Communication and language learning

Ronald T. Zallocco

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A Thesis

entitled

Communication and Language Learning

by

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts Degree in English with a concentration in English as a Second Language

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In recent ESL research there has been a move away from grammar-based approaches for teaching students and more focus on content. Victor Yngve (1996) has stated such findings in Hard Science Linguistics, arguing that language is not a physical, real world property. What is real world are assemblages of people and their environment linked together. However, many language classrooms still adopt the grammar-based approach to learning. The problem is that while they may turn in grammatically polished classroom papers it is still possible to leave the classroom setting without being able to communicate with speakers of the target language.

In response to the communication vs. language conflict, a study has been done that applies each of these teaching methods into slideshows for English as a Second Language (ESL) purposes. The study intended to show that context through communicating—as opposed to grammar lessons through language—is what a student needs when encountering a different language. The two slideshows for this study tested students’ memory of the material, in this case a story that takes place between a server and a customer inside a restaurant. The subjects consisted of Second Language Learners (SLLs) and Foreign Language Learners (FLLs) from a university. The test consisted of
multiple choice questions that tested subjects’ knowledge of the content of the lesson they had witnessed (only one of two lessons was selected for each session). The test was created to determine the communicative effectiveness of that particular lesson. It is hoped that the lessons demonstrate a clear contrast between instruction using language and instruction focused on people communicating, and that this will encourage the growth of communication among teachers and students in ESL classrooms.
Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Dr. Coleman for guiding me through the work on a weekly basis, especially the PowerPoint slides needed to bring the characters to life. I also thank my committee members, Dr. DeMedio and Dr. Techlehaimanot, for telling me how to write (and how not to write) a thesis.

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List of Abbreviations

1110 ...............Subjects who studied Composition I (ESL) at The University of Toledo

A.L.I.............The American Language Institute
ALI...............Subjects who studied in the A.L.I.

COMM..........The Communicative Lesson

ESL .............English as a Second Language

FLL ...............Foreign Language Learner

LANG ............The Language Lesson

SLL ................Second Language Learner

UT .................The University of Toledo
Chapter 1

Language and Communication

Introduction

When an instructor teaches English to non-native speakers, complications arise. The teacher may, for instance, describe something in his or her lesson without visual aids. Too often what takes place in the classroom is that instructors try to teach students how to use language. There is a difference between communication and language, which needs to be recognized by teachers of Foreign Language Learners (FLLs) and Second Language Learners (SLLs). This study, therefore, was designed to observe differences between the effects of teaching language and teaching how to communicate.

Literature Review. The bulk of the history of English teaching has focused on language. Victor H. Yngve (1996) dates this back teaching method back to the Stoics and, later, to Greek philosophers like Aristotle, who believed in a normative grammar which people should adopt in order to speak to each other (p. 23). Jack C. Richards stated that the 1920s was a time when teaching language became more common. Also during this time, there were those who saw certain patterns in language teaching, such as vocabulary lists. Richards states that although the theories of British teachers like Palmer, West, and Hornby varied regarding language teaching, they all agreed that vocabulary and grammar are primary tools for teaching English. This method of grading based on grammar would later be used in classrooms as a structural approach to language teaching (Richards & Rogers, 2001, p. 33).

Many continue to justify teaching language, often by way of the drill method: “If we give the meaning of a new [to the student] word … we weaken the impression which
the word makes on the mind” (Billows, 1961, as cited in Richards & Rogers, 2001, p. 28). In this method, accuracy in grammar and pronunciation is considered crucial, while errors should be avoided (Richards & Rogers, 2001, p. 41). This led to movements in Audiolinguism, Communicative Language Teaching, and structuralism in the 1950s, which emphasized that there are appropriate uses for sentence structure, morphemes, and phonemes that should be used (Richards & Rogers, 2001, pp. 65, 67).

**Issues with Language Teaching.** According to Lightbrown & Sprada (2006), the use of structure-based approaches (and nothing else) does not result in high accuracy and linguistic knowledge, because learners receiving grammar-translation instruction “are unable to communicate their messages and intentions effectively in a second language” (p. 143).

