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# UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL AUTONOMA DE MEXICO

Facultad de Filosofía y Letras  
División de Estudios Superiores



## “Towards the Development of a Reading Comprehension Course Model in English for the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras”.

**T E S I S**

Que presenta para optar al grado de:

**MAESTRA EN LETRAS MODERNAS**

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## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Reading in a foreign language is an activity which is both necessary and advantageous to students at the University level in Mexico. It is our intention in this thesis to examine what is involved for these students in the process of reading and learning to read in both their native language and a foreign language. In this respect, we will concentrate in some detail on the aspects of reading in first and foreign languages, giving our attention to the exploration of students' varying and unique strategies for learning with special emphasis on the reading process. In doing so, we will direct our considerations towards the design and ultimate implementation of course materials suited to our students' needs and learning strategies.

The reading process in itself has had to change concomitant to changes which have taken place in the very need of our students for reading. In the past, the students' reading activities mainly reflected a humanistic concern. In contrast, the University student of today in Mexico is faced with a world in which his educational experience not only emphasizes but also demands the procuring and immediate processing of information to meet diverse academic requirements. These can and do vary among different University careers. The diversity of such requirements has determined to a large extent our role as materials developers, in particular the way in which we study our student population with the purpose of developing the kinds of courses most appropriate to them.

In the "Facultad de Filosofía y Letras" of the "Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México", students are representative of thirteen different careers, each implying varying

academic needs and requirements related to reading in a foreign language.<sup>+</sup> What is apparent, nonetheless, is that a reading skill is not only required of the students by the University authorities, but also reflects the students' daily needs, as can be seen in the bibliography for which they are responsible in their classes. It is our purpose in this thesis to demonstrate how this very apparent need has affected our students' interests and motivation regarding learning how to read in a foreign language. We further wish to indicate some of the means by which we will implement materials complementary to our students' interests and motivation.

Traditionally, reading is one of the four skills and some practices in its teaching may, indeed, prove useful. We will illustrate those aspects in traditional foreign language teaching methods which lend themselves to the teaching of reading in a foreign language. Nevertheless, we strongly believe that the teaching of reading in a foreign language cannot, by any means, be met entirely through the use of traditional methodology. Rather, a tentative model applicable to our students' situation should take into account different approaches to reading.

In this light, we will present and analyze the current theories and methods developed by reading specialists which we feel have direct bearing on our students' learning processes as well as needs. These specialists have studied the process of reading, placing special stress on reading for information, an emphasis which we have found to be highly useful in terms of our students' needs. The theories developed by these reading specialists, we believe, will play an important role in the development of our learning and teaching model.

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+ For a detailed overview of some of the students' needs for English in the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, consult the B. A. Thesis presented by Laura Consuelo Cao, mentioned in the bibliography.

Finally, it is our intention to reach conclusions about traditional and current methods of teaching reading in a foreign language, thereby suggesting some specific solutions to problems we will have encountered in our analysis of methodology and practice regarding the teaching of reading. Such theoretical and practical considerations are, by their very nature, inseparable from the recommendations to be made regarding the teaching and learning of reading.

Thus, we believe that recommendations related to the teaching of reading are of the utmost importance. For we cannot isolate reading from our students' academic preparation which must, implicitly, reflect real demands placed on them by today's very scientifically oriented and ever-changing world. The constant need for information that can be acquired only via written texts in foreign languages, places enormous constraints on Mexican students and indirectly on their teachers as well. To carry out our role as teachers, it is of unquestionable importance that we understand not only the constraints placed on our students, but also the means we have at our disposal to work around these constraints so that they can operate in both our and our students' mutual benefit and favor.

One of these means, and we feel by far the overriding one, available to us is that of the materials developer. For it is mainly through the eyes of the materials developer that we can look and thereby scrutinize the nature both of our students' needs and of their learning processes. With the understanding obtained from a careful study of these two aspects, and further, from their practical implementation in the guise of course design, we can then feel much more secure in our role as teachers. For then and only then, will we be equipped to work with students directly affected by global changes in the nature of their own education.

Definition of Terms not Defined Within the Text Itself.<sup>+</sup>

**Coherence** - in attempting to define coherence, Morrow infers that coherence is related to the fulfillment of a specific rhetorical act in a given situation. (Morrow, 1977, 14)

**Cohesion** - is basically a matter of grammatical links which operate between sentences. (Morrow, 1977, 13).

**Comprehension** - "[it] may be regarded as relating what we attend to in the world around us -the visual information of print in the case of reading- to what we already have in our heads". (Smith, 1982, 53). It can also be regarded as the extraction of meaning from text - as the reduction of uncertainty. (Smith, 1982, 185)

**Decode** - n(esp) device for translating data from one code to another. (Hornby, 1975, 226):

**Discourse** - is used to refer to a text where each proposition has a specific value (use) therein, and where both cohesion (grammatical links) and coherence (the fulfillment of a rhetoric function) are present. (Extract from Widdowson, 1978, 22-54).

**Easification** - it is a learning strategy which helps the learner to simplify the text for himself. (Bathia, 1978, 46)

**Empiric** - relying on observation and experiment, not on theory. (Hornby, 1975, 286)

**Long-term memory** - "[it] is the source of the all important non-visual information in reading; it contains the knowledge and beliefs that are part of our more or less permanent understanding of the world." (Smith, 1981, 42)

**Prediction** - is "the prior elimination of unlikely alternatives. (Smith, 1971, 62)

**Register** - "[it] is defined as the product of field of discourse (subject matter of the language event, e.g. biology), mode of discourse (the medium employed in the language event, e.g. spoken/written), and style of discourse (the interpersonal relationships that determine the code used, e.g. formal/casual, etc)." (Mackay and Bosquet, 1981, 12).

Reading comprehension - is considered as the ability of the students to understand content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) and function words (prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions and auxiliary verbs). Content words contain the message or idea, whereas function words connect the ideas cohesively in a larger context. (Sim and Bensoussan, 1979, 36)

Short-term memory - "is the location for information that we intend to erase". (Smith, 1971, 42)

Usage - "is the citation of words and sentences as manifestations of the language system". (Widdowson, 1978, 18)

Use - "is the way the system is realized for normal communicative purposes". (Widdowson, 1978, 18)

+ It is impossible to define a priori for definition by its very nature depends on the context and on the purpose of the context itself. Let us, then, call these "definitions" working definitions, hoping that the context in which they find themselves will be instrumental in defining them.



### A Brief Profile of the Students and their Requirements.

If we were able to design our materials successfully around our students' needs, the road to meaningful language learning and teaching would be smoothly paved. Nevertheless, in relation to the "Facultad de Filosofia y Letras", this sentiment originally expressed by Ronald Mackay and Allan Mountford<sup>+</sup> with regard to language learning and teaching in general, has been overridden by the sheer complexity of the student body. Laura Cao in her B. A. thesis presented in 1981, offers the most thorough study made to date of some of the very diverse student body composing the "Facultad de Filosofia y Letras". Her study underscores the wide disparity among different students' needs for reading in a foreign language.

The conclusions reached in Cao's thesis are based on extensive interviews with students, faculty members and administrators. A careful analysis of the data obtained from these interviews coupled with a re-shuffling of such data into distinct categories yielded interesting and often, at least superficially, contradictory results. Nevertheless, certain trends can be restated from Cao's thesis. Perhaps, the most important of these is that students' needs differ vastly according to their distinct fields of study. Under this general rubric, we may then begin to state specific cases, i.e., that students studying Librarianship and Geography are in special need of English, whereas History and Latin American Studies students can function reasonably well both in their university studies and as professionals without a reading knowledge of English.

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+ R. Mackay and A. Mountford in Cao, 1981, 20.

Also foremost among Cao's perception of general trends within the "Facultad de Filosofía y Letras" is that while bibliographies in English do exist on paper, in reality they are not adhered to in many careers. In other words, students can complete their studies without having to read very much, if anything at all, in English in their distinct careers. Such a real lack of bibliography perhaps reflects the prevalent attitude on the part of professors in various fields of study that if they as teachers do not require English, why should they encourage it on a broader faculty-wide basis? We could note that teachers paid profuse lip-service to the need for English, yet their real behavior with their students belied their stated concern for the knowledge of a foreign language.

Such has been our own very disconcerting personal experience when dealing directly with teachers in other disciplines. Difficulties have ranged from failure to collect promised bibliographical materials to outright silence with regard to announcing the availability of courses in reading comprehension.

In this vein, Cao has also cited the feeling on the part of students and faculty alike that the requirement of a reading knowledge in English in many careers is a mere formality, not to be taken seriously. She quotes from an article from the "Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana" to the same effect with the minor variation that a knowledge of English is a "prestige factor of very relative weight" (Cao, 1981, 19) in the area of higher education. Despite the purely formal nature of the English requirement, nonetheless, it may be a factor in the drop-out rate of students in the "Facultad de Filosofía y Letras." Cao has noted that students fear the English reading comprehension<sup>+</sup> examination and voice their hesitation about

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+ Definitions are to be found in "Definition of Terms", p.p. 5-6 or within the text itself.

presenting this exam. Because of the fear of presenting an examination in a language further removed from Spanish than, say, French, Italian or Portuguese, over fifty percent of the students studied by Cao who presented reading comprehension examinations in the C.E.L.E. did so in Romance languages. At this juncture, it appears appropriate to underscore the relative importance of English as a source of bibliography in many of the humanistic careers as opposed to the lesser importance of some of the Romance languages. Of course, it is of interest to us to note that the students' reactions to the English exam do vary from one career to another. As an example, we have found a distinctly more positive attitude prevalent among students of other languages and literatures, largely because, we believe, of their experience in learning languages which has resulted in the development of reading strategies.

Our student body is, in fact, distributed among thirteen different careers ranging from Philosophy to Geography. As Cao has suggested, it is not advisable to generalize about such a diverse student body which exhibits a vast disparity in both professional and personal interests, conceptual abilities and learning styles.

What most of our students do have in common, however, is a background knowledge of English varying from two to four years spread out between secondary and preparatory school. The result of those years of experience with English, that is, whether or not such experience has been a happy and profitable one, does, in fact, determine the kind of motivation which our students bring to English classes at university level. The attitudes adopted by our students thus, can and do vary considerably. In reality, however, a large percentage of our students are motivated solely by the thought of passing the

required English "translation" (reading comprehension) examination, for that would represent one step further towards our students' degrees.

Our students are mainly young adults whose entrance to the "Facultad de Filosofía y Letras" is practically guaranteed [if they are graduates from government schools.] Such guaranteed admission allows for a wide range of intellectual preparation and ability among our students. Our previous reference to the students' likely lack of motivation and to the background they have acquired in English, as well as to their wide diversity of academic preparation, make it almost impossible for us to ascertain on a unilateral basis our students' wants, and much less, their needs. For the concept of "needs analysis" is much more complex than that which initially meets the eye.

Needs analysis [has] come to mean the whole cluster of techniques which lead to an understanding of the parameters of...learning situations: ego, fellow learners, teacher(s), administrators, course-writers, producers, social agencies, career expectations and job satisfaction, social dynamics, learner-type and resource analysis, etc., are relevant factors. ...Since none of these are constant, analysis becomes a central aspect of course management. (Trim, quoted in Widdowson, 1983, 22)

We are, therefore, faced with having to make decisions on an ongoing basis which are in keeping with a reading comprehension course that should be highly learner-oriented. Furthermore, the concept of needs analysis has to be expanded so as to encompass the role(s) played by an ongoing process of course design and consequent implementation.

Needs analysis, per se, has traditionally involved an area of study designated now as "register analysis" [which] describes areas of use in terms of formal linguistic cate-

gories and aims at producing a specification of linguistic competence" (Widdowson, 1983, 9). Since the type of course we are interested in developing for our students is to be worked about real language use or discourse and not around formal linguistic categories, we will not be concerned with register analysis. Although it is often difficult to predict the students' reactions to a course worked around language use or discourse, we believe that such predictions are not only of utmost importance to us, but should also be the focus of a reading comprehension course. By extension, our own students' projected reactions should form the bases on which we are to build our model of course design and implementation.

It is to be remembered that our students' previous experiences with the learning of English have not only reflected a traditional setting, but traditional course materials as well, based on a kind of register analysis linked to the formulation of abstract linguistic rules. Such materials are almost exclusively geared to the memorization of structure rules in addition to vocabulary, both of which are conveniently removed from any kind of functional communicative context. It has also been our occasional experience to hear our students' complaints about the apparent uselessness of having to memorize grammatical rules.

Given all the considerations as well as the difficulties previously discussed, it does not appear valid to attempt to outline a succinct student profile reflecting such a varied student body as the one we find in the "Facultad de Filosofía y Letras". Rather, we must accept from the start, as an unchanging constraint, that the construct of our students' needs and the materials which we intend to offer will of necessity

initially be generalized. There is no other way that we can expect to reach en masse such a diverse student body as ours. However, such generalization can and must be subject to ongoing change, consistently reflecting our students' needs as we continually perceive them in an equally ongoing fashion as the one suggested in the model proposed by Trim (see previous note). Further, a course model such as the one we intend to propose, is by its very nature at the mercy of initial generalization and open to subsequent consistent salvation through ongoing change. Such change is to be precipitated largely by involved and sensitive teachers in constant contact with the varying needs of their students.

**Introduction: A Change in the Focus of Reading Comprehension and its Consequent Significance.**

Reading, as a subject, has long commanded the interest and didactic impulses of both teachers and students of language. While in the traditional humanistic sense, reading reflected the highest achievement possible for educated man, at present, reading, although still representative of the mark of an educated man, has come to mean something else. We may attempt to equate the new meaning of reading as tantamount to a new image of man's goals and aspirations in contemporary society. Rather than focusing on a contemplative, reflective analysis of the written word; modern man is more concerned with the instant assimilation and interpretation of scientific and technological achievements and advances and, consequently, with their corresponding domains contingent on his own theoretical and/or practical applications. In short, the current tendency is to read almost solely for the sake of obtaining and utilizing information. Such a view of reading has not only permeated the scientific fields, but has also made a significant incursion into fields traditionally linked to the humanities.

This change in the focus of reading has necessitated a corresponding change in the importance that reading has traditionally been allotted in the teaching of languages. Language teachers and developers of materials designed for these teachers and their students have undergone a radical change in viewpoint with respect to the methodological factors associated with the teaching and learning of reading. The questioning which has arisen as a consequence of the newly acquired importance of reading has led to a re-evaluation of the reading process and what it entails. One of the most sig-

nificant results of this recasting of the purposes of reading has been an unsurpassed need to examine and apply to real learning and teaching situations the pertinent theoretical considerations and constructs regarding the nature of reading for information.

In its most traditional aspect, reading has indeed played an important role in the classroom. We, as teachers and materials developers, are not too far removed in time from a first language classroom in which reading, interpretation and analysis were relegated almost exclusively to the area of the language arts. From the age in which children were first able to read, they were taught to value the aesthetic aspects of language as expressed in literary forms. Their teachers, it is to be noted, carried into the very earliest stages of reading, an appreciation of the humanistic values and techniques in which they themselves had been taught and trained. Consequently, in the contemporary classroom we can still see vestiges of this humanistic outlook.

Nevertheless, alongside a continued albeit greatly diminished interest in literature, we find an ever-increasing, overwhelming emphasis placed by teachers on aspects of rapid reading and the extracting of information. Such an emphasis has been most certainly uttered by our students, especially in their immediate necessity to "process" materials and present them in seminar and/or essay form. The type of reading material most commonly associated with these new purposes for reading has reflected areas of improvement in man's knowledge of scientific and technological as well as technical fields. It is, then, no surprise to us that the very study of the nature of reading should, of necessity, also reflect a more scientific and technical approach.



This modification in outlook with regard to the teaching of reading in the first language has provoked far-flung repercussions in the teaching of this skill in a foreign language. In other words, as our own direct experience has shown us, students, too, have become increasingly aware of the necessity for change in foreign language teaching, a change which would more aptly reflect their current real learning needs. Correspondingly, any modification in language teaching methodology reflects an ever-growing concern on the part of teachers as to their students' real needs and uses for language. Teachers and researchers, especially in developing countries such as Mexico, have noticed that their students' immediate and overwhelming need for knowledge of foreign languages has centered almost exclusively about reading for the immediate retrieval and processing of information.

