are more time-conscious than peolpe from rural areas? Why?
4) In your culture, does a person's sex make a difference in his/her use of body language? Discuss the following points: casualness, politeness, space, gesture.

Have the students draw,collect pictures or use Silent Way rods to describe the houses in their countries, and then think about the questions below.

1)How are the houses in your country different from the ones in America?

2)What does the lay-out of your house show about the function of the various rooms?

3)What does your house say about the way that people in your country feel about the space around them?Is it different than the way people in America feel?If so, how?

This exercise is taken from'Human Communication Handbook: Volume one'by Brent Ruben.There are many other exercises in the two volumes of this series,which could be adapted for use in the ESL classroom.

The exercise is intended to highlight for discussion the ambiguities of language and the manner in which people create the meanings they attach to words.Additionally,it provides the basis for noting the different meanings that different persons may attach to the same word.Tha activity can be used with any number of participants and requires approxiamately 20 minutes to complete.

Procedure

Distribute copies of the accompanying worksheet to participants with instructions to read and individually answer each question as they believe to be appropriate.Allow 5 minutes to complete.

Compile and compare participant's responses and discuss.

Worksheet

1)The student government president was elected by an overwhelming majority.
-What percentage of the vote did he receive?

2)John is a heavy smoker.
-How much does he smoke?

3)Mr.Johnson gives an unusually large number of exams in his course.
-How many exams does he give?

4)Mary has a well-paying job.
-How much does she earn annually?

5)Dr,Wenden is middle-aged.
-How old is he?

6)Mary's grade-point average is excellent.
-What is her average?

7)Jackson dropped out of school very early.
-How many years of school did he complete?

Footnotes

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5)Bateson,Gregory,Steps to an Ecology of Mind.New York: Chandler Publishing Co.,1972,p453

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7)Brown,Roger,Words and Things.New York:The Free Press,1968 p 230

8)Caissie,Roland.BBE Class,School for International Training, June 1978

9)Watzlawick,Beavin,Jackson.Pragmatics of Human Communication, New York,W.W.Norton and Co.,1967,p123

10)Ibid.,p125

11)Ibid.,p127

12)Ibid.,p146

13)Ibid.,p136

14)Ibid.,p136

15)Ibid.,p141

16)Birdwhistle,Ray L.'Contribution of Linguistic-Kinesic Studies to the Understanding of Schizophrenia',in Alfred Auerbach(ed.),Schizophrenia.An Integrated Approach(New York: Ronald Press,1959)pp99-123

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