In fact, it is often very difficult to determine what students know about the target language. The classroom emphasis on accuracy often leads learners to feel inhibited and reluctant to take chances in using their knowledge for communication. The results from these studies provide evidence that learners benefit from opportunities for communicative practice in contexts where the emphasis is on understanding and expressing meaning. (p. 143)

Another account of grammar causing issues for learners was done by Toshiko Sugino (1995), who examined an English class at a middle school in Japan. The school used a curriculum set by the Ministry of Education, and much of the studying was done silently. Although Professor Brown (in an interview with Kay (1995) states that students want ‘exam English’ instead of English for communication, most of the students can’t hold an English conversation outside classes “without considerable hesitation, giggling, and embarrassment on their part” (p. 8, as cited in Sugino, 1999). He stated that each question tested has one correct answer, that no errors — even minor punctuation errors
— are tolerated, and that even a letter like ‘R’ needs to look exactly like how it is written in the textbook, or else points are deducted.

Some linguists and teachers have noticed that the focus on grammar is misleading. Grammar mastery would show mastery of a language, but only if all English speakers spoke according to grammar textbooks. Usually this is not the case, and learners find themselves having to break these grammar rules in order to communicate in English. In response to this issue, alternative theories have been formed hoping to bring communication – not language – back into the classroom.

**Domain Confusion in Communication.** Debates have taken place among linguists throughout the last century as to whether communication was necessary and, if so, how teachers could integrate it into lessons. Despite the preference for teaching grammar in the 1930s, many British linguists at that time considered a mastery of structures as no longer a main priority; communicative proficiency was starting to become the focus (Richards & Rogers, 2001, p. 153). By the 1960s, grammar-based teaching had run its course and, as linguists were discovering errors in the speech of non-native speakers, a dialogue took place over what can be done about the language issue. Three particular teaching approaches focused on English teaching were formulated (Richards & Rogers, 2001, pp. 153, 155): Situational Language Teaching (SLT), or practicing basic structures in meaningful situation-based activities; Audiolinguism, or the practicing of grammatical structures; and Communicative Language Teaching, or the acquirement of language through communications.

According to Richards & Rogers (2001), the desire to explore these concerns with English teaching stemmed from the need “to focus in language teaching on
communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures” (p. 153). Since World War II, the Council of Europe, an educational organization, was active in publishing books and sponsoring conferences focused on language teaching to be used throughout Europe (p. 154). This spread of communicative teaching was taken further by the British linguist D. A. Wilkins, who developed syllabi for different European governments that focused on communication instead of grammar and vocabulary. He separated this according to two separate categories: notional (time, location, quantity, frequency, sequence) and communicative (requests, denials, complaints, offers) (p. 154). The syllabus was derived from functional linguistics, in which language is viewed as “meaning potential,” and the “context of situation” is viewed as central to understanding language systems and how they work (Firth, 1937, Halliday 1978, as cited in Savignon, 2002, p. 1-2).

Richards (1985) traces the first major challenge to structural linguistics based on two specific viewpoints, notational linguistics (Wilkins, 1976) and English for Specific Purposes (Robinson, 1980). Even with these approaches, however, there was still some reference to grammar in the syllabi. For Wilkins, there should be concepts for the learner to communicate, functional purposes in which to use language, situations for the language to be used, and roles for the learner to play. Robinson’s theory was mainly concerned with showing how language teaching (regardless of whether communication played a role) changes when the purposes are presented narrowly within a given context. (p. 34, as cited in Richards, 1985).

Confusion between a focus on form and meaning-focused communication persisted in many of the textbook exercises and language test prototypes that influenced
curricula (Savignon, 2002, p. 21). An example of this confusion was laid out by Geoffrey Sampson, who stated that language “links sound waves in the air, and marks on paper, to human thought: it bridges the worlds of natural science and the humanities” (p. 181). What Sampson misunderstands, however, is that it is not language that is linking these people and sound waves; it is the act of people communicating.