Recent studies regarding reading have focused not only on the learners' needs in reading but also more significantly on the means by which learners find, process, and use information. As a consequence, such studies are of utmost interest and importance to us, not only as regards the scope of this thesis, but also insofar as they represent broader concerns vital to us, first as teachers and then as materials designers. For it is our primary goal in establishing a model for course design to make more accessible and, thereby, facilitate the process of reading to our students.

We may note that in spite of all that has been said and written with regard to the nature of reading, the fact remains that reading is still felt to be an empirical and somewhat elusive discipline. In other words, reading simply cannot be looked upon with some of the necessary scientific detachment normally associated with other disciplines characteristic of

the technological computerized age in which we live. In effect, man still must depend on his own unique and personal mental processes when extracting information via a written text. At times, these processes may appear to defy classification; nevertheless, they constitute the mental capacities necessary to read and organize information efficiently. Man must learn to make better, more meaningful, use of his mental capacities in order to be more successful in his retrieval and application of information obtained from reading. For this very reason, any pertinent theoretical and/or practical information which claims to shed light on the understanding and subsequent means to develop these mental capacities and, consequently, the reading process are of unquestionable importance to us.

It is felt, therefore, that we must extract from all that has been written about this elusive ability called reading "data that illuminate the processes that characterize reading rather than 'prove' theories in a word, data that are analytical, not merely descriptive" (Kolers, 1969, 9). We firmly believe that such data will contribute towards an understanding of the factors involved in reading and how as teachers and materials developers we may set as our goals first the design of a course model, and subsequently through that model the development in our students of the factors involved in reading. Our intent will thus reflect ways in which we may implement a "process in the learner towards his eventual aim" (Widdowson, 1983, 31), considering that process as an amalgam of the different strategies and mental capacities which have been demonstrated as successful in promoting the act of reading. Such an objective should form the principal concern of anyone who wishes to write about the reading process and reading comprehension. Further,

it should be a primary consideration for anyone who wishes to place reading and reading comprehension into the framework of methodological considerations in the teaching of a foreign language in a developing country such as Mexico. Finally, and more specifically, it should be of overriding importance in our examination of language teaching and learning at the "Facultad de Filosofía y Letras" of the "Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México".

Given the vastly different backgrounds, learning strategies and motivations of our students, we are aware of the effect of the former on our students' interaction with any course which we may develop. Further, as teachers with some expertise in the field of learning to read in a foreign language, it has been our experience that many of our students have not developed to the extent that we would in theory expect, processes which facilitate reading and retention of information in their native language. For this reason, the design and implementation of a course model would have to stress the most basic of reading skills and strategies. Thus, our teaching role is even more complex, for we are not only engaged in foreign language teaching, but we might very well have also become the sole provider of skills urgently needed in reading any material, in any language, in our students' university careers.

In this way, along with the concern for the transference of reading strategies and other processes of learning from the native to the foreign language, one of our goals in developing a course model would have to be the implementation of basic strategies when these are lacking in our students. This goal, though stated simply here, is not equally a simple task, for it is often difficult to determine when and which strategies are lacking in our students in their first language and, as we will

demonstrate, some theorists are convinced that such implementation is nearly impossible (see Coady's analysis on p.p. 25 and 26 of this thesis). However, were we as teachers and materials developers to view our role(s) as facilitators and "encouragers" rather than as the standard-bearers of any one theory, we would perhaps attain greater rapport with our students, thereby allowing for levels of understanding which could bear fruit in the form of greater student interest and learning.

Our concern with this last aspect is so great that it has come to be the modus vivendi of this thesis. We are completely aware, however, that we are unable to fully exhaust the theme at hand and that our approach as well as subsequent suggestions are, in fact, molded to our practical experience with our students, experience which we feel has enabled us to ferret out from among the theorists the data we find pertinent to our unique situation.

Therefore, by its very nature and constraints, our thesis will perhaps have only limited application to a very specific situation. Moreover, our suggestions have yet to be implemented and such implementation would, in effect, require ongoing studies beyond the ken of our efforts in this research paper. Nevertheless, we are conscious of the boundaries we have had to establish in this thesis. Our study of factors related to reading as applied at all times to our students will, we hope, set the stage at future junctures for further considerations of course design and implementation in the teaching of reading comprehension in English in the "Facultad de Filosofía y Letras" of the "Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México".

## Chapter I

Psycholinguistic Bases of Reading with Regard Mainly to the LI.

It seems logical to us, given the concern to which we have previously alluded (see Introduction, p. 12) that we begin our study of reading with an examination of the reading process in one's native language. For, we believe that this process has great bearing upon the way(s) we, as teachers, can direct our teaching and our students can channel their learning of reading in a foreign language. As a result, among questions we may ask regarding the reading process are the following: do we all read in the same way and, if not, do our different ways of reading correspond to our distinct purposes for approaching a text? Furthermore, does what we see in a text depend on the different kinds of questions we ask and the distinct aspects of information we seek while we read? Finally, we may ask if it is indeed possible to teach reading in a foreign language because reading, as we have suggested through the types of questions asked, is such an individual activity?

We may tentatively state that the reading process consists of a highly complex act in which there is much more than initially meets the eye. In our attempt to understand what constitutes reading, we may first question if reading consists of the decoding of written words into their oral counterparts. It is a known fact that many readers, including some students, carry out this process of decodification. Whether they read effectively while doing so is another matter, for the high speeds with which the experienced reader reads do not seem to back up this theory. In fact, it would be impossible at such speeds to read first letter by letter and, subsequently word by word. If we did so, we would not only reduce our speed, but also at the same time lose the gist of the text. While we may consequently disqualify

oral decodification as a particularly efficient way of reading, we are still faced with the task of determining the most efficient form of reading.

We may further take into account our common experience of having read texts from which words were deleted and from which we still were able to extract the main ideas. Such an experience proves that we do not need to read word for word in order to achieve comprehension, for it is a well-known fact that people who manage to succeed in reading word for word do not see the forest because of the trees. In other words, people who read word for word break up the text. Thus, these people are perhaps unable to understand the gist of the text, and other aspects such as style, the author's view and others which are more evident when texts are considered at discourse level.

Thus, reading word for word and its counterpart, linear reading, are not far removed from us. In the not too remote past, reading was considered a passive process in which the reader would extract information which the author had put down on paper. The reader would have to follow the text in a linear fashion and have to understand every word in the text in order to achieve understanding. He was expected to remember every detail. It was thought to be sufficient for the reader to understand the vocabulary, to look up unknown words in the dictionary, and to read and reread until everything was understood. In this way, reading consisted of many repetitions of the act itself and with each repetition a higher level of understanding was supposed to have been attained.<sup>+</sup> Reading was a very goal-oriented activity, and the processes which were involved in reaching the goal of complete understanding were not to have varied from one reader to the next. In essence, all readers took

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<sup>+</sup> Smith, F., 1981, 11.

the same steps in roughly the same order toward the very same goal. Different purposes for reading were either shunned or openly frowned upon, for divergence was contrary to the idea of a passive process.

The concept of reading as a passive activity has been discarded by such contemporary theorists as Frank Smith, Kenneth Goodman, Paul Kolers, James Coady, Henry G. Widdowson and others. They all concur in that reading is an activity which very much demands active participation on the part of the reader who brings to the reading task distinct personalized study skills and individualized reading techniques. This concept is nearly diametrically opposed to the lack of individual approaches previously described.

Frank Smith specifically rejects the idea that reading is a linear process. He maintains that the reader does not use all the information found in the text, but rather selects only part of the information --that part which best complements his interests. "The fluent readers in all aspects of reading are those who pay attention only to that information in the print that is most relevant to their purposes" (Smith, 1978, 84, 124). This statement would prove that reading is a communicative activity in which each reader makes a different selection of cues from which to extract meaning. Thus, each reader faced with a text focuses on different words or ideas in order to determine the meaning of the text. However, it is not in the text's printed form that meaning lies. Instead, it is each reader who in turn brings meaning to the printed page, when he reads at text level.

Smith also affirms that reading does not begin at letter level, then proceed to word and sentence level and, finally, reach text or discourse level.<sup>+</sup> The above-mentioned breakdown

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<sup>+</sup> Smith does not always differentiate between "text and discourse level".

of reading has been expressed as "mediated meaning identification" (Smith, 1971, 151), in which the meaning is extrapolated at any one or all four of the previously cited levels: letter, word, sentence and text (discourse). That is to say, inexperienced readers will stop in order to deliberate difficult or unknown elements of a text, trying to decipher their meaning(s) by considering any or all of the stated levels and focusing on salient features of the written language necessary for these readers' understanding of impediments in the text.

Experienced readers, however, carry out a procedure known as "immediate meaning identification" (Smith, 1971, 150-151) which is independent of the type of identification carried out in the process of mediated meaning identification. Experienced readers recognize immediately the different features characteristic of written language without stopping to deliberate these and, in that way, they bring immediate, unmediated meaning<sup>+</sup> to the texts they are reading. Such meaning is personal, whereby readers can make significant observation and decisions about words, often focusing on words at distinct, yet unpremeditated junctures in the text. Smith says that while readers make use of the above-mentioned techniques, they are facilitating the development of others as they read (Smith, 1971, 150-164). For this reason, as well as others, Smith has reaffirmed that experienced readers will require less visual information in order to extract information from a written text.

Smith admits that all readers will, on occasion, resort to letter or word identification --mediated meaning identification-- but, also states that experienced readers will unquestionably do so more infrequently and, for this reason as well, will always require less visual information. Smith recognizes that, apart

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+ For further information on this subject see p.52 of this thesis and Smith, 1982, 135-149.



from occasional references to specific feature characteristics, the fluent reader derives meaning solely from the complete text and not from its component parts.

Coady describes reading as a cyclical process which involves conceptual abilities, background knowledge and process strategies. These factors are individual to each reader and, thus, students learning to read "travel the same paths but not in the same manner or to the same degree" (Coady in Mackay, Barkman and Jordan, 1979, 8). In the course of this thesis, we will further consider in greater detail the many varied steps and paths involved in the reading process as elaborated upon by Coady and other theorists.

Kenneth Goodman describes reading as "a psycholinguistic process by which the reader ... reconstructs as best as he can a (written) passage" (Goodman in Eskey, 1979, 68). Goodman, like Coady, goes on to state that his reconstruction is a cyclical process. According to Goodman, however, this process consists of four steps which are expressed as: sampling, predicting, testing and confirming (Goodman in Smith, 1973, 23). In this process, the fluent reader does not identify each letter and word in sequence, nor does he stop to analyze structure. While both Goodman and Smith agree as to this approach to reading, Goodman also believes that the fluent reader reads large chunks of texts, first sampling from what he is reading (Goodman in Smith, 1973, 23). Then, in predicting, the reader takes advantage of his expectations --those ideas and/or features which he expects the ensuing text to contain-- and of his knowledge of the world. He, thus, forms hypothesis around which he can reconstruct the text or infer the author's message or enough of it to enable his comprehension. In this manner, having once sampled parts of the text, the reader is able to predict what follows. The reader is also helped in this process by his knowledge of the subject matter he is reading about and by certain study skills

which good readers develop through their own experiences.

As we have described, once the reader has sampled parts of the text and predicted what is to follow, he begins to check his "guesses" and reconfirms or modifies them as he continues reading. If we agree that reading is the type of process we have described in which the reader actively participates, it is then highly possible for us to accept Goodman's theory that reading could, in fact, consist of the four steps previously mentioned --sampling, prediction, testing, and confirmation-- and that these steps take place in a cyclical fashion. Our acceptance of Goodman's theory is based above all on the constant interaction of reader with text in which the reader is engaged in the confirmation and/or modification of his hypothesis.

Paul Kolers also suggests that reading is not a passive activity when he points out that the reader's active participation is required in order to extract meaning from a written passage. Kolers carried out experiments with bilinguals in which he changed the shape of the letters, jumbled the word order and alternated several languages in the same text. He concluded that "subjects could always tell what the passage was about --that is, what message had been conveyed-- but only rarely could they say in what language they had read a particular fact" (Kolers in Smith, 1971, 154). In this way Kolers affirms that the correspondence between what is written and "what the subject says he has read is clearly a semantic or informational correspondence" (p. 154). In essence, the reader gets the message but is not concerned about how he gets it. Kolers also suggests that readers only select information relevant to their specific interests, thereby defining "message" as predetermined largely by each reader's distinct needs and purposes for reading a text.

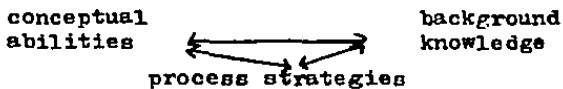
Both Frank Smith and Kolers pick up the thread of Goodman's thoughts with respect to reading when they, too, emphasize that individual participation is essential in reading. The reader does not process all the information he is reading but rather carries out a continuous selection of information to be processed. Goodman's ideas on the ways in which readers process information, such as the explanation given below, have further interested as well as influenced both psycho- and applied linguistics.

Reading is a selective process. It involves partial use of available minimal language cues selected from perceptual input on the basis of the reader's expectations. As this partial information is processed, tentative decisions are made to be confirmed, rejected or refined as reading proceeds. (Goodman in Smith, 1973, 22)

If we add what we have already considered of Coady's theory: that students "travel the same paths but not in the same manner or to the same degree" (Coady in Mackay, Barkman and Jordan, 1979, 8) to Goodman's explanation of the reading process, we can then even more readily accept the reader's active participation in the process of reading. Thus, we could conclude that individual readers who exploit their conceptual abilities and background knowledge develop their own personal reading strategies which will always include aspects of sampling, predicting, testing and confirming.

In this way, while Coady fundamentally agrees with the descriptions offered by Smith and Goodman, he also points out that their analysis is based on the process of reading in a first language. Coady is more concerned about how students read a foreign language. In "A Psycholinguistic Model of the E. S. L. Reader" (Coady in Mackay, Barkman and Jordan, 1979, 5-12), he describes reading in any language as a cyclical process which

involves conceptual abilities, background knowledge and process strategies. He has, therefore, set up the following diagram



(p. 7). Coady goes on to say that students of a foreign language would benefit if they increased their background knowledge which to him is similar to what Smith would term their "knowledge of the world" (Smith, 1982, 54). Our knowledge of the world very often includes a set of cultural variables which we tend to take for granted. We generally do not set them apart from other variables contributing to our knowledge of the world. Nevertheless, in this light, it is important to note that students who are reading specialized material in a foreign language are less hindered than those reading more general humanistic material. Then, in essence, "background" specialized knowledge has become a variable distinct from cultural background.

Coady has pointed out that foreign students more often than not lack the background cultural knowledge we as teachers often recognize as necessary for understanding certain texts written in a foreign language. To compensate partially for this lack of knowledge, Coady suggests that instruction in study skills would be highly beneficial for foreign language learners.<sup>1</sup> Of course, we should add that study skills are helpful with those texts where the cultural information is far outweighed by areas of information already familiar to the learners, such as in the cases we have mentioned above. Of course, it is to be expected that in Coady's framework, foreign language students could en-

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1 See appendix, part three, X-XXIII.

counter cultural obstacles. Nevertheless, when conceptual abilities are lacking in learners, Coady tells us that there is very little to be done, short of relying upon the teaching of study skills, and even study skills are a poor substitute for intellectual capacity.

Given, however, that we are generally working with an intellectually capable group of learners, we could then agree with Coady when he maintains that students depend on different skills for distinct purpose. That is, as we have seen, students can and do choose from an identifiable group of skills common to reading, but they do not travel these paths "in the same way or in the same degree" (Coady in Mackay, Barkman and Jordan, 1979, 8). Coady believes that at this point in which students become aware of how they change skills in reading, one could call "these skills...strategies": hence, Coady's choice of the term "process strategies" (p. 7).

Among the many process strategies pertinent to reading described by Coady are the following: syntactic information, (deep and surface) lexical meaning, and conceptual meaning, cognitive strategies, affective mobilizers. Coady pointed out that any reader would use different combinations of process strategies but that foreign language students would or could be deficient in process strategies which "involve substantial knowledge of the target language" (p.p. 8-9), in particular in three areas from the above mentioned: syntactic information especially at the surface level, lexical meaning and conceptual meaning. If certain process strategies, as Coady seems to infer, require a greater knowledge of the foreign language, it is obvious that at some point or other this knowledge would have to be given to the student(s) who needed it in order to read at the required level. On the other hand, Coady believes that the mechanical aspects of reading carried out in the first language (L1) would

be transferred by learners to reading in the target language (L2). Therefore, he suggests that to encourage the student to make such a transfer of strategies from the L1 to the L2, emphasis in reading should be consciously placed on comprehension strategies common to both languages. It is understood that comprehension strategies encompass the varied steps to which Coady alludes, and which also have been the object of discussion for other theorists. This too, as Coady suggests, will form an integral part of our course model.

At some point or other, theorists have explained some of the process strategies which Coady cites, but it would be perhaps important to elaborate on the last three. Unskilled readers, and especially readers in a foreign language, have always had the tendency to read at word level, thus stopping at each unknown word. This kind of reading results in the reader's providing definitions, such as those found in a dictionary with no concern for the environment surrounding these words in the text. As Coady suggests, [it would be beneficial for the foreign language reader to be encouraged to use the context of the text as the cue(s) from which to derive meaning for unknown elements] (p. 11). Working with contextual elements often requires the reader's active recall of prior knowledge related to the text at hand. In this way, the reader is actively filling in the gaps created by the information unknown to the reader.

We have noted that Coady tends to stress universal procedures followed by native readers as well as foreign language learners. That procedures in reading can be expressed in terms of universals is an important concept to us in our study of the nature of reading. It also sheds considerable light on the kinds of decisions readers make as well as the bases for making such decisions. One of the most enlightening studies to date which emphasizes decision-making as related to universal proce-

dures is "Toward a Model of Text Comprehension and Production", authored by Walter Kintsch and Teun A. Van Dijk. According to these theorists, all readers share a set of common procedures in the act of reading; however, poorer readers do not perform as well as better readers and they also perform at a much slower pace. Kintsch and Van Dijk classify poorer readers as those who have demonstrably weaker verbal systems (Kintsch and Van Dijk, 1978, 371).

Kintsch and Van Dijk, as well as Smith, concede that the short-term memory plays an important role in the reading process, i.e., poorer readers tend to use this asset much less efficiently than do good readers (p. 371). What all readers share, however, is an element in the short-term memory, called the "buffer" which allows for its effective or not-so-effective use. The buffer is that part of the short-term memory which is instrumental in the processing of data. When the buffer is strong, readers are not hindered in connecting new information with the old.

The idea of connecting information is of utmost relevance to Kintsch and Van Dijk. In effect, it forms the basis for their analysis of the reading process, for as Kintsch and Van Dijk tell us, readers establish a "text-base" which is a "coherent structured unit" (p. 365). The text base depends inextricably upon

what is intuitively called a topic of discourse... that is the theme of the discourse or a fragment thereof. Relating propositions in a global manner is not sufficient. There must be a global constraint that establishes a meaningful whole, characterized in terms of a discourse topic. (p.p. 356-366)

Subordination of information plays an important role in the establishment of a text-base and its dependent appendages. What allows the reader to establish connections among the text base and its subordinate propositions is the aspect of referential

coherence :

...if a text-base is found to be referentially coherent, that is, if there is some argument overlap among all of its propositions, it is accepted for further processing; if gaps are found, inference processes are initiated to close these; specifically, one or more propositions will be added to the text base that make it coherent. (p. 367)

Decision-making is carried out on the level of determining textual coherence. When coherence is found to be lacking, the reader provides the necessary information through the buffer in order to be able to continue processing the text. Whether or not the reader is successful in his establishment of inferences and subsequent propositions depends on the level of sophistication of the buffer (p. 368). In this procedure, the reader is aided in his continual processing and retrieving of information, aspects which are vital to the act of reading itself. Decisions are implicit at all steps of this procedure. Cooper and Petrosky (1975, 5), who offer a very different approach to the nature of reading while also stressing universal procedures also show how fluent readers make decisions and confirm and modify them. In their study of how fluent readers read, Cooper and Petrosky have identified strategies used in handling stretches of difficult textual material. Of the different strategies which they mention, three would seem particularly important. The first is how "the reader makes use of redundancies --orthographic, syntactic and semantic-- to reduce his uncertainty about meaning."<sup>1</sup> At the same time the reader also "samples the text as economically as possible under the direction of peripheral search guidance". This is to say that the reader uses cues found in different parts of the text as well as infor-

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1 See appendix, p. XII, ex. III-A, B.



mation already gleaned from the text in order to reconfirm or modify his expectations. In other words, the reader samples from different parts of the text (p. 15).

The second strategy taken from Cooper and Petrosky which seems important to us elaborates on what Goodman has stated about the focus of the experienced reader's use of prediction:<sup>+</sup> "the reader shifts approaches for special materials", that is, he recognizes characteristics inherent to different kinds of texts and bases his prediction on these characteristics. It would seem that this strategy is used each time the text varies. If we take this one into account, we can also conclude that, as a third strategy, the reader adapts specific approaches to the distinct purposes he has when reading a certain text. Cooper and Petrosky back this up when stating that: "the reader shifts approaches depending on his purpose" for reading (p. 16).

To our way of thinking, A. K. Pugh has expanded upon Cooper's and Petrosky's ideas declaring that a mature reader consciously adopts a distinct style which we could equate with Cooper's and Petrosky's definition of "approach" once he has determined his purpose for reading a specific text. Pugh describes several different styles of reading. Three of these are: scanning, search reading and skimming.<sup>++</sup> In the first, the reader fixes his attention on the parts of the text in which specific information in a given form is located. In search reading, the reader looks for specific information the exact form of which is unknown. The third reading style is skimming in which the reader glances through the text in order to get the gist of the text. So that he can do so, the reader must, according to Pugh, "consciously reorganize and recall some of the information given by the author" as well as the way in which the author has arranged his text (Pugh, 1978, 50). In this way, recall of textual organization is of vital importance.

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<sup>+</sup> See appendix, p. XIV, ex. I-A.

<sup>++</sup> See appendix, p. XI, ex. II-A, B.

Pugh also describes two more styles of reading which even more highly emphasize the reader's conscious reorganization and recall of information contained within a text. These are: receptive reading and responsive reading. In the first, the reader's only goal is the acquisition of what Pugh calls the "plain sense", or the main ideas and important details to be found in a given text. In the second, the reader is actively engaged in forming an opinion on what he has read. In effect, the reader uses the author's message to reconstruct his own ideas and to "answer" the author in a kind of mute conversation. H. G. Widdowson and J. Palmer tell us that such an unspoken conversation is made possible through the "cooperative principle", a "construct in which the interlocutors in a communicative act have established unspoken referential antecedents which aid in their mutual understanding" (Palmer in Mackay and Palmer, 1981, 83-84).

H. G. Widdowson stresses the communicative nature of reading, as does Smith, by stating that reading is based on such a mutual understanding between reader and author. In essence the reader usually reads only about topics of which he already has prior ideas or knowledge, hence sharing these with the author. Furthermore, as Widdowson tells us (Widdowson, 1984, 39), the reader only obtains information that is useful for his specific purpose, because, in fact, one reads with a specific purpose in mind. Reading, in short, is but a means to an end, that is, except when reading literature or reading for pleasure, the reader is far more preoccupied with the author's message than with the language used to express it. Yet, reader and author must share certain antecedents in order to make possible the reader's lack of preoccupation about the language used in a text.

This very lack of preoccupation underlies the dynamic relationship between reader and author that Widdowson has pointed out. In this relationship, the reader exercises his sociocultural knowledge and his understanding of universal rhetorical functions such as description, definition, exemplification and others. These functions form part of the baggage of knowledge commonly shared by the reader and the author and facilitate the reader's understanding of a text.

When readers sense the need for preoccupation about the kind of language used in a text, they most likely are involved in a conscious interpretation of textual material very different from the kind alluded to above. Such is the case of literary texts. In his analysis of the reader's perception and interpretation of literary and especially poetic texts, Harold Weinrich (Weinrich, 1980) contends, reiterating the ideas of Jean-Paul Sartre as expressed in Weinrich's article, that very often the reader depends more on the information omitted than on the information explicitly stated, in order to arrive at a viable interpretation of a given text. In fact, when too much information is provided, the reader has the tendency to skip this information. Readers involved in the interpretation of poetry tend to read at a slower pace, precisely because such interpretation depends highly upon the elimination of the reader's doubt whereby he fills in the gaps deliberately left open to him by the author. Thus, slow reading in this case and, more concretely, "literary" reading, are not counterproductive; rather, they reflect a different kind of reading which is both productive and highly valid in special circumstances (p.p. 145-146).

## Chapter 2.

The Implications of Reading in a Foreign Language.

The theorists mentioned in the previous chapter with the exception of J. Coady and H. G. Widdowson refer to reading in a native language. As theorists, they are more involved in attempting to provide descriptions of the reading process than in proffering practical applications of their theories. As applied linguists, teachers and course designers we are more concerned with how such theories can explain the reading process and what an understanding of this process would entail in the classroom. The theorists mentioned in the previous chapter, acting as scientists, have carried out various experiments on which they base their theories. But given that the brain (which is so difficult to base theories upon) is involved in the very complex process of reading, many of the theories put forth by the most learned of theorists may remain just that: theories. We cannot categorically state that reading lies within the realm of only one of the theories previously stated, or within all of them, or even within any one of them. This obviously leads us to serious reservations about the scientific strictness of the conclusions previously described.

In spite of these reservations, the descriptions of reading in a first language could be looked upon as goals that students of a foreign language might some day reach. We hope that our students will be able to extract main ideas.<sup>1</sup> We also expect that they will be able to extract specific information efficiently when reading in a foreign language. We hope that at a later point in time they may be equipped to perceive implicit information<sup>2</sup> and thereby understand more fully the author's viewpoint.

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1. See appendix, p. X, ex. II-C, D.

2. See appendix, p. XX, ex. 1-a, b.

In addition to these goals it is our hope that our students will [be able to fit this knowledge into their own existing structure ... and to be able to use this knowledge at a later date] (Urquhart in Figueroa, 1979, 66). It is our intention to describe the nature of this existing structure insofar as it will aid us in determining how our students process information through reading.

The knowledge which a reader has very often prepares him for attitudes assumed in reading which he would normally not assume in conversational discourse. Widdowson elaborates on this point when he explains that

the positions the reader takes up will not be determined by the interpersonal factors that are so crucial in conversation, but by ideational factors (to use Halliday's terminology). That is to say, the reader's concern is to derive as much information as he needs from his reading so as to consolidate or change the frames of reference which define his particular conceptual territory. If he seeks to consolidate he will tend to be assertive, and if he seeks to change he will tend towards submission. (Widdowson in Alderson, 1984, 223)

The concept of the reader as an assertive or submissive partner in the act of communication is of interest to us in both our study and in our proposed model. Not only does it shed new light on the role that prediction and purpose play in reading, but it also establishes the reader as having a distinct personality in regard to the text at hand. This personality is determined, as Widdowson believes, by the reader's attempt "to relate what the writer says to a preexisting schema"<sup>+</sup> (p. 224)

In his model, Widdowson uses "schema" somewhat differently. In effect, Widdowson refers to a conceptual rather than

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<sup>+</sup> See appendix, p. XXI, ex. 1-A, B.

to a strictly cultural "schema" as noted in the descriptions offered by Steffenson and Joag-Dev. Despite these differences with regard to the concept of schema, we can note that it is extremely difficult to decide where cultural influence ends and purely conceptual influence begins. Nevertheless, according to Widdowson, the reader's intention is ostensibly to sample the information available in a text and to modify, whenever necessary, his existing schemata. Widdowson informs us that the text is "itself schematically organized and so represents a structural order which the reader has to reconcile with his own" (p. 225). In effect, the author's ideas are made to fit into the reader's already existing schematic order. When the two orders are similar, that is, when reader and author are in agreement, the reader takes an assertive role. When these orders are different, the reader may choose to reaffirm his own schematic order and will only sample some information from the text, therefore taking an assertive role. He may, however, decide to accept the author's schematic order, thus submitting to this order and substantially modifying his own framework of ideas.

While Widdowson does not overtly apply this model to the foreign language learner, we can obviously sense its implications there. The language learner, for all that Steffenson, Joag-Dev and Coady have told us about cultural frames of reference<sup>+</sup> may, indeed, lack the conceptual schemata<sup>+</sup> which the author reflects in his text. (Although as we have noted, conceptual schemata may not be totally derived from cultural variables). Thus, the learner, by his very nature, may more often than not be forced into a more submissive role vis à vis the text and, by extension, vis à vis the author in the act of communication which is reading.

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<sup>+</sup> See appendix, p. I-IV.

The role which the foreign language learner takes in reading, as we have seen, is by no means clear-cut. It can and does vary according to the interaction of many different factors, among which we have specifically considered the interplay of cultural and conceptual schemata between foreign language reader and author. Nevertheless, we can accept as an axiomatic truth regarding all learners and learning situations (which encompass the act of reading) that "the only effective and meaningful way in which anyone can learn is attempting to relate new experiences to what he knows (or believes) already. In other words, comprehension and learning are inseparable" (Smith, 1975, 1). In effect, the learner tends to learn more when he takes a more assertive position with regard to a particular text. Comprehension precedes learning,<sup>1</sup> for as learners more readily understand new information, they simultaneously fit it into already existing schemata, adding to their schemata new data, thereby "learning" something new.

Further, defining comprehension and learning proves to be no easy task. We have affirmed, however, as does Frank Smith, that comprehension, in fact, precedes learning. If the text itself does not make sense to us, then we are unable to restructure our theory of the world in the head, which can be considered as a sort of pre-existing schemata.<sup>2</sup> However, at some point the text can make sense to us and thus we would reconstruct or modify our schemata basing our new reconstructions or modifications on information gleaned from the text. Smith calls this process "learning" (Smith, 1975, 35). Concomittant to this "learning", to use Smith's terminology, Smith introduces what he calls "Information theory".

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1. See appendix, p. XIV, ex. VII, VIII.
  2. To help pinpoint students pre-existing schemata, proposed texts are studied exhaustively using diverse cultural and conceptual criteria.

According to the precepts of "Information theory", as interpreted by Frank Smith, "a message or a signal is informative if the receiver of the message knows more after receiving the message than he knew before receiving it" (Smith, 1975, 31). When reading, readers respond to familiar signals which establish the necessary ground for them to assimilate new information. If readers receive only familiar signals with no new information, they can be just as likely to tune out as if they were receiving sheer unadulterated "noise" (the term in "Information theory" for signals which are completely meaningless to us). Therefore, for reading to induce real learning, there should be a proper mixture of familiar signals and meaningful new information in a context in which the reader will take an assertive role, fitting the new information into pre-existing conceptual and cultural schemata.

As teachers and material writers, we are very much concerned with the processes of comprehension and learning. It would interest us greatly to be able to pinpoint in our students the moment in which comprehension becomes learning. In spite of the approaches to guessing unknown information which Gagné (see p. 44 of this paper) and Hosenfeld (Alderson, 1984, 230) have tried to show us, it is most unfortunately impossible to look directly into our own and, by extension, into our students' cognitive structures (Smith, 1975, 43). While Frank Smith admits that "the solution to a problem may flash into our mind, he also admits that we [might] have no idea of where the solution came from or how it was conceived" (Smith, 1975, 44).

While we cannot perceive cognitive structure per se, we can and do perceive its products, both in our own learning and in that of our students. Therefore, cognitive structure and its expression through cognitive style can only be inferred from



observable data, i.e., from the ways in which we see our students approach texts. By cognitive style, we mean the distinctive approaches used by learners when involved in learning activities. Smith elaborates on this idea, telling us that "cognitive styles do not "explain" individuals, nor do they act as mysterious forces that direct our brains from within. They are observable and relatively consistent characteristics of thought and behavior which reflect an intricate pattern of beliefs, expectations and rules that are all about interaction with the world. They are a consequence of experience and learning" (Smith, 1975, 198). As a logical consequence to Smith's observation, our principal aim in this part of our study is to describe some of the diverse cognitive styles observed in foreign language learners as they are reading with the express purpose of their application in our proposed model.

Cognitive styles, as it has been mentioned, depend upon cognitive structure, or the way(s) in which we relate our own unique cultural and conceptual schemata to the cultural and conceptual schemata produced by authors and evidenced in texts. Up to this point, we have limited our considerations of these schemata to the exclusion of rhetorical aspects, that is to say, we have yet to examine the effect of textual schemata and organization according to rhetorical principles upon comprehension and learning. Rhetorical principles play an important role in the ease with which students grasp information in texts or in the "readability" of such texts.