This domain confusion is evident in the work of Noam Chomsky (1996), an original proponent of “universal grammar.” He believed that knowledge of grammar is already biologically in our mind, referring to Plato’s ideas of innate knowledge (“existence scarcely accounts for the fringes of knowledge attained”) (p. 10). He drew the distinction between competence (what a person knows) and performance (using that knowledge to produce an action). He believed that grammatical structure is part of our innate knowledge — we are born with it biologically — and that this comes out as an action as we speak (p. 9). Regardless of one’s belief in universal grammar, the ideas Chomsky provided are focused on language, not communication.

Retaining Chomsky’s distinction between competence and performance, Hymes (1971) proposed the term “communicative competence” to represent the ability to use language in a social context so that sociolinguistic norms of appropriateness can be observed (as cited in Savignon, 2002, p. 3). Hymes’ concern with speech communities and the integration of language communication, and culture was not unlike that of Firth (1937) and Halliday (1978) in the British linguistic tradition. Hymes’ “communicative competence” can be seen as the equivalent of Halliday’s “meaning potential.” Likewise, Savignon (1971) used the term “communicative competence” to characterize the ability of language learners to interact with other speakers as distinct from their ability to recite
dialogues or perform on discrete-point tests of grammatical knowledge (as cited in Savignon, 2002, p. 4). To test this competence, Savignon conducted a study (1971) that consisted of an 18-week drill class. The results showed that learners who were tested in activities requiring fluency, comprehensibility, and the amount of communication performed with roughly the same accuracy on discrete-point tests of grammatical structure. However, their communicative competence far surpassed that of learners who had no such practice. The learners (in a beginning-level English class) given communicative tasks were also reported to have enjoyed the activity, which shows that even beginners respond well to communicative, meaning-focused activities as opposed to formal activities (Savignon, 2002, p. 4-5).

There remains other literature that has reported observations of communication among people. Keith Johnson (1996) claimed that for communication to take place among FLLs and SLLs, the structures can only be correct when there is message focus. He states that “Getting structures right when there is nothing else to focus attention on” is the skill Audiolingualism develops, but this does not happen in communication (pp. 170-172). According to Halliday, meaning is far more crucial to communication: “There has to be an effort to remember, to inform, to communicate.” He refers to the term, message focus, in which the pupils’ attention is focused on message while the pupil’s attention is deflected away from the forms that are being practiced (as cited in Johnson, 1996, pp. 174-175). The students in this situation could at least apply the lesson to the real world, regardless of their grammar skills.

The limitations of teaching language take place in an example given by Wolfgang Klein (as cited in Baltes & Stautenger, 1996, p. 101). He contrasts parts of
communication (in this case, sound waves) with parts of language, showing that no matter how many times a sound of speech is repeated in isolation, it will not be understood by the person hearing it.

If we exclude language learning in the classroom… then the primary input is the physical speech signal – sound waves hitting the eardrums, which should make some sense. For the learner, this stream of noises is not yet segmented into phonemes, morphemes, words, sentences … if there were only sound waves as input, this task would be insoluble. (p. 101)

The parts of language that Klein discussed — sentences, words, phonemes, and morphemes — are not the communicative properties of a person but are parts of language.

Klein acknowledges the limitations this puts on someone listening to a language they cannot understand.

Suppose someone locked you into a room and played Inuktitut to you for days, weeks, even years, you would not learn it, any more than you would be able to learn Chinese just by regularly listening to shortwave radio programs in Chinese. The creation of linguistic knowledge in the speaker’s mind requires a second type of input—all the accompanying information, gestures, actions, and the entire situational context that eventually allows the speaker to break down the sound stream into smaller entities and to give them a meaningful interpretation. In other words, the input actually consists of two connected sources of information, the sound stream and the entire parallel information. Both of these are experientially transmitted-information that stems from other speaking and acting minds. Without those two types of experiential information, and without the leaner’s interpretive processes that brings them together, no acquisition of a particular language is possible. (as cited in Baltes & Stautenger, 1996, p. 101)

Although Klein says that sensory speech and the rest of the context must be received in parallel, he does not explicitly recognize that language itself is not part of the input. But, as Yngve (1996) stated, if we removed linguists, the physical properties (light waves, sound waves, etc.) would still remain but logical-domain objects (words, sentences,
morphemes, phonemes) would vanish because they are only created by linguists (Yngve, 1996, p. 113).

**Linguistics as Science.** In response to the issue of language, Yngve (2004, p. 15) stated that it is the act of people communicating that should be studied. He makes the distinction between two different sciences. One is soft science, in which science depends on assumptions, abstractions, philosophies, idealisms, and traditions (a sample question would be “How do we use language to communicate?”). The other is hard science, in which science depends on structured rules that can be proven true or false based on real-world observations (a sample question is “How do we communicate?”). Yngve argues that, between these two, the current model for linguistics includes language (a soft science), whereas the study of people communicating (a hard science) is what should be the focus. The difference is that teaching the current model means depending on assumptions instead of people and their environment, as shown in Table 1.2 (p. 15).

Yngve (2004) also distinguishes between the study of language and the study of how people communicate, stating that while teachers decide how to teach based on the former, they should decide how to teach based on the latter. His distinction is that language consists of grammar whereas communication consists of linkages, including not only speech but facial expressions, body motion, and the inanimate objects that people talk about. He claims that for linguistics to be treated as a hard science, there are four scientific assumptions that must be followed (p. 16): (a) there is a real world out there to be studied; (b) that world is coherent, so we have a chance of finding out something about it; (c) we can reach valid conclusions by reasoning from valid premises; and (d) observed effects flow from immediate real-world causes.
Referring to the immense influence of Greek philosophers and the Stoics, Yngve (1996) considers their views on language to be so popular that they are automatically accepted by most language teachers. He stated that studying language “has rested on traditional and arbitrary assumptions that had no necessary connection with the real world” (p. 22). Although linguists within the last two centuries have tried to justify the study of language as a science, they have depended on what Yngve calls “ideals of perfection in the logical or metatheoretical part of philosophy, which did not treat concrete realities, rather than in the physical or natural part that did” (p. 25). He further states that, rather than study communication among people that occurs in the natural sciences, the study of language creates its own objects (p. 25).

Yngve (2009) states that for a study of hard science linguistics to exist, there must be people who observe what is there in the real world.

People are modeled in terms of dynamic systems. How they communicate is modeled in terms of postulated communicative properties of these systems. This yields a body of theory that is testable against observational and experimental evidence from the real-world people and objects modeled, as is done in the other hard sciences. (p. 267)

To study the relationships among such physical objects and events (people, props, light waves, sound waves), Yngve has modeled these as part of a system called a linkage. In a linkage, the communicative roles among people and objects are modeled as systems called participation, props, and so on (Yngve, 2009, p. 267).

A description of the difference between language and physical-domain objects of study (specifically in the physical and biological sciences) was given by the neogrammarian Ferdinand de Saussure, who stated that, unlike linguistics, other sciences work with objects given in advance and can be considered from different viewpoints.
(Yngve, 1996, p. 30). To make his point, Saussure uses the French word *nu* or ‘bare,’ which, instead of being a concrete object, is revealed to be a sound or an expression of an idea: “There is no way to tell in advance that any particular viewpoint takes precedence” (as cited in Yngve, 1996, p. 30). Yngve concurs that such a separation exists, adding that such physical objects exist before we actually observe them. This disagrees with Chomsky’s claim that people have knowledge in their minds without experiencing or observing it (p. 113).