More specifically, however, textual readability is a term which may be described as the ease with which one reads and captures and retains information, or comprehends and learns by modifying existing knowledge of the world, or in other words, one's cultural and/or conceptual schemata. In determining the readability of specific texts A. H. Urquhart states that "read-

ability formulae normally incorporate word difficulty and sentence length as significant factors" (Alderson, 1984, 160). These variables are, in fact, traditional intrasentential linguistic factors. Yet, as Urquhart himself maintains, readability could depend on other factors as well; "rhetorical organization could [in effect] affect the readability of texts in certain ways" (p. 160).

Urquhart's experimental work revolved about the incorporation of two rhetorical organizational principles --time order and space order-- as determinants of readability measured according to reading speed and ease of recall. His work carried out with native speakers and, similarly, with foreign language learners pointed to the importance for readability provided by the organizational factors of time order and space order in texts. In summary, both native speakers and foreign language learners performed better on tests measuring readability, when the texts they read conformed to chronological presentation of facts in narratives and to a determined, easily followed spatial ordering of data in descriptions.

We may carry Urquhart's conclusions one step further by asserting that the chronological ordering of events and a "logical" spatial ordering of descriptions could reflect similar cognitive schemata in learners. It is possible to apply this precept to our own students as we have done in our course model.<sup>+</sup> As learners, our students are equipped with organizational schemata which enable them to comprehend the rhetorical structure of texts insofar as those texts correspond to the schemata the learners already possess. We may carry this argument one step further as does Widdowson when he states:

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<sup>+</sup> See appendix, p. XIII, exs. IV-B, V-A, B.

the way English is used in science and in other specialist subjects of higher education may be more satisfactorily described not as formally defined varieties of English, but as realizations of universal sets of concepts and methods or procedures which define disciplines or areas of inquiry independently of any particular language. In other words, the "special uses" ... are the communicative functions of language in a general sense and constitute universes of discourse which underlie the different textual features which realize them in different languages. (Widdowson, 1979, 24)

Universal elements of discourse could, indeed, encompass such aspects of rhetorical organization of texts as the chronological sequencing of events and the logical spatial ordering of data.<sup>+</sup>

That learners of English could and did perform better on "tests of readability" when faced with texts which were logically ordered according to chronological and spatial factors, underscores the universality of discourses to which Widdowson refers as well as the rhetorical principles of textual organization. For this reason, we most certainly agree with Alderson's observations in a postscript on Urquhart's observations when he states that "the writer assumes that a particular set of readers will have a particular purpose and set of knowledge and he orders his text accordingly" (Alderson, 1984, 178). One area in which the writer makes adjustments to his readers' purpose and set of knowledge has been shown to be in rhetorical organization. The point Urquhart's paper makes "is that there is accumulating evidence that we should be considering rhetorical factors in the text as well as more traditional intrasentential linguistic factors" (Alderson, 1984, p. 180). Textual organization should, thus, be an overriding concern in our examination of the foreign lan-

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<sup>+</sup> See appendix, p. XII-XIII.

guage reader's approach(es) to his texts, and it is a concern we have reflected in our course model.

Frank Smith unknowingly elaborates on Urquhart's hypotheses when he states that:

the perceiver imposes his own organization upon the information that reaches his receptor system. The organization of this knowledge of the world lies in the structure of his cognitive categories and the manner in which they are related - in the way the perceiver partitions his knowledge of the world. (Smith, 1975, 187)

Both Smith and Urquhart in their ideas about reading are also referring to the learning process in general. For, as we have seen, learning involves among other processes, perception, conceptualization, a kind of intellectual categorization and storage of information for further use when the need for that information arises. These processes are already part and parcel of the learner's cognitive framework and determine the way(s) or style(s) in which he approaches texts. It would be possible to conclude, therefore, that reading is very much a learning process that cannot be taught. For this reason, in Understanding Reading Smith suggests that teachers should be concerned mainly with what learning to read involves and with presenting students with meaningful tasks<sup>+</sup> where comprehension of the activity or concept exists even before the student is faced with a written text. Smith's observation opens up a wide area of discussion for us both as teachers and as materials developers. We are, thus, faced with the problem of determining with greater precision not only what constitutes the knowledge which learners would bring to a reading comprehension course, but also the teacher's and students' roles in a contemporary reading class, as well as the type of material to be used and activities exploiting such mate-

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+ See appendix, p. XI, ex. II-C2.

rial. Our interpretation of these issues will be the all-encompassing subject of subsequent deliberations in this thesis. It will also lead to aspects reflecting a practical framework on which to design a course model.<sup>+</sup>

+ For further information on which to design a course model, see appendix, p. I-VIII.

### Chapter 3.

#### Some Practical Considerations in the Setting up of a Reading Comprehension Course in English in the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras.

In setting up our reading comprehension course it is important for our university students to understand that reading in a foreign language need not be terribly difficult or, in other words, understand that reading in a foreign language should simply expand upon previous knowledge. At this point, the teacher should encourage his/her students to ascertain what is involved in reading in a first language, ostensibly in order to circumscribe such previous knowledge. The teacher could then ask if reading in any language would involve the same processes. This step seems crucial to us, for affirmative answers to this question are very reassuring for our students who then face the reading task in the foreign language with a more positive attitude.

In attempting to design a reading comprehension course which concentrates on communication, we have succeeded in bringing together the previous considerations in the activity to be described below. In a similar fashion, Rosenfeld suggests a thinking aloud approach which "consists of asking students to perform tasks and to verbalize their thought processes"<sup>+</sup> (Alderson, 1984, 231).

Since reading is very much a learning activity, in describing some of the reading processes it would be advisable for the students to infer some of these processes through their own personal involvement in the act of reading as well as through the teacher's prompting if need be. In the ensuing discussion about the first language and the reading processes involved, the students might point out that many of the abilities needed might

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+ See appendix, p. XI, ex. C-2, a, b.

be applicable when reading in a foreign language. Once the student is conscious of this fact, he will bring to the reading task previous knowledge of his own language and also of the foreign language. He will also probably transfer certain cognitive abilities or personal approaches to learning that he has used successfully in the past. An activity inspired by Gagné (1980, 84-92) could promote the former might be set up in the following manner:

-- First the student is faced with a text that he wishes to read, perhaps one that he has chosen or one that belongs to his field of study. It is assumed that the student's choice of text is a source of motivation and nothing is as useful in this activity as a high level of motivation on the part of the student.

-- Then, the student is asked to read the text in the foreign language in silence as many times as he wishes without a dictionary and at his own speed.

-- Ideally, once this task has been completed, the teacher sits next to the student and has the student explain what he has gathered from the text. The native language can be used, if necessary. The teacher can prompt the student by means of brief comments or questions such as "why?", "when?", "how?", and finally begins to ask the student how he has obtained the given information from the text. Emphasis is placed on the student's conscious analysis or the "thinking aloud" process as applied to the text and on the use of his own personal learning strategies.

This activity is repeated several times under the same circumstances in order to help the student to use his own learning approaches and linguistic abilities and to foment student-prompted new approaches. Encouraged by this "success" the student will

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Widdowson affirms that if a student is conscious of what strategies he is using, he will improve his reading process (Widdowson, 1978, 108).

feel more confident about reading. Indeed, while "many learners' difficulties [could continue to be] caused . . . by an inadequate or counterproductive view of the task" (Hosenfeld in Alderson, 1984, 246), Hosenfeld reports that thinking aloud activities "convincingly demonstrate the usefulness of developing students' awareness of the strategies they currently use, and of consciously trying to get them to use new strategies." (246)

As a follow-up to the activity described, the text can be introduced at a later date with written pre-reading questions,<sup>1</sup> perhaps based on Pugh's five major reading styles: scanning,<sup>2</sup> search reading, skimming,<sup>3</sup> receptive reading and responsive reading (Pugh, 1978, 50-55). Questions based on these reading styles are suggested to be included at the beginning of the reading because they tend to sensitize the student to the structure of the text, to its development, to its coherent and cohesive characteristics and to the other numerous (and more particular to the text in question) factors that intervene in the text. These questions could, in fact, be considered a kind of pre-judgement of the way students will read. However, they conform to the major styles of reading observed in experienced readers and are very likely also indicative of the students' reading behavior in their own native language.

The teacher is still seated at the student's side and assumes the role of a "psychiatrist" who listens. As a good psychiatrist, the teacher is aware of his/her need to "ask indirect rather than direct questions [for] at times it is necessary to ask students questions in order to clarify certain features of their problem-solving processes. Questions should be so worded that they do not impose directly upon students' thought processes or self-report" (Hosenfeld in Alderson, 1984, 232). The student with

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1. See appendix "Poetry and Poets", p. X, exercise I-A.

2. See appendix "Poetry and Poets", p. XI, exercise II-A.

3. See appendix "Poetry and Poets", p. XII, exercise II-B.



practice will come up with more sophisticated learning strategies as he continues to read.

In essence, we are "teaching" the student to confront questions involving his own conscious knowledge of the world, the nature of the text itself and of his own need to read such a text. Here are examples of these types of questions varying, of course, according to the students themselves and to the particular text. A philosophy student in this case might have to consider: e.g.

1. What is definition?
2. How does Frege define "definition"?
3. How will your knowledge of Frege help you to understand this text?

After the student has read the text in silence several times, he is in a better position to understand more fully how his own knowledge of the world and the knowledge he has of his own subject have helped him to understand the text.<sup>1</sup> The teacher can now sit beside the student and listen to what he has to say about the text, about reading, and about his own learning styles.

At this stage, a new text is introduced. This is also an authentic text but it is now in a "cloze"<sup>+</sup> format. Once again, the student reads the text at his leisure in silence. When the teacher returns to question him, the student is expected to conclude that one does not read word for word and that meaning can be predicted. The student is also expected to express other observations of this nature. Osgood (1959) has noted that "cloze procedure points out the communality of the language systems of the writer and reader" (Osgood in Mackay, Barkman and Jordan, 1979, 20). It is hoped that the student will have

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1. See appendix, p. X, exercise I-A, 1, 2.

+ A text where every seventh or ninth word has been deleted.

something to say to this effect, in his own words, of course. If not, we as teachers can try to prompt the student's involvement through leading questions or through the use of another student as monitor.

The above-mentioned technique, as well as the one that follows, which may seem utopic given the size of our classes, are used with all members of the class. Students read on their own. Then a teacher sits with each student. When student appear to have comprehended individually some of the reading processes and understood how they "discovered" the structure of the text, induced the meaning of different parts of the text and made other pertinent discoveries, it is no longer the teacher, but instead a student who sits next to his partner. He listens to his partner's running commentary, making no suggestions at this time. When the first student has finished commenting on the text, the second student trades places with him and does the same as his partner. What we expect to take place is that both students will verbalize different approaches and reading strategies. Thus, both should benefit mutually and come to understand that reading is an active process carried out in different ways by different readers.

At first, it may seem more advantageous to group together two students who are studying the same career, because they would have similar working knowledge of the same fields of study. At some later date, small groups of students can discuss what they have read. Walker and Harrison describe the results of their experiments with small group activities. They state that "[discussion in a noncompetitive atmosphere of a close reading of a text] allowing each member reasonable opportunity to participate"<sup>+</sup> is one of a number of approaches possible. The authors

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+ See appendix, p. XI, exercise II-C, 2-a, b.  
p. XII, exercise II-D, a, b.

and a large number of teachers "who tried out these activities" report that students enjoy doing the activity/ies, and that they "enjoy sharing their responses". "The poorer readers are able to contribute and [also] gain in sharing the insights of the more fluent readers" (Walker and Harrison in Mackay, Barkman and Jordan, 1979, 21-22). In the "close reading of the text" by the group, many meaningful observations will surface that will benefit all concerned.

At this point, it appears pertinent to say the the activity we have just described and which can be extended to include exercises based upon the reading theories previously expounded, is a very valuable one. Its value derives from the fact that the student is faced at first with reading by himself at his own speed. Then, he is encouraged to verbalize what is taking place in his own mind in a non-competitive atmosphere with only the teacher to listen to him. Of course, the teacher has strived to create an atmosphere as stress-free as possible around and directed towards him. Questions of a very general nature are introduced initially, aimed at some of Pugh's suggested reading styles. These kinds of questions are asked because skimming and scanning are among the activities which we really carry out when reading for diverse purposes, and usually reflect the way in which we read a text for the first time.

Indeed, it is hoped that the students will conclude on their own that their reading styles differ among themselves and that these distinct styles are determined by the different types of texts one chooses to read and by what one wishes to do with such different types of texts.

The texts themselves will provide a diversity of content and writing styles as well as expose the students to written passages at greater than sentence level. Students should be encouraged by every means to read at greater than sentence level because in only that way will they be exposed to the factors

involved in textual organization and predictions derived from such organization. The very fact that students will be reading on their own, using personalized study skills and advancing at their own speed seems to be a very efficient way of building up confidence in themselves. In addition, this type of reading induces learning to use all the appropriate reading skills as well as "learning to read by reading" (Smith, 1973, 195). The enormous amount of different materials to which the students are exposed will sensitize them to both "usage" and "use" at greater than sentence level, most likely at discourse level. Of course, it is at discourse level where the reader is able to appreciate textual organization.

At this point, it would perhaps be appropriate to say that during the activity mentioned above, numerous questions could arise. Some students might want to know what each and every word means. They could often be tempted to reach out for the dictionary, especially a bilingual one, for even though the activity itself sounds easy, teachers frequently encounter a high level of resistance on the part of some students to an activity of this type, where students are expected to think independently and not have to resort to such crutches as dictionaries. Some teachers also hesitate to use this type of exercise for they say that "voicing aloud what one is doing when one is reading is not something one normally does when one reads (Smith, 1981, 111). These teachers maintain that the students are faced with voicing a series of reading procedures and skills that they had never been conscious of before and that these procedures might have been more effective if left unvoiced and unconscious.

In an activity of this kind the student could be flattered or scared because the teacher is giving him his undivided atten-

tion. Nevertheless, the student --especially a student brought up in a traditional teaching-learning atmosphere-- may feel that he is not learning because the teacher is not telling him anything. In other words, the teacher is not "teaching" him. There is always an enormous concern that the teacher has to explain, give rules and correct. Since all of these traditional steps are not emphasized in the activity at hand, the student may experience stress because of the apparent lack of teacher control, and also because of the high degree of individual attention momentarily directed toward him.

The new role assumed by the teacher, that of monitor, does not reassure many students. When the student is faced for the first time with learning on his own, inducing meaning and using his own problem-solving approaches, he is often in a quandary. When the teacher no longer assumes a traditional teaching role in which he/she directs the student at every juncture of teaching, but instead encourages the student to guess even if he makes mistakes and to learn through these mistakes, the student often cannot cope with the transfer of the responsibility of learning. It is at this point in the activity that the teacher must again actively solicit from the student his idea about what reading is and what processes it involves. Above all, it is important to remind the student that reading is a learning activity and that it involves the student's use of his own personal study skills and learning abilities and that, "after all, it is the student who must learn by doing. It is the student who must learn the possible combinations and interconnections among the various process strategies. This goal of learning to use them quickly and flexibly can be achieved only by practice, i.e., reading" (Mackay, Barkman and Jordan, 1979, 12).

Having to face an unknown situation such as this cognitive behavior activity, the student is often worried because he wants [to know where [he] is going with plenty of landmarks to return to] (Ulijn, 1982, 265). This attitude must be taken into account when explaining time and again the differences involved between a traditional language class and the reading comprehension course that the student is taking. In a traditional course, the teacher is the sole source of determining what is correct or not. He also points out if a student has understood. In the type of reading comprehension course model we have tentatively designed, the teacher's role emphasizes ways in which the students themselves can question and examine their interpretations and/or answers. In this way, the teacher serves as facilitator or even as a "devil's advocate", as in some of the activities we have briefly described, rather than as the sole authoritarian figure who determines states of correctness.