Table 1.1

*The Goals of Hard and Soft Science Linguistics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hard Science Linguistics</th>
<th>Soft Science Linguistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is a natural science (ala physics, chemistry, biology).</td>
<td>It creates hypotheses that are untestable against real world evidence are eliminated; they are philosophically based.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It studies parts of the real world.</td>
<td>It studies nonphysical constructs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It focuses on how people communicate and on physical means of energy flow taking place among them (including sound waves of speech, light waves of gestures).</td>
<td>It focuses on the nonphysical constructs of language, signs and grammar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are predictions of theory are tested against the real world through careful observation experiment.</td>
<td>Theories are not testable against the real world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It studies real world objects.</td>
<td>It studies unobservable nonphysical objects, for which there is no objective evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are four standard assumptions that must be considered.</td>
<td>It freely admit as many untestable assumptions as they wish Accepts scientifically unjustified assumptions (like language).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yngve (1996) states that only people, objects, sound waves, the physical surroundings and the relationships among them are real (p. 23). From a real world perspective, this is what is truly taking place within a classroom of FLLs and SLLs.
When applied in the classroom, these parts form a linkage, in which the teacher and students are the people; the sound waves consist of speech between the teacher and students while light waves are the means through which the teacher and students can look at each other. A sample of a linkage is provided in Table 1.3, in which a salesperson sells a vase to a collector. In this linkage, there are two women bargaining over the price of an antique offered for sale (the vase). In this case, the collector and salesperson are the persons A and B and the vase is the real object (Yngve, 2004, p. 24).

In Table 1.2, there are objects tested against evidence from separate persons. The participant level contains an assemblage which shows the reaction of one person/participant (a collector who takes on the role of a customer) to another person/participant (a dealer who takes on the role of dealing with antiques). The participants are also tested against evidence from real objects assembled. The role part level contains people concerned with a dealer offering a vase and the customer shaking his head as a response. (Yngve, 2004, p. 24).

*Communicating in the Classroom.* Savignon (2001, p. 4) states that “all communication occurs in a context,” a context which can “determine the rules that govern how speakers communicate.” In the traditional form of teaching, teachers control the discussion topic, choose what discussion is relevant for that topic, and who may participate at a certain time. Students “respond to teacher-directed questions, direct their talk to teachers, and wait their turn before speaking.” In this way, teachers, “by virtue of the status they hold in their classrooms, play a dominant role in determining the structure of classroom communication” (p. 4). For Berns (1990), this setup is problematic, as the
patterns of communication are “established and maintained by teachers as the
determinant for what students eventually learn” (as cited in Savignon, 2001, p. 6).

Berns states that teachers should examine classroom communication in its
totality, including the role students play as active participants in the creation of
knowledge (as cited in Savignon, 2001, p. 6). One solution is communicative
competence. This is achieved by naming objects in the real world (“The book is red”) 
while showing the object being referred to (a book with a red cover). This is an
economical method that requires little use for rules about syntax or vocabulary and yet is
still comprehensible to a language learner (Richards, 1985, p. 82, 83).

Table 1.2

*A sample of an assemblage and a linkage*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assemblage</th>
<th>Linkage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real-world objects and events</td>
<td>Model of linkage as a physical system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dealer (person)</td>
<td>[The dealer] (participant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vase (object)</td>
<td>[vase] (prop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound of the speech produced by the dealer (energy flow)</td>
<td>[The dealer’s speech] (channel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light waves that allow the dealer to see the collector shaking his head (energy flow)</td>
<td>[The collector’s head shake] (channel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dealer’s antique store (location)</td>
<td>[The dealer’s antiques] (setting)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The linkage, in this case, is the following. The instructor and the students are the
people, the classroom is the surrounding, and the props are the real world objects (images
with text typed above them). Given this instance of communicative events in a lesson, the study, as described in Chapter 2, observes such an event. The study reinforces a division between communication and language by splitting these into their own lessons.

Therefore, this study is concerned with two distinct lesson, in particular the effectiveness of their communicative representations.