In this sense, the behavior solicited from the student should reflect his use of analytical strategies and the expression of these strategies through whatever means the student has at his disposal. These means may include verbalization in the L2 or in the L1 as well as use of a wide range of paralinguistic modes (such as pointing to examples in the text). Since we are dealing with mature students at university level who may be accustomed to using such an analytical approach in their own fields of studies, once students understand that language, and that in this case reading, can also be analyzed in a similar way, they will hopefully shift from a synthetic or word-by-word grammatical approach to an analytical approach based on understanding at discourse level. Thus, students will develop their own cognitive abilities and at the same time their linguistic abilities via the kind of activity we are proposing. Indeed,

we are suggesting through this activity that cognitive and linguistic abilities are highly complementary and often inseparable. As we have shown in other parts of our paper (see p.p. 25, 26) a synthetic or word-by-word and grammatical approach is indicative of mediated meaning and word identification, in which the reader loses perspective of the whole in order to extrapolate the meaning of individual words or phrases. Contrastingly, in immediate meaning identification, the reader grasps the meaning at discourse level. His understanding is then "analytical" in the sense that he analyzes the text for its message at discourse level, and sees more how the different components contribute to his global understanding of the text. Of course, while both mediated and immediate meaning identification contribute to the reader's understanding of a text, the reader's goal, as an experienced reader is generally considered to be immediate meaning identification, with perhaps a few sometimes necessary lapses into mediated meaning or even word identification. Thus, both types of meaning identification reflect the inseparable and highly complementary nature of linguistic and cognitive abilities. As a result, we have inferred in other parts of this paper as well as in the preceding description, that what we are proposing is not a structurally based course derived from "formal linguistic categories with criteria for moving from simple to complex" (Brumfit in Alatis, et. al., 1981, 197) with grammar rules learned and applied, with the study of vocabulary systematically arranged and practiced.

Perhaps, it would be important to explain briefly to our university students the distinction between formal and functional approaches to language: the formal approach involves, on the one hand, the definition of contents: the phonological, syntactic and lexical features of the foreign language. The functional approach, on the other hand, [specifies the contents of the

foreign language in terms of the "uses" to which the learner will put the language] (Wilkins, 1975, 184-186). In keeping with the latter, we would explain to our students in the simplest of terms that they already had a structural basis of the foreign language although now felt to be passive knowledge, and that they are ready, consequently, to extrapolate the formal approach to language which emphasizes usage from the more communicative approach which emphasizes use. Our students may accept at first with reserve and later whole-heartedly their reading comprehension courses where [language is stressed as a means of acquiring knowledge rather than as an end in itself] (Brumfit, 1979, 187).

Brumfit's criteria for the functional approach indirectly stresses the goal of reading as that of acquiring information and/or meeting a need which is not necessarily language-oriented. Such criteria bring us back into the realm of reading with a distinct purpose in mind, which, in fact, is the kind of reading our students carry out in their native language for school-related activities. The kinds of material our students choose to read reflect both long- and short-term goals, goals which can be translated to mean that the material is used to broaden our students' academic preparation. This material has been written for readers whose interests and needs would roughly approximate those of our students. We may tentatively concur with Keith Morrow in one of his definitions in calling such material "authentic" because it consists of "a stretch of real language produced by a real . . . writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort" (Morrow, 1979, 13).

One may use as a starting point the above-cited definition of authentic material, hence, providing students with extracts from such material. Extracts<sup>+</sup> are, as Widdowson has described

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+ See text in appendix, p.p. XVII-XVIII.



them, "piece(s) of genuine discourse" and "natural instance(s) of use" (Widdowson, 1978, 79). Because of our students' ultimate need for specialized selections of language reflecting current trends in their fields of study, genuine materials apportioned in small doses would appear most appropriate for teaching and learning purposes. Ideally, they purport to give the students those elements of language most highly characteristic of texts in the students' specialized fields of study.

There are, however, inherent drawbacks to the use of extracts. Morrow cites one, when he tells us that

...we have no way of identifying clearly for our students what elements of an authentic text are there because they are part of a general language system, and which parts are there because they are part of the characteristic way this particular speaker/writer uses the language for this particular purpose when addressing this particular type of audience in this particular type of situation (Morrow, 1979, 14).

Therefore, it is not feasible to assume that a given text would reflect the general features of the type of language our students need to read.

Another equally distressing flaw of extracts is that they are "taken from the context of larger communicative units and therefore lose [] many of the characteristics of discourse" (Widdowson, 1978, 79-80). Material taken out of context is by its very nature incomplete and would, therefore, presuppose a thorough knowledge of that context not only in order to be fully understood, but, in addition, for such material to be meaningful to the students.

We may further consider, along with Morrow, that such authentic textual material was, indeed, not created with the language learner in mind, that is, as traditionally understood, "designed to practice specific language points rather than to

convey real information" (Morrow, 1979, 13). Morrow's deliberations about authenticity lead us to think, once again, of our students' activities in terms of reading for information rather than for the acquisition of language. Or, as we have previously cited, reading in a foreign language should specify "the contents of the foreign language in terms of the "uses" to which the learner will put the language" (Brumfit, 1979, 184-186). Therefore, in more practical terms, we should perhaps think of equating language learning with the kind of learning done in subject classes other than language. This suggestion allows us to think in terms of presenting specialized materials from our students' own fields in the English language class.†

In this way, language learners could be presented with learning material which is authentic. By "authentic", we now mean in the broadest sense material appropriate as communication. Widdowson further states, partially in defense of language for specific purposes,

that a foreign language can be associated with those areas of use which are represented by the other subjects on the school curriculum and that this not only helps to ensure the link with reality and the pupils' own experience but also provides us with the most certain means we have of teaching the language as communication, as "use", rather than simply as "usage". (Widdowson, 1978, 16)

While communication is, indeed, our foremost goal in determining authenticity, it may be necessary to examine in greater depth the distinct components of such communication. Such examination is intimately linked to text selection, for when we choose a text for our students, it may not suffice only to take into account our previous definition of authentic as "real". Rather, we should further specify authentic as "meaningful",

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† See text in appendix p.p. XVII-XVIII for students of Pedagogy.  
p.p. XXI-XXIII for students of Philosophy.

where meaningful means that a text should be relevant to our students' needs. Criteria based on relevancy (which in turn determine communicability) are diverse. Nevertheless, as Morrow points out, such criteria can be narrowed down to four basic categories: "topic, function, channel and audience". (Morrow, 1979, 15).

By topic, Morrow suggests that we ask ourselves as teachers if our students would by all means "want to deal with language on this subject" (p. 15). Morrow also addresses himself to the problem of subject and/or area specificity. Some topics may be too general and, therefore, uninteresting to our students. Of course, as a further observation regarding material selection based on topic, Lautamatti reminds us that "materials are often made for as large groups as possible and do not therefore fit any particular learner's or group's needs too well" (Lautamatti, 1979, 92).

Where function is concerned, Morrow limits his comments to the question of "will our students want to deal with language intended to do the same thing" as the texts under consideration imply? (Morrow, 1979, 15). In essence, while the topic may meet our students' needs, the language used and the function(s) involved may not be appropriate for our students. For example, our students of theater in the "Facultad" might be more inclined to reading about how the Elizabethan theater was designed than to reading a play by Shakespeare in the original English. The topic in both cases is Elizabethan theater, but the functions differ: in one case historic description would predominate and in the other, one might say that literary perception prevailed.

When Morrow refers to the channel, he indicates how the material was produced. He asks "was it written or spoken?" (p. 15). Further, whether or not the so-called authentic passage that the materials designer is tentatively considering is

in its original state is also important to us. That is, will we, as materials designers, be working with a transcribed text originally meant to be heard or with a text originally produced as written discourse? This, of course, is the simplest of considerations. For, analogous to this consideration we also have to take into account the fact that channel, as it is most widely understood, encompasses the study of all the varieties of written texts. Moreover, a text or a passage might and, in fact, does include a broad range of different kinds of writing, such as exposition, narration and argumentation. Of course, this last consideration brings us closer to the idea of function.

Morrow has also determined that "audience" is a very important factor in text selection. By audience, Morrow is invoking an analysis of the readership for whom the text was intended. Morrow, therefore, requires that our own students form part of this readership. For if they do not, the text loses one of its prime aspects of authenticity and, by extension, also fails to reflect the quality of meaningfulness and appropriacy for the specific group which we are considering.

Text selection based on authenticity forms a vital part of the materials designer's work. If the four characteristics specified by Morrow --topic, function, channel and audience-- are met, then we can safely assume that we have selected material with real communicative value to our students. However, once having satisfactorily met the above-mentioned criteria, it would be advisable to check with our students to see if they were truly interested in reading the texts we had chosen for them. At this point, it is most helpful to recall that reading is, though certain universal procedures may be carried out, above all an individual process. As such, our students' needs as well as purposes for reading vary from student to student. Therefore, the materials which we would have selected a priori, adhering

carefully to Morrow's precepts, could suit some of our students while others could be ruled out. Our students' possible reactions as we have described them, lead us to concur with Lynn (1974) when he tells us that while our text selection could [have been extremely well done, the only trouble is that one never seems to come across the students for whom the reading materials were designed] (Lautamatti, 1979, 101).

As teachers and materials designers, we are at a definite impasse. It is true that at one moment we did select texts, believing that we had a clear idea of the students' background knowledge, interests and, above all, the uses to which he/she would need to apply his/her knowledge both of the foreign language itself and, more importantly, of the ability to read in the foreign language. Should the texts selected by the teacher fail to clearly reflect the previous criteria we would have to agree with Lautamatti who states that "nothing can...be more un-motivating...than a text...where the instructions and exercises are based on mistaken ideas about the student's knowledge of the language" (Lautamatti, 1979, 92-93). In the long run, what we as language teachers might have to accept is that we will eventually have to have a large amount of self-access reading material available in order for our students to be able to read at their own pace, using their own individual learning strategies and reading for their own specific purposes. Given the enormous diversity of the students body in *Filosofia y Letras*, such material will by its very nature need to be authentic, encompassing many areas of study. Nevertheless we would not "solve" our problems solely through the use of self-access materials, for we would encounter yet other complications regarding the difficulty of establishing authenticity. To point out such complications it is to H. G. Widdowson to whom we should now turn.

Widdowson further maintains that readers consistently read only what is "related to their own social and psychological

reality" (Widdowson, 1978, 79). In other words, readers read and interpret according to previously formed schemata. Widdowson goes on to say that extracts or passages from complete texts of the sort we might select could, indeed, be considered "genuine". Nevertheless, they could not be called "authentic instances of use" if we were to ask our students to read them "not in order to learn something interesting, but in order to learn something about the language itself " (p. 80).

In light of his observations Widdowson outlines several procedures aimed at minimizing the problem inherent to the use of extracts. One of these procedures is to work with an article, first limiting oneself to "one or two paragraphs at a time," and then proceeding to consider the whole article as a complete unit of discourse. Another possible solution, and one which is preferred by Widdowson, is what he calls "prompting glossaries" (see appendix for an example)<sup>+</sup> in which the component words are allotted the meaning(s) which they take on within the text itself. Although Widdowson emphasizes some of the advantages of preparing and using a prompting glossary, he also fully recognizes that prompting glossaries "tend to relieve the learner of the essential task of interpreting the discourse himself" (p. 87). A good part of reading, as we already know, consists exactly in the interpretation of discourse, as well as in guessing at unknown elements in a text. Prompting glossaries would deprive the students of the very necessary experience of guessing. By providing the most appropriate meaning of an unknown element, the glossary supplants the guessing process. If all unknown elements were so glossed, students would never have the opportunity to exercise their own knowledge in determining their meaning. Thus, given this overriding flaw in prompting glossaries Widdowson suggests yet other avenues of approach to selecting and further dealing with reading passages for foreign

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+ p. XXIV.

language learners. These avenues of approach are simplified versions and simplified accounts.

When engaged in text simplification the materials designer's overriding goal is to make the text more readily accessible to the learner. Such simplification is highly dependent on the nature of the learner and involves careful consideration of the learner's cognitive styles, the schemata he possesses which determine these distinct cognitive styles and last, but not traditionally least, the linguistic knowledge the learner brings to the text. Widdowson remarks to the effect that in traditional language courses, simplification of reading material is a mere excuse for providing the learner with "a manifestation of selected parts of the language system" (p. 78) in order to "consolidate a knowledge of structure and vocabulary that has already been introduced" (p. 78) with the added attraction of "[extending this knowledge by incorporating into the passages examples of whatever elements of usage come next in the course" (p. 78). Widdowson sums up the grave dangers of such text simplification in stating that:

[the passage] has something of the character of a display case and its value as discourse is decreased accordingly. The effectiveness of passages of this kind as a means of manifesting a restricted set of elements from the language system is achieved at the expense of a normal realization of the system as use. (p. 78)

We may say that the type of text simplification known as a "simplified version" suffers from these very defects attributed to reading texts in a traditional structurally graded course. Allan Mountford has said that in this sense simplification focuses on "linguistic usage..., the creation of semantically equivalent text" (Mountford, 1975, 59). Widdowson himself in his description of the simplified version stresses the semantic element, linking it to the effect produced by prompting glossaries.

In the products known as simplified versions the materials writer has composed "passages which are derived from genuine instances of discourse by a process of lexical and syntactic substitution" (Widdowson, 1978, 88). We have already seen the effect of syntactic simplification and/or substitution as tantamount to the effect produced by traditional structural grading in selected reading passages. Where lexis is concerned, simplification produces an effect equivalent to that brought about by the prompting glossary. "In effect what [simplified accounts based on lexical substitutions] do is to incorporate the glosses...directly into an original extract to produce a version which is judged to be within the linguistic competence of the learner" (p. 88).

Often, substitution as in the simplified version results, as Widdowson points out, in a true distortion of meaning (p.p. 88-89). That is to say, in our zeal to render texts simple enough by what we might consider our students' standards, we fall into the trap of providing false information, the ultimate of dangers implied through simplified versions. Hence, text simplification based on a predetermined idea of the learner's linguistic competence in the areas of syntax and lexis often provides a mistaken albeit traditional means of aiding the learner. In this light, Widdowson states that the simplified version is a mere "contrivance for teaching the language." (p. 88)

Furthermore, in the simplified version, materials designers may be involved in "making more explicit the rhetorical structure of the text as discourse" (Mountford, 1975, 59). This process involves, more often than not, the decomposing of the genuine discourse into units which materials designers have traditionally considered more accessible and comprehensible to learners. However, there is yet another great danger involved in such a procedure. We note that decomposition does, indeed, consist of



"a process of detransformation in which complex sentences are broken up into simple or compound sentences",<sup>+</sup> and could also imply a simplification of the rhetorical structure itself. Such a simplification, in turn, results in a complete restructuring of the passage. Nevertheless, the danger consists in this very breakdown or transformation of rhetoric: simplification at this level most often results in the loss of continuity of meaning so necessary to discourse, only to be replaced by meaning at the sentence level.

Of course, we may say that the simplified version has its advantages which are most highly appreciated in a more traditional approach to the teaching of reading. In this sense, if we were to consider reading a purely synthetic exercise, we would have to complement reading material with an exploitation of grammar and vocabulary isolation.

An alternative and more successful approach to the materials designer still in the realm of text simplification is the "simple account". The simple account stresses the learners' communicative competence rather than his linguistic competence. In such a procedure of text simplification, "the simplification [itself] is applied to the communicative use of language to create a pragmatically equivalent discourse, as distinct from a semantically equivalent text" (Mountford, 1975, 59), the type of product usually associated with simplified versions. Widdowson tells us that the simple account in effect "represents not an alternative textualization of a given discourse but a different discourse altogether. It is the recasting of information abstracted from some source or other to suit a particular kind of reader" (Widdowson, 1978, 89).

The materials writer in this sense is not solely involved with the substitution of discrete syntactic and/or lexical ele-

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+ Mountford, 1975, 59-60.

ments in the production of a simple version. Rather, through a simple account, his task is the creation of an independent piece of discourse thematically and rhetorically related to the original source or sources. He, in effect, assumes the role of author. As an "author" [he is intimately involved in the process of interaction, thereby communicating with his readers. It is the ideal construct of his readers, based on his own real experience with similar readers, which determines, as in the case of a "real" author, the way in which he will write the text(s).] (p. 89) For a more detailed description of the process of creating a simplified version or creating a simplified account, as well as the problems inherent to both processes, we would refer the reader to Widdowson (1978), p. 88-91.

Allan Mountford suggests that there is no clear-cut road to simplification; that is, we cannot draw a definitive line of demarcation between the materials designer as pedagogical substitutor -- as in simplified versions -- and author -- as in simple accounts. According to Mountford, "most simplifications come somewhere between the two extremes, having in other words, features of both recreation [or simple accounts] and adaptation [or simplified versions]" (Mountford, 1975, 62). Indeed, both recreation and adaptation reflect similar concerns, apparent to those of us who as materials designers have been involved in the practical activity of text simplification.