Table 1.3

* A sample linkage and assemblage with an instructor and a student

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assemblage</th>
<th>Linkage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Real-world objects and events</td>
<td>Model of linkage as a physical system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The instructor</td>
<td>[The instructor]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(participant)</td>
<td>(participant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student</td>
<td>[The student]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(participant)</td>
<td>(role part)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A white board</td>
<td>[A white board]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(object)</td>
<td>(prop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound of the speech produced by the instructor</td>
<td>[The instructor’s speech]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(energy flow)</td>
<td>(channel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light waves that allow the instructor to see the student raise his hand</td>
<td>[The student’s hand raised] (channel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(energy flow)</td>
<td>[asking a question]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The university classroom</td>
<td>[The classroom]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(location)</td>
<td>(setting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[The university]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(setting part)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Hypothesis.* The concern of this study was to observe the differences in the effectiveness of lessons focused on communication vs. language. To accomplish this, four sessions took place from which to gather data. This data relied strictly on how students from separate classes — ENGL 1110 (referred to in this study as 1110) and A.L.I. Intermediate I — scored on the test. The test results were observed to make comparisons between levels, between lessons, and within levels.
The data included the number of correct scores on the tests. The goal of the study — to show that communication through representation is more effective than language — observed the number of correct test scores for the subjects. The variables were correct answers, incorrect answers, and an equal number of correct answers among the sessions.

The following research hypotheses were tested.

\( H_A: \) There will be more correct answers for tests in the COMM sessions than in the LANG sessions.
\( H_A: \) There will be more correct answers for tests in the 1110 sessions than in tests for the ALI sessions.
\( H_A: \) There will be more correct answers for tests in the 1110 COMM session than in the 1110 LANG session.
\( H_A: \) There will be more correct answers for tests in the ALI COMM session than in the ALI LANG session.

The following null hypotheses were also considered for this study.

\( H_0: \) There will be more, or as many, correct answers for tests in the LANG sessions than in the COMM sessions.
\( H_0: \) There will be more, or as many, correct answers in the ALI sessions than in the 1110 sessions.
\( H_0: \) There will be more, or as many, correct answers in the 1110 LANG session than in the 1110 COMM session.
\( H_0: \) There will be more, or as many, correct answers in the ALI LANG session than in the ALI COMM session.

The lessons designed for the study will be discussed in Chapter Two.
Chapter 2

Methodology and Design

Introduction

There has been debate among linguists throughout the last century over how to teach a language. There was, for instance, an older school of thought exemplified by Palmer and West (cited in Richards, 1985) in which language is taught through vocabulary and grammar; on the other hand Yngve (1996) denied that this is the true concern; for him, it is the act of people communicating that must be the focus.

Taking these ideas — language vs. communication — into consideration, this study has concentrated on two lessons. One presents information with communicative representations (including context with real world representations of people and their environment) and the other which presents information with language (containing more text and only a minimal display of real world representations). To see how these approaches differed in effect, a test was conducted that required the responses of subjects, followed by a data analysis in which the correct answers were counted.

This study was intended to show that communication is necessary for learning and that exposure to language — which is not real — cannot allow an FLL or SLL to communicate. This was observed by providing these lessons and the test for different groups of FLSs and SLSs. In the study, the following hypotheses were formulated.

$H_A$: There will be more correct answers for tests in the COMM sessions than in the LANG sessions.
$H_A$: There will be more correct answers for tests in the 1110 sessions than in tests for the ALI sessions.
$H_A$: There will be more correct answers for tests in the 1110 COMM session than in the 1110 LANG session.
$H_A$: There will be more correct answers for tests in the ALI COMM session than in the ALI LANG session.
The following null hypotheses were also considered for this study.

H₀: There will be more, or as many, correct answers for tests in the LANG sessions than in the COMM sessions.
H₀: There will be more, or as many, correct answers in the ALI sessions than in the 1110 sessions.
H₀: There will be more, or as many, correct answers in the 1110 LANG session than in the 1110 COMM session.
H₀: There will be more, or as many, correct answers in the ALI LANG session than in the ALI COMM session.

**Theoretical Background.** To decide what made one lesson communicative and the other language-based, it was necessary for representations of real objects and events — like people, props, light waves, and sound waves — to be present for communication to occur. To accomplish this, a display of people, objects, and events interacting with each other was needed in the lessons to form a context. These representations of real things and events included, for example, the sound waves from a person speaking (such as the recorded dialogue heard over the sound system) and objects being spoken about (such as a plate or a glass of water). The fundamental difference between both lessons was that the COMM lesson would include these elements, whereas the LANG lesson would not. This would cause a challenge as both lessons had similarities, such as containing the same dialogue.