The materials designer dedicated to text simplification could, at times, limit his consideration to problems he feels learners could experience at the lexical level. He could, therefore, ask himself what criteria for word substitution would be applicable that would also systematically take into account selection and gradation? Unable to ascertain to perfection such criteria, in re-writing a text the materials designer could, in

fact, be obliged to employ a restricted or artificial terminology consisting of lexical items which might never appear in an authentic passage and certainly did not appear in an authentic passage and certainly did not appear in his source of information. In other words, the materials designer may substitute items which may be pedagogically satisfactory - i.e. correspond to a student's minimal linguistic knowledge - but which may, in fact, be artificial as related to the authentic text. What may alleviate the materials designer's predicament with regard to lexis is the idea that technical words often do not have to be replaced. For it is a known and accepted fact that specialists or students reading textbooks in their own field usually do not have difficulties with specialized or technical vocabulary.

Furthermore, the materials designer could ask himself with regard to both lexis and syntax, how it would be possible to simplify the vocabulary without simultaneously simplifying the structure? And, if he were to undertake the simplification of structure, which structural elements would he need to simplify? At this point, the materials designer would perhaps do well to take heed of Widdowson's warning: "a methodology which concentrates too exclusively on usage may well be creating the very problems which it is designed to solve" (Widdowson, 1978, 18).

Finally, simplification --be it recreation, adaptation or, as Mountford believes, a combination of both approaches--, implies yet another grave danger to the materials designer, one which one must take into account when setting up our model. The materials designer could so seriously distort the language of the area of specialization that it would no longer be intelligible to the learner well versed in that area. We recall Widdowson's analogy about the universality of language in certain specialized scientific disciplines, "the universal modes

of communication which cut across individual languages" (Widdowson, 1979, 23). The materials designer needs to be somewhat of a specialist himself insofar as he is aware of the constraints of the specialized language, constraints which oddly enough do not vary from one language to the next. For, these very constraints determine the specialized learner's pre-conceived schemata so vital to the understanding of a text. The "universal modes of communication" should, therefore, be preserved at all costs, so as to make the simplified text more readily comprehensible to the learner.

One means by which universal modes of communication are incorporated into the very act of simplification is through a process which Widdowson calls "gradual approximation". For Widdowson, "gradual approximation" combines distinct features which he believes contribute most positively to apprehension of discourse on the part of the learner. Widdowson has argued that features which aid the learner do not necessarily have to be linguistic in nature. Therefore, the technique called "gradual approximation" consists of "the development of a series of simple accounts of increasing complexity by reference to two sources: a linguistic source in the form of a set of sentences, and a non-linguistic source in the form of a diagrammatic representation of information. The sentences provide the usage base and the diagram provides the communicative context" (Widdowson, 1978, 91).

Widdowson combines linguistic and non-verbal aspects through the use of a procedure called information transfer. According to Widdowson, information transfer involves the working of non-verbal devices such as drawings, flow-charts, maps, graphs, charts, etc. into the verbal elements found in a text.<sup>+</sup> Thus, "the interpreting of written discourse involves the processing of these non-verbal elements and a recognition of their

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<sup>+</sup> See appendix, p. XIII, ex. V-A, B.  
XVII-XVIII, ex. I, II, III.

relationship in the verbal text" (Widdowson, 1978, 73).

The intimate complementary relationship between verbal and other visual non-verbal elements in a reading passage is often what renders the passage comprehensible. Because so much of reading depends upon the recognition, interpretation and application of cues apart from the written language itself, the reader's and especially the learner's understanding is frequently aided by the use of non-verbal visual elements adjunct to the written text. Widdowson draws upon the natural dependence of the reader on such elements, thus incorporating this dependence into his "gradual approximations".

Throughout the "gradual approximation", the learner is expected to exercise his own unique cognitive approach while following a series of steps which will lead him to an understanding of the text at hand. Such steps may include specific exercises incorporated at distinct points with the goal of drawing the learner's attention to the act of interpreting information in the passage. These exercises will, of course, elicit references to the non-verbal elements accompanying the passage. (Refer to p.p. 91-93 of Teaching Language as Communication for a clear example of gradual approximation through the use of a text and accompanying exercises).

Widdowson believes that gradual approximation is flexible enough to allow for adaptation to different learners and to different kinds of discourse. With regard to the former, we can vary the number of sentences given in the first stage, their linguistic complexity, the amount of detail given in the diagram and the degree of dependence of the sentences on it; all of these can be adjusted to suit particular learners." (Widdowson, 1978, 93)

For Widdowson, gradual approximation implies grading as an integral feature. His suggestion for working with material in this fashion offers numerous advantages. Among these advan-

tages perhaps the most salient is the use of universal concepts as expressed through the visual non-verbal elements which in fact transcend differences in specific verbal knowledge and/or background. We recall, in fact, Widdowson's concern for universal elements which make language more viable, thereby more comprehensible for learners. The visual non-verbal aspects exploited in gradual approximations have in a sense provided an excellent means by which to support and complement further both universal and individual approaches to reading in a foreign language.

Whereas Widdowson focuses on universal aspects of language and their application in aiding learners to deal with pieces of real discourse, V. K. Bhatia concerns himself more with the specific verbal aspects of discourse which could prove to be stumbling blocks for the learners. Bhatia's approach, called "easification" basically breaks the text down into its component parts. Bhatia further attempts to show both the diagrams using arrows, brackets, boxes, etc. (see appendix for examples of easification).<sup>+</sup> Such visual representation of relationships among various components should "ease" the learner's way through the text. Bhatia supports his approach as well as his concern for both structure and meaning when he states that his "aim generally is to facilitate comprehension by making explicit not only the rhetorical value of individual utterances but also the propositional development of the text" (Bhatia, 1978, 43).

It is interesting to note that when Bhatia explores language with the aim of making it more comprehensible, he uses visual means by which to facilitate such understanding. Though his focus differs from that of Widdowson, Bhatia also resorts to universal constructs in the form of non-verbal elements in

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+ p. XXIV.

order "to guide the student through the text" (Bhatia, 1978, 46), through a series of devices [that suggest strategies for handling specific areas of the text, but never give definite or straight solutions for problems arising out of the text] (p. 46).

In this way, Bhatia prepares the learner to come to his own conclusions about the text, using as his suggested bases for interpretation the devices Bhatia himself has provided. Bhatia feels that his devices encourage the student to develop his own cognitive strategies. Thus, the student is encouraged to assume a more mature attitude towards reading and a more sophisticated and complex use of strategies as he faces increasingly difficult reading material. Bhatia's long-term goal is to "ease" the student away from the conscious dependence on easified models. Rather, the student, once weaned away from Bhatia's models, will come to apply his own strategies in order to cope with difficult passages, thus mentally easing texts on his own. Bhatia, as well as the other theorists we have studied, is primarily interested in making reading material more accessible to the learner.

## Conclusion.

In our conclusions we have, among other areas of consideration, attempted to discuss diverse criteria for text selection and subsequent text modification whenever such modification is deemed advisable because of the nature of the students or the text or both. Our examination of such criteria is based on a previous detailed analysis of the reading process first in the native reader (Chapter 1) and then in the foreign language learner (Chapter 2). We are most interested not only in how the foreign language learner differs from the native reader, but also in the characteristics most typical of foreign language learners in a reading comprehension setting. Our analysis centers about the suggested procedures to be used by learners when working with texts, as our real experience as teachers has shown us in the "Facultad de Filosofia y Letras."

The nature of the learner's difficulties sets the stage for further discussion about both text selection and modification. The process of selection is based on finding the type(s) of text(s) most congruent to both the learner's needs and their unique cognitive strategies, the latter being based on pre-existing schemata related to intellectual perception as well as practical realization. Our discussion about matching texts to students yielded interesting observations, most of which pointed first to the necessity of using authentic texts and consequently to the difficulty of selecting such authentic material compatible with the students' needs and background (in the largest sense of these terms). In our study of authenticity, we delineate several tenets basic to what constitutes authentic material as correlated to students' needs and capacities.

Despite our overriding concern for authenticity whenever possible, we are aware of constraints both on the part of the



students --in the form of cultural variables, cognitive styles, incomplete language preparation-- coupled with drawbacks in the authentic texts themselves. Such factors lead us to believe that there is a difference between genuine texts, that is, texts authentic in that they are untouched by the hand of the materials designer, and authentic texts, or text which may be genuine or may, in fact, be modified, but do meet the learners' criteria. Of all the diverse procedures for text modification we have taken into account, the one which most aptly reflects the above-mentioned requirement has been that of gradual approximation. Gradual approximation, as we recall, brings together two different yet complementary techniques for text modification which render texts most highly accessible to learners: simple accounts and information transfer. In particular, the latter is of great importance to us, for it proves that not all reading is purely textual and, as a result, we as materials developers have become even more predisposed to incorporating a greater number of visual, non-verbal elements into the texts we choose for our students.

While we in fact do incline toward the gradual approximation as the most ideal of text presentations for our students, we have not eliminated other possibilities. Consequently, we have considered such varying avenues of approach to text modification as prompting glossaries, simplifications and easification. The last is a method which, as we have indicated in *summary* form, offers diverse possibilities, centered about analysis through symbols and other varied forms of breakdown, of the contents of a text (see appendix, p. XXIII).

Although we have examined in detail the problems both of text selection and text modification we are, nonetheless, aware of the very diverse nature of the students we are to be dealing with. Especially in the "Facultad de Filosofia y Letras of the

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México", where there is such a divergence of interests and career choices, we are conscious of the difficulty in text selection and in subsequent materials development. Some materials developers in similar situations have in part overcome this apparent obstacle (these apparent obstacles) through the design of materials around a common core where a systematic presentation of important structures and reading strategies is included. While working with this common core, the group as a whole is introduced to diverse reading strategies and to ways of approaching distinct kinds of texts. This procedure reflects a solution of sorts, since it does not cater to the individual reader and, in the case in question, to each foreign language learner with his distinct linguistic background and unique cognitive strategies.

Common core material, however, must be considered as only a first step in the learning and teaching of reading comprehension in a foreign language. It is a transition from working with material at word level studied without regard to context, and a subsequent attempt to dealing with material at discourse level. In the latter stage, the emphasis is placed on communicative activities, implying use rather than usage. Common core material, as we envisage it, can provide as initial stage for our students.

At a later stage in the course, the students are presented with specialized material that is dynamic in nature. That is to say, such material can be entered at different stages, depending on the needs and interests of the individual learner. This specialized material, in order to be exploited efficiently and successfully by the individual learner, should include access to immediate feedback. In this way, the student could be enabled to know how he is faring on his own or within the group of students with whom he has studied this material. It is im-

portant at this stage, however, to point out that the kind of material we are describing is not programmed (for a brief description of programmed material, see appendix).<sup>+</sup> Rather, the material is selected for its highly motivating and communicative characteristics and also because it is of the kind of material which our students will have to cope with in their studies.

The material we have been considering is introduced to the students as a consequence of their prior preparation in the common core. As the students advance in this material, the teacher is still available (see Krashen's model of the teacher, Krashen, 1982, 64-65), as are the members of the class or group for comments and support. A large majority of students would progress no further than up to this level. Hopefully, most of the students would at that point have acquired sufficient expertise to facilitate their processing of reading in their required bibliography, at their own pace in the privacy of their own home.

On the other hand, a small minority of students who are so inclined and whose learning attitudes and styles are more developed and, consequently, more mature might wish to go on to self-access materials available in a resource center in order to continue reading on their own. In other words, we are describing students who are highly motivated and who have learned to work on their own without any teacher assistance whatsoever. In the "Facultad de Filosofía y Letras" the idea of having a resource center that could offer a variety of self-access materials can be viewed only as a dream in some far-off utopic future. Nevertheless, it would complete our idealized scheme of offering our students nearly every opportunity possible to fulfill their needs.

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+ p. XV, ex. D.

The appendix that follows exemplifies some practical applications of the theoretical concerns which we have been considering in this paper. The first part (Ficha Pro-Pedagógica) of the appendix deals with some of the different aspects to be analyzed when judging the suitability of the text. Both formal and communicative aspects are systematically pointed out. This does not mean that all of these aspects would be exploited in the model course design in any or all of the texts selected. The second part (Outline) delves into the many considerations that material has to reflect in order for the material to echo the linguistic and methodological views deemed important in setting up the course. In part three, several texts have been selected and some exercise types exploited. Further exercises could be included (see Grellet 1981 and Candlen 1981).

The ideas developed in the appendix are mere suggestions of diverse approaches that could provoke in the students a wide range of learning styles and present them with varied authentic materials. At this point again, we would like to emphasize that any reading comprehension course for such a wide student body as that of the "Facultad de Filosofía y Letras" would, by its very nature, have to undergo continuous reassessment and manipulation by the practicing teacher and material developer.

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A P P E N D I X



## PART ONE

After taking Morrow's definition of authenticity into account, the next step would be the individual study of each text with the Ficha Pre-Pedagógica.

### FICHA PRE-PEDAGOGICA

#### I. ACERCAMIENTO SOCIO-LINGÜISTICO

- A. Emisor: ¿Quién escribe?  
Datos biográficos pertinentes al texto estudiado: posición social, edad, formación, tendencias políticas.
- B. Receptor: Para determinar cuál es el receptor: importancia de la edición o la colección.  
Conocimientos sobre dónde escribe el autor, quién lo publica--textos polémicos, revistas con tendencia política.  
El escritor puede escribir "en contra" de alguien en textos polémicos.  
(Información más problemática: se puede enseñar a los estudiantes la revista o el libro de dónde proviene el texto, para la identificación del público.)
- C. Mensaje: Contexto intelectual, histórico y social del documento.  
¿Qué clase de escrito?  
En general el mensaje lleva al receptor a los objetivos perseguidos por el autor: información, crítica, demostración, difusión (V.G., manuales escolares).  
Publicación oficial autorizada, de polémica (¿quién es responsable de la publicación?)
- D. Lenguaje: Codificado: de negocios, difusión, lenguaje especializado.
- E. Organización del producto en función de la referencia:  
Ej: textos especializados, documentos específicos como un prospectus farmacéutico que se organiza de una manera específica: composición, indicaciones, contraindicaciones, posología; o como una carta comercial--su composición depende de las relaciones que existen entre los correspondientes.
- F. Canal: Revista, prospectus, periódico, libro, anuncio publicitario, etc.

#### II. ACERCAMIENTO ESPECIFICAMENTE LINGÜISTICO

- A. Función del lenguaje.
1. Referencial: objetiva, documental, correspondiente a la tercera persona.
  2. Emotiva: corresponde a la primera persona, centrada en el emisor. Se traduce por:
    - a. Nivel gramatical: sintaxis afectiva - interjecciones.
    - b. Nivel léxico: terminología - peyorativos, adjetivación halagadora. El vocabulario indica a veces la tendencia política.
  3. Conativa: orientada hacia el destinatario. Corresponde a la segunda persona. Uso de imperativos y formas equivalentes.

4. **Fática:** centrada en el contacto. Busca prolongar la comunicación sin dar información. Ej: fórmulas fijas de una carta.
5. **Metalingüística:** utilización del lenguaje para dar información sobre la lengua misma, explicando las palabras indispensables a la comunicación.
6. **Poética:** establece la relación entre el mensaje y la experiencia del emisor. Centrada en la forma del mensaje más que en su contenido.

## B. Marcos formales de enunciación.

Las marcas comunicativas dan información sobre el autor frente al contenido del texto, frente al lector; la distancia entre el autor y lo que escribe, el efecto que quiere crear en su público, los actos de habla que realiza.

### 1. Emisor -- Receptor.

- a. Formas lingüísticas indicadoras relativas a la categoría de la persona: designan a los protagonistas.
  - i. **Pronombres personales:**  
I: designa al que habla en este momento y lugar.  
we: se define a partir del yo (I): I está incluido en we.  
You: exclusión del yo (I).
  - ii. **Poseesivos.**
  - iii. **Pronombres demostrativos.**
- b. Distancia del autor en relación a su escrito o enunciado.
  - i. **El autor se hace cargo de sí mismo.**  
 Ej: 'In my opinion', 'I believe that...', 'As we have said', etc.
  - ii. **El autor implica al lector (nosotros/we colectivo).**  
 Ej: 'We must', 'It is necessary', 'Let us suppose', 'It is obvious that...', etc.
  - iii. **El autor se refiere a las opiniones de otras personas (establece una distancia entre escritor/enunciado).**  
 Ej: 'Educators believe', 'Many writers say', 'The government...', 'He analyzes', 'They comper', etc.  
 Aparece bajo la forma de un nombre propio o su sustitución (él, ellos, etc.).

### 2. Lugar y momento de la enunciación.

Formas lingüísticas indicadoras relativas a las categorías de momento y lugar de la enunciación.

- a. **Pronombres demostrativos** (remiten a personas, momentos o lugares según el contexto).

## b. Adverbios o expresiones equivalentes:

'here'		'there'	
'now'	referencia a la	'then'	referencia a
'today'	instancia del	'yesterday'	tiempo y lugar
'tonight'	discurso	'last night'	históricos
'tomorrow'			

## c. Designaciones verbales (tiempos verbales).

Ej: la diferencia entre los diferentes pasados.

## C. Modalidades.

## 1. Modalidades lógicas.

Indican:

la necesidad - 'need'  
 la obligación - 'must'/'ought to'  
 la volición - 'want'/'would like to'

## 2. Modalidades apreciativas:

opinión, juicio del autor;  
 localización de verbos, adjetivos, adverbios y sustantivos.

## D. Actos de habla:

lo que hace el autor cuando escribe.

Ej: presenta una tesis	da explicaciones
explica	da su conclusión
informa	compara
crítica	amonesta
rechaza un punto de vista	denuncia
refuta un argumento	solicita,
da ejemplos	etc.

("funciones": Wilkins)

## III. ACERCAMIENTO LOGICO-SINTACTICO (ANALISIS TEXTUAL)

Localización de elementos lingüísticos para encontrar la organización del discurso, la cohesión del texto de un párrafo a otro, de una oración a otra.

## A. Organización formal del documento (indicaciones sobre la estructura del texto.)

Títulos, subtítulos, títulos de párrafos.

Presencia o ausencia de esquemas, cuadros, gráficas, etc.

Organización de los párrafos.

Indicios tipográficos: mayúsculas, cursivas, negrilla, enumeración, comillas, puntos de suspensión, interrogación, exclamación, dos puntos, números, paréntesis, corchetes.

## B. Articuladores de tipo retórico.

Ej: 'First, second...'

'On the one hand..., on the other hand...'

'One..., two,...'

'First..., then..., finally,...'

- C. Articuladores de tipo lógico.  
Indican: la consecuencia, la causa, la oposición, la finalidad.  
Ej: 'therefore', 'since', 'however', 'in conclusion'.
- D. Indicadores temporales (y elementos que marcan la cronología de los acontecimientos).  
1. Ej: 'since', 'from', 'at the time of', 'until then/now'.  
2. Tiempos verbales.
- E. Anafóricos/Catafóricos.  
Pronombres demostrativos/personales.  
Predeterminadores: 'Such an observation', 'The last point',  
'This/That'.
- F. Repetición de palabras. (redundancia)  
Uso de sinónimos/antónimos.
- G. Localización de formas de oraciones.  
Oraciones negativas, interrogativas, imperativas.  
Voz pasiva.  
Nominalización.  
Oraciones relativas.  
Adjektivación,  
etc.

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This is an outline of some of the considerations involved in setting up common-core material for the students of the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras. Once the texts were selected and studied using the Ficha Pre-Pedagógica, study of this outline would follow.

## O U T L I N E \*

### Material Design

#### A. Material Selection and Organization.

##### I. View of Language on which material is based.

Is this view expressed directly or indirectly through the material?

= Formal System

Language = Communication

##### II. What do contents focus upon: what is the content of the contents?

##### III. How are the contents sequenced?

Grading. With a material as a whole within each unit.

Criteria: simplicity =/= difficulty  
 frequency =/= infrequency  
 availability?  
 cyclic or modular

##### IV. How are the contents subdivided?

On what basis... chapters, sections,  
 On what criteria... exercises and parts  
 of exercises

##### V. How is continuity allowed for?

To what extent.  
 In which ways.  
 Within the material,  
     units,  
     exercises.

Is continuity explicit or implicit?

##### VI. Is there a particular direction to be followed?

Learner/teacher                      implicit or explicit.

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+ Some of these considerations are elaborated upon, <sup>by</sup> Eleanor Wall Thonis, 1978, p.p. 209-210.

- B. Teaching Learning Process Involved.
1. What classroom / lesson procedures do materials assume and / or predetermine? Do teachers / students decide for themselves? Are similar or varying procedures involved within the exercises, within the materials? Are procedures recurrent or diverse? Will learners follow the same procedures?
  2. What participation do the materials propose? Individual, small groups, or whole group. How and to what extent does participation within the material vary?
  3. What teacher roles do the material assume?
    - i. Teacher exploits material?
    - ii. Teacher provides criteria for learner's progress?
    - iii. Joint cooperation teacher/student.
    - iv. Teacher/source of data and information.  
Student activities approach.
  4. What learner roles do the materials encourage/facilitate? What theory or definition of learning is explicitly/implicitly assumed by the materials?
    1. Learners Are:
      - a. assumed to follow the materials as source of models to be imitated, practised, internalised, and reproduced;
      - b. encouraged to "discover" the use of materials- to interpret in their own way, to hypothesize on the data and information.
  5. Communicative Competence.
    - a. How is learner's communicative competence involved by materials?
    - b. How are learner's knowledge systems involved? Can the learner exploit and develop his knowledge of the formal system of language or textual knowledge, meanings, concepts and ideas?
    - c. How are the learner's "affects" involved? How are learner's attitudes, beliefs and values? Is affective involvement related to the exploitation and development of the learner's communicative knowledge systems?

- d. How and to what extent are the learner's abilities involved?
  - 1. Interpretation exploited and developed.
  - ii. Expression exploited and developed.
  - iii. Negotiation exploited and developed (with material and other learners).  
How are these abilities involved?
- e. How and to what extent are learner's language skills involved?  
Reading, writing, listening and speaking as separate undertakings, or related (cyclical, logical skills).  
How often are these skills exploited?

Other principles on which the teaching-learning process may be based on.

### C. Teaching Situation Requirements.

1. Are materials appropriate to the purposes/objectives of the course?
  - a. appropriate to target performance in target
  - b. appropriate to target competence situation
2. Are materials appropriate to the actual learners taking the course?
  - a. Has material been pre-tested on a group/groups of learners?
  - b. Has feedback been provided with the materials?
  - c. What advantages/disadvantages have been found?
  - d. Do (in what ways) materials take the learners' initial contributions into consideration?  
Do learners initial language repertoire, communicative knowledge and communicative abilities and skills.
3. Do materials take account of the initial and on going expectations of the learners?  
Do the materials accommodate different learner's expectations of what language learning requires?  
Do the materials allow for the learners' motivations? Can materials accommodate various and changing needs, interests and motivations?  
Do materials include sufficiently clear advice to learner about how the materials may be used?

4. Do materials take account of the initial and on going expectations of the teacher concerning how materials may be used?  
In terms of the purpose/objectives for which the materials were designed?  
In terms of content of materials.  
In terms of criteria behind the selected data.
5. What role can the materials serve in Evaluation?  
Do the activities, exercises help the learner to learn, or do they merely test learner's performance?



IN ORDER TO SELECT ADEQUATE MATERIALS, IT IS NECESSARY TO CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS. (+)

A.1) TEACHER COMPETENCIES

- a) Do the materials demand a high degree of teacher competency?
- b) Do the materials require language proficiency to such a degree that the teacher who is going to use them does not feel happy with them?
- c) Do the materials lend themselves to the competence and temperament of the teacher who is going to use them?

11) PUPILS' AGE

- a) Are the materials appropriate for students of this age?
- b) Are the content, situation, and language suitable and interesting for them?
- c) Would the students themselves on their own be reading material of this nature in their L1?

B) PUPILS' INTERESTS AND NEEDS

- a) Do materials provide for different learning styles on the part of the students?
- b) Do materials exploit linguistic skills and/or communicative abilities necessary for different students?
- c) Are materials a possible source of varied exercises that will interest the students and the teacher?
- d) Will the students have to deal with material of this sort?

11) OBJECTIVES OF THE READING PROGRAM

- a) Are the materials consistent with the order of the language skills as developed in a given program?
- b) Are the materials selected, graded and presented as an integral part of the given program?
- c) Do the materials follow the criteria as those of the program and of the institution?

B.1) MATERIALS ANALYSIS

- a) Are the materials self contained?
- b) Are they authentic, simplified or simple accounts?  
And if so are they appropriate for a given group?
- c) Are the materials well written?
- d) Do the texts present cohesion and coherence?
- e) Do they present communicative acts in an appropriate way?
- f) Do the materials offer cultural diversity relevant to the L2 background?
- g) Does the cultural content of the material interfere with the students' understanding of the text?

11) EASE OF HANDLING

- a) Are the materials easily available and attractive?
- b) Are they easy to handle for the students and the teacher?

+ Eleanor Wall Thonis, 1978, also elaborates on these considerations.

1. The following passage<sup>o</sup> is taken from the Delefy Manual. The text was selected because of its subject matter and because it is self contained.
2. Obviously all the exercises would not be done. We felt it advisable to show some of the many possibilities the text offers.
3. The level, interests and needs of individual groups would determine what exercises would be set.
4. The handling of the exercises and the group would also be determined by number three and the teacher's own concept of reading and learning to read in a foreign language.

#### I.A. Preliminary Questions.

Before reading the text, answer the following questions.

1. What is poetry? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What characterizes artists? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### B. Read the following text carefully.

##### POETRY AND POETS

SINCE THE TIME of the ancient Greeks and Romans it has been said that poets and other artists are mad when they create. This madness, however, was always highly respected, often being considered some kind of divine inspiration. Artistic madness was actually little more than a figure of speech and did not refer to the real mental health of the artist. At about the beginning of the nineteenth century people began to take the statement literally. The artist was conceived of as being mentally disturbed, and the use of the imagination was looked on as a kind of incapity. This notion still survives today, both on the part of those who dislike art or artists and on the part of those who love art.

- C. Choose the sentence that best summarizes the main idea of the text.
  - a. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the present habit of taking artistic madness literally became current.
  - b. The idea that the artist was literally insane was never held until the beginning of the nineteenth century.
  - c. Nowadays it is not unusual to come across people who take the idea of the artist's madness literally.
  - d. At about the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was a change in the conception of artistic madness.

C. Now read the second part of the text carefully.

- 15 AMONG THE ANCIENT GREEKS poetical skill was thought to be a product of divine inspiration. No ordinary mortal could create such beautiful things unaided; it was necessary that he call on the Muse to help him. It is from this notion that poets throughout Europe ever since that time have frequently begun their poems with an invocation to the Muse.
- 20 In the middle of the fifth century before Christ, however, a new spirit crept into thinking on artistic matters. A group of wandering teachers, called the Sophists, offered to teach anyone anything for a fee. They not only taught a large number of subjects and skills, but they also drew up rules for them and wrote about them. It is not surprising that they treated poetry just like anything else as some-
- 25 thing that had rules of its own which could be learned and taught. Poetry was no longer something divine but a craft that the Sophist would willingly teach at a mutual profit to teacher and pupil. Plato, who came along just after the
- 30 Sophists, would not go along with this idea, however. He returned to the traditional notion and stated that poetry was the product of divine inspiration. The poet composed when he was in a state of frenzy induced in him by the Muse.

- D. Choose the sentence that best summarizes the main idea of the text.
- The concept of poetic creation passed through three stages among the ancient Greeks.
  - The Greeks believed that poetry was a learned craft until the time of Plato and the Sophists.
  - The Sophist revolutionized the conception of poetic creation by making it divine only to be refuted a few years later by Plato.
  - The idea of poetic creation as something divine was always prominent in the ancient Greek mind.

II. Now read the text again quickly.

- A. In very general terms, what does the author say about poets and artists? \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Read the text again and find the lines where the author writes about artists. \_\_\_\_\_
- C. 1. Read the first text again. (This is a repetition of the exercises inserted between the paragraphs. We have included it here again to point out that it could serve several purposes according to where it is placed.)
2. a) Choose the sentence that best summarizes the main idea of the text. b) Discuss your answers with a friend.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (a) At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the present habit of taking artistic madness literally became current.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (b) The idea that the artist was literally insane was never held until the beginning of the nineteenth century.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (c) Nowadays it is not unusual to come across people who take the idea of the artist's madness literally.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (d) At about the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was a change in the conception of artistic madness.

D.1. Read the second text again.

2. Choose the sentence that best summarizes the main idea of the text. Discuss your answers with a friend.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (a) The concept of poetic creation passed through three stages among the ancient Greeks.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (b) The Greeks believed that poetry was a learned craft until the time of Plato and the Sophists.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (c) The Sophists revolutionized the conception of poetic creation by making it divine, only to be refuted a few years later by Plato.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (d) The idea of poetic creation as something divine was always prominent in the ancient Greek mind.

### III. Contextual reference.

- A. In the second passage, underline in red "the Sophists" and the words that the author uses instead of "the Sophists".
- B. Using the words you underlined in red, what comments can you make about the structure of the text?

### IV. How is the text developed by the author?

A. (Who?)

Complete the following statements with the names of people who believed the following. Refer to the text for further information.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ said that poets are mad when they create.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ of the nineteenth century began to consider artists really insane.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ was considered a person endowed with divine inspiration.
4. Teachers, \_\_\_\_\_, believed that poetry was a craft that could be taught.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ stated that poetry was the product of divine inspiration.

## B. (When?)

Complete the following statements with elements of time which show when these actions took place.

- Poets and other artists have been considered mad when they create \_\_\_\_\_.
- People began to consider artistic madness a literal state at \_\_\_\_\_.
- The notion of artists being mentally disturbed and the concept of "divinely inspired" imagination \_\_\_\_\_ survives.
- A new spirit, the idea that poetry was a craft, crept into people's minds \_\_\_\_\_.
- Plato, who came along \_\_\_\_\_, did not agree with the Sophists' idea that poetry was a craft.

V. Now use the above information and information taken from the text to complete the following time lines.

## A. Paragraph I.

When?	Who?	What?
	Ancient Greeks and Romans	
		highly respected
At the beginning of the XIX century		
Today		

## B. Paragraph II.

When?	Who?	What?
	Among the ancient Greeks	

- VI. In the original text, with colored pencils underline in green the people the author is talking about. Underline in yellow the different elements of time, and in blue what took place with those people at a given time. Base your answer on information from exercise V.

A. How does the author achieve cohesion and coherence?

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B. Other comments.

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- VII. Complete the following passage with so, but or and, according to the meaning of the text.

During the fifth century B.C., a group of teachers, called the Sophists, offered to teach anyone anything for a fee \_\_\_\_\_ they taught a large number of subjects and skills \_\_\_\_\_ drew up rules for them. \_\_\_\_\_ it is not surprising that they treated poetry just like anything else, as something that had rules of its own \_\_\_\_\_ which could be taught and learned. \_\_\_\_\_ Plato, who came along just after the Sophists, would not go along with this idea. He returned to the traditional notion \_\_\_\_\_ stated that poetry was the product of divine inspiration.

- VIII. A. Read the following sentences.

B. Organize the sentences to form a cohesive paragraph. Use words like therefore, so, and, but. Respect the relationships developed by the author in the original passage.

1. Ordinary mortals could not create beautiful things unaided.
2. They said it had rules of its own which could be learned.
3. Divine inspiration, through a muse, came to them and induced a state of frenzy.



In the following text, "Understanding and Learning" some suggestions proffered by F. Grellet in her excellent practical guide to reading comprehension exercises are set for the students. Many other exercises that she suggests would be included but as we have mentioned in numerous parts of this paper the exercises set are the result of an on-going dialogue between the teacher and students. It is only through continuous communication with his students, that the teacher can sense what questions to ask and what exercises to set that would allow the students to develop their own [reading strategies] (Coady in Mackay, Barkman and Jordan, 1979, p. 7).

In the development of reading material "one should start with global understanding and move towards detailed understanding rather than working the other way round. The tasks given to begin with should be of a more global kind-within the competence of the students. Gradually, as they read more fluently and get the gist of a text more easily, a deeper and more detailed understanding of the text can be worked toward. (Grellet, 1981, p. 6)

Getting the students accustomed to reading authentic texts from the very beginning does not necessarily mean a much more difficult task on their part. The difficulty of a reading exercise depends on the activity which is required of the students rather than on the text itself, provided it remains within their general competence. In other words, one should grade exercises rather than texts. (Grellet, 1981, p.p. 7-8).

- I a) Consider the text as a whole, its title, accompanying picture(s) or diagram(s), the paragraphs, the type-face used, and make guesses about what the text is about, who wrote it, who it is for, where it appeared, etc.
- b) Skim through the text a first time to see if your hypotheses were right. Then ask yourself a number of questions about the contents of the text.
- c) Read the text again, more slowly and carefully this time, trying to understand as much as you can and trying to answer the questions you asked yourself.
- (Grellet, 1981, p.p. 10-11).



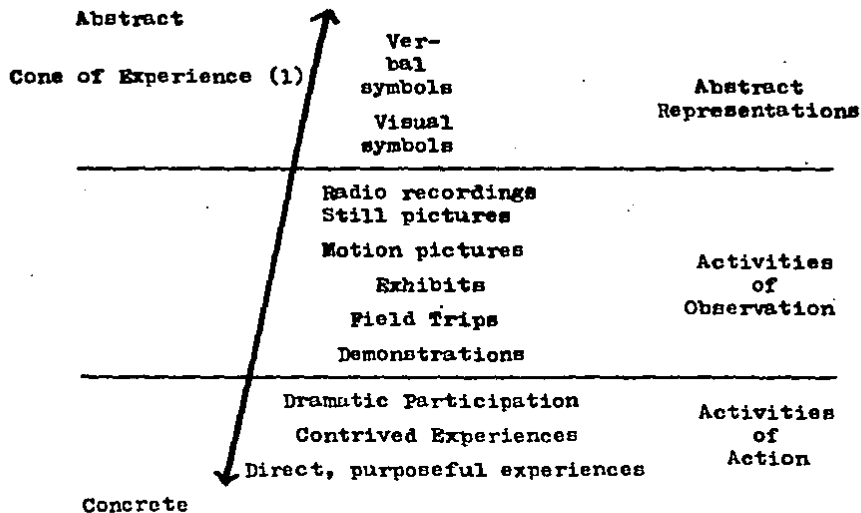
### Understanding and Learning

Learning progresses from the concrete to the abstract. Dale's cone of experience presents the importance of concrete, direct experiences, and the difficulty of conceptualizing from only abstract, written verbal symbols.

Dale divides the cone of experience into those activities of doing; observing someone else do something; and interpreting abstract visual or verbal symbols.

I. Activities of action: The child is a participant in the learning.

1. Direct experiences with a purpose. Experiences that involve the senses: touch, smell, sight, hearing, taste. For example



preparation of a meal in class, or the construction of furniture.

2. Contrived experiences: a method that simplifies details. For example, a picture or a small reproduction.
3. Dramatization: participating in a drama.

1. Cone of Experience, from Edgar Dale. Audio-Visual Methods in Teaching, 3d. ed. Copyright 1969 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., p. 107. Reprinted by permission of Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

- II. Activities of observation: the child only observes someone else doing the action.
4. Demonstration: performed by the teacher.
  5. Excursions away from the school. For example, to the dairy or to the store.
  6. Exhibitions: collections of things in the experiences of children: stamps, coins, dolls, etc.
  7. Educational motion pictures.
  8. Vertical picture files, photos, the radio, records.

III. Abstract representations.

9. Visual symbols: charts, graphs, maps, diagrams, etc. Each is only a representation of an idea.
10. Verbal symbols: a word, an idea, a concept, a scientific principle, a formula. In each case, completely abstract.

Intellectual life functions primarily on a very high level of abstractions or symbolizations. The point is that children need much experience at concrete levels before they can solve abstract questions and problems with good comprehension.

Process vs. Content

To enhance understanding in the school life of the child, the curriculum of the school should be based more on process than on content. When teachers are aware of the development of the cognitive process of children and the necessity of putting new learning to work in order for it to be remembered, they are apt to see much that is objectionable in the traditional classroom of factual recall, parroting back explanations to the teacher, and performing on tests that require much regurgitation of factual information at the simple recall level. For emphasis, this methodology based on process of learning is contrasted with methodology based on the content learned.

PROCESS METHODOLOGY

Learning to think clearly to solve problems

Learning to categorize the relevant and the irrelevant in a problem situation.

Learning by discovery—learning by inductive methods is more valuable than learning what the teacher tells him.

Experimenting            testing, and integrating subject matter information.

CONTENT METHODOLOGY

Careful memorizing of teacher's lecture notes.

Depending on the teacher to decide what is important.

Relying on information learned from teachers, books and parents.

Studying each subject as a small isolated body of necessary information.

Evaluating using the evidence and accepting or rejecting the results  
Emphasizing how to read, study, think and learn.  
Free discussion and small group work to search for answers to the "larger" questions.

Accepting the judgement of teachers and textbooks as unquestioned authority.  
Emphasizing what to read, study, think and learn.  
Recitation in class.

Children must learn a great deal of factual information to use in how-to-think situations. One should not make a dichotomy of "Do we teach children what to think or how to think?" since without the what it will not be possible to do the how.

Note: Suggested possible exercises are to be found on the next page.

1 Using Dale's cone and the information implicit in it, answer the following:

- a. What is the teacher's role in a class where process methodology is emphasized? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. What is the student's role in a class where content methodology is emphasized? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. 1. Where would you, as a student, prefer to be? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- d. 1. Where would you, as a possible teacher, prefer to be? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is a possible implication of the methodology you have chosen? \_\_\_\_\_
- e. "Children must learn a great deal of factual information to use in how to think situations. One should not make a dichotomy of "Do we teach children what to think or how to think, since without the what it will be impossible to do the how."

Discuss: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Widdowson (Widdowson, 1978) suggests that students have to become acquainted with how the language system works in a foreign language. He believes that if students understand the underlying language universals that exist when students work with material in a foreign language whose subject matter is familiar to them, they will be able to begin to fathom how the foreign language works in a specific type of text.

The following is chapter XII from Frederick Copleston's History of Philosophy. It is reproduced in its entirety and is therefore "quasi" self-contained. The presentation of a text of this nature could be justified in a reading course because students are sometimes sensed to have to read only one chapter of a book.

The first part of the chapter is in Spanish and the second is in English. Widdowson suggests that this might be helpful to the student who would be able to understand the subject matter, the author's treatment of the subject and how the author was dealing with the information. Hopefully, the student would continue to use the information thus acquired when reading the second part of this chapter. (p. 81)

I. A. Make a hypothesis about the text. \_\_\_\_\_

B. Now read the text and see if your hypothesis is correct.

#### Capítulo XII

#### LOS SOFISTAS (+)

Los primeros filósofos griegos se habían ocupado principalmente del objeto y habían tratado de determinar el principio último de todas las cosas. Su éxito, empero, no igualó a su sinceridad filosófica, y las sucesivas hipótesis que propusieron acabaron por producir cierto escepticismo respecto a la posibilidad de lograr un conocimiento seguro de la naturaleza última del mundo. Añádase que el resultado natural de algunas doctrinas, como las de Heráclito y Parménides, no podía ser sino una actitud escéptica respecto a la validez de la percepción sensible. Si el ser es estático y la percepción del movimiento ilusoria, o si, por otra parte, todo está cambiando sin cesar y no hay ningún principio real de estabilidad, nuestra percepción sensible no merece crédito alguno y, con ello, se socavan las bases mismas del saber cosmológico. Los sistemas de filosofía propuestos hasta entonces se excluían los unos a los otros; ciertamente, en las opuestas teorías había su parte de verdad, pero aún no había surgido ningún filósofo de talla bastante para conciliar las antítesis en una síntesis superior, de la que quedarán excluidos los errores y en la que se hiciese justicia a la verdad contenida en las doctrinas rivales. El resultado hubo de ser una cierta desconfianza para con las cosmologías. Y, de hecho, si se quería progresar de veras, estaba haciendo falta volver los ojos hacia el sujeto como tema de meditación. Fueron las reflexiones de Platón sobre el pensar las que posibilitaron una teoría más acertada, que habría de tomar debidamente en cuenta los dos hechos de la estabilidad y la mutabilidad; pero el volverse de la consideración del objeto a la del sujeto, cambio de enfoque que hizo que el progreso fuese posible, tuvo lugar por primera vez con los sofistas, y fue en gran parte una consecuencia del fracaso de la antigua filosofía griega. Ante la dialéctica de Zenón, pareció probablemente muy dudoso que fuese posible cualquier avance en el estudio de la cosmología.

+ Copleston, Frederick, Historia de la Filosofía, Vol. I, Grecia y Roma, Ed. Ariel, 1968. Traducción de J. M. García de la Mora.

Además del excepticismo subsiguiente a la primera filosofía griega, otro factor contribuyó a dirigir la atención hacia el sujeto: la creciente reflexión sobre el fenómeno de la civilización y la cultura, reflexión facilitada sobre todo por las amplias relaciones que tenían los griegos con otros pueblos. No sólo les eran conocidas las civilizaciones de Persia, Babilonia y Egipto, judiciales, y los sofistas se dedicaban a enseñar el mejor modo de ganarlos. Pero claro está que ello era fácil que equivaliese, en la práctica, al arte de enseñar a los hombres cómo conseguir que la causa injusta pareciera justa. Semejante proceder difería mucho, evidentemente, de la actitud de afanosa búsqueda de la verdad que había caracterizado a los antiguos filósofos, y por aquí se explica el trato que recibieron los sofistas en manos de Platón.

Los sofistas realizaban su tarea culturizante por medio de la educación de los jóvenes y dando lecciones públicas en las ciudades; mas, como eran profesores que iban de población en población y hombres de gran experiencia y que representaban, a pesar de todo, una reacción un tanto escéptica y superficial, vino a ser corriente la idea de que, remitiendo a los jóvenes, se los arrebataban a las familias y desprestigiaban ante ellos los criterios tradicionales hasta dar al traste con el código de las costumbres y con las creencias religiosas. Por tal motivo, los partidarios incondicionales de la tradición miraban a los sofistas con malos ojos, mientras que los jóvenes se declaraban de parte de ellos con todo entusiasmo. Y no es que las niveladoras tendencias de los sofistas fueran siempre debilitantes del vigor de la vida griega: su amplitud de visión hacia de ellos, por lo general, abogados del panhelenismo, doctrina cuya necesidad se dejaba sentir agudamente en la Grecia de las ciudades-estados. Pero lo que más atrajo la atención fueron sus tendencias escépticas, sobre todo porque no ponían nada realmente nuevo ni sólido en lugar de las viejas convicciones que procuraban echar abajo. A esto podría añadirse el detalle de que exigían una remuneración, un salario, por las enseñanzas que impartían. Esta práctica, aunque legítima de suyo, difería de la que distinguió a los filósofos antiguos y desentonaba de la opinión griega respecto a "lo conveniente". A Platón le parecía abominable, y Jenofonte sostiene que "los sofistas no hablan ni escriben sino para enseñar, por enriquecerse, y no son útiles para nadie".<sup>5</sup>

5. *Jaenker, Cleopatris, 12, 8 (D. 79, 8 c).*

From what has been said, it is clear that Sophism does not deserve any sweeping condemnation. By turning the attention of thinkers to man himself, the thinking and willing subject, it served as a transition stage to the great Platonic-Aristotelian achievement. In affording a means of training and instruction, it fulfilled a necessary task in the political life of Greece, while its Panhellenistic tendencies certainly stand to its credit. And even its sceptical and relativist tendencies, which were, after all, largely the result of the breakdown of the older philosophy on the one hand, and of a wider experience of human life on the other, at least contributed to the raising of problems, even if Sophism itself was unable to solve these problems. It is not fanciful to discern the influence of Sophism in the Greek drama, e.g. in Sophocles' hymn to human achievement in the *Antigone* and in the theoretical discussions contained in plays of Euripides, and in the works of the Greek historians, e.g. in the celebrated Melian dialogue in the pages of Thucydides. The term *Σοφιστής* took some time to acquire its disparaging connotation. The name is applied by Herodotus to Solon and Pythagoras, by Androtion to the Seven Wise Men and to Socrates, by Lysias to Plato. Moreover, the older Sophists won for themselves general respect and esteem, and, as historians have pointed out, were not infrequently selected as "ambassadors" of their respective cities, a fact which hardly points to their being or being regarded as charlatans. It was only secondarily that the term "Sophist" acquired an unenviable favour—as in Plato; and in later times the term seems to have reacquired a good sense, being applied to the professors of rhetoric and prose writers of the Empire, without the significance of quibbler or cheat. "It is particularly through the opposition to Socrates and Plato that the Sophists have come into such disrepute that the word now usually signifies that, by false reasoning, some truth is either refuted and made doubtful, or something false is proved and made plausible."<sup>6</sup>

acceptance of payment, and the hair-splitting tendencies of certain later Sophists, justify to a great extent the disparaging signification of the term. For Plato, they are "shopkeepers with spiritual wares"; and when Socrates is represented in the *Protagoras* as asking Hippocrates, who wanted to receive instruction from Protagoras, "Wouldn't you be ashamed to show yourself to the Greeks as a Sophist?", Hippocrates answers: "Yes, truly, Socrates, if I am to say what I think." We must, however, remember that Plato tends to bring out the bad side of the Sophists, largely because he had Socrates before his eyes, who had developed what was good in Sophism beyond all comparison with the achievements of the Sophists themselves.

Copleston, Frederick, A History of Philosophy, Vol. I, Greece and Rome, Image Books, 1962.

If one learns to read "by reading" (Frank Smith, 1973, 1975, 1981, 1982), then this is what must be encouraged, thus allowing students to develop their own strategies. Colin Harrison and Terry Dolan (in Mackay, Barkman and Jordan, 1979) back Smith up by saying that

they admit to having grave doubts about one belief widely held among language teachers, namely, that doing reading comprehension exercises enhances reading comprehension. (p.p. 20-21)

So the group and the teacher will have to decide whether to include exercises or not.

4.3.2.2 *Prompting glossaries*<sup>+</sup> Let us now turn to what I have called prompting glossaries. A glossary of this kind for the reading passage given above might take something like the following form:

- (a) S<sub>1</sub> approximately—about
- (b) S<sub>2</sub> remainder—i.e. the rest of the water, the water that does not evaporate
- (c) S<sub>3</sub> loosely compacted upper layer of porous rock—porous rock is rock which allows water to pass through it. It is loosely packed, so water can pass through the spaces.
- (d) S<sub>3</sub> closely compacted impervious rock—impervious rock does not allow water to pass through it. It is tightly packed so there are no spaces for the water to pass through.
- (e) S<sub>4</sub> water percolates down through—water soaks through
- (f) S<sub>4</sub> arrested by an impervious layer—stopped by a layer of impervious rock
- (g) S<sub>5</sub> collects in the interstices between rock particles—fills up the gaps between the small pieces that make up the rock
- (h) S<sub>5</sub> these—i.e. the interstices
- (i) S<sub>5</sub> becomes saturated—when the spaces between the rock particles are completely filled with water the rock or soil is said to be saturated

etc.

The first point that might be noted about this prompting glossary is that all of the entries are of the value gloss type: the meanings which are given are those which the phrases take on in the particular sentences referred to. In the case of the first entry here, it happens that the signification of the word is not distinct from its value in this context and a number of other cases of convergence of signification and value occur in this passage (and will occur, of course, in all discourse). But these occurrences are not singled out for individual treatment: instead they are dealt with as part of a more general gloss. It is indeed a feature of this kind of glossary that it tends to deal not with individual lexical items but with much larger units of meaning. Furthermore, some of the entries go beyond a simple rephrasing which can replace the expression which is being glossed. We can compare (c), (d) and (i), for example, with (e), (f) and (g). In the case of the latter group of entries, phrases are provided with glosses which constitute alternative, simpler, versions and the learner can replace one with the other and no syntactic or semantic adjustment is necessary. In the case of (c), (d) and (i), however, there is no possibility of replacing the original phrase with the gloss. The glosses here are, indeed, not so much direct translations into simpler language as commentaries which expand upon what is actually said and which present an interpretation of parts of the passage as discourse.

<sup>+</sup> Widdowson, H.G., 1978, p.p. 86-87.