**Input Design.** The solution to observing the effects among sessions was to keep the differences based on approach, not content. Both would contain the same basic story, both would include a restaurant, both would include a server taking a customer’s order, both would follow the same five part structure from greeting to paying the bill, and both would contain the same dialogue to be played throughout the lesson. The differences
were based on which representations of real world people, objects, and events were present in one lesson and which were not present in the other.

This decision rested on what tools are needed for both types of presentations. If a lesson is based on language, then it should present only speech and text, and if it is communicative then it should include real world representations of people and events. It was decided that it was more beneficial to judge the communicative effect by keeping the story for the lessons the same but making sure that the style of one contrasted strongly with the other.

Creating the Lessons. In planning both lessons, it was decided that these would serve instructional purposes. This is partly inspired by lessons done by Coleman (2005), who created and proctored lessons for a basic ESL tutorial that focused on a particular subject, such as parts of the body, the weather, and money. Since these lessons are designed to be communicative, they required stages that the instructor takes the FLL or SLL through. For the input stage in the lesson about weather, the learners realize that seeing a picture of a cloud and hearing the word “cloud” means that the object must be a cloud; the references are transferred between the instructor and the learners through light and sound waves, which result in communicative interaction. A debriefing stage follows the activity, in which the learner is meant to communicate these concepts by speaking in English.

The tutorials were a genesis for this study. The COMM/LANG lessons were created in Carrara, a computer software. With Carrara, still images were provided to create a visual story containing characters in a setting. The lessons were planned so that they would include visuals to accompany text. In this sense, each presentation resembles
a slideshow, only the approaches for both lessons differ because each lesson was designated an individual goal, one to present information in a communicative manner with context and the other containing images and sounds with a supposed dependence on language instead of real world representations. After creating the images for these two presentations in Carrara, they were placed on a PowerPoint. Added to this was dialogue recorded to accompany the text onscreen, a dialogue set in a restaurant between one of the servers and a customer.

**Other Lesson Materials.** A script for both lessons was prepared with dialogue between the two main characters. The text – both written and spoken – was a typical conversation one may hear in a public restaurant, such as the server asking the customer what he wants to order and the customer telling the server, “I’ll have a water.” This is the conversation pattern present throughout the lessons. There was no concern with character development: the dialogue was not meant to describe to the audience the characters’ names, hobbies, desires, histories, or anything else expected for typical character development in script writing. The purpose of the presentations was solely instructional, with other elements like sounds and objects present to help determine the effectiveness of communicative representation in each lesson.

For designing both lessons, a decision was made to look at the ESL tutorial lessons. Therefore, it was decided that animation software would supply the material. For each lesson, images were constructed in Carrarra and convert then to a PowerPoint to be shown to classes in the University of Toledo (UT). Carrara was the software available for creating the images; vocals for dialogue between the server and customer were supplied
by the voices of two people and recorded with Audacity software, which also recorded the sound effects for the COMM lesson.

**The Storyline.** In creating two separate lessons, it was decided that the story should be about a typical, mundane activity in American culture. The final decision was to show a sample lesson on how to order in a restaurant, since eating in a public place is an activity that people from other nations are likely to encounter. The structure planned follows the typical structure that a person may find in a public restaurant. After several drafts, the story was split into five time frames. The following list is an outline of each time frame as it applies within the story structure.

1. A male customer sits at a table in a public restaurant reading his menu while waiting for a server. A female server arrives to greet him and asks what drink he would like, followed by his response, “Just a water, please.”

2. The server returns with a water and checks if the customer needs time. When the customer replies “No”, she records his order of steak, eggs, and vegetables.

3. The server returns with the order and tells the customer he can always ask for something else.

4. The server returns as the customer finishes, asking if he wants more. The customer asks for only the bill.

5. The server brings the bill to the customer, wishing him a good day.

**Procedure.** Each of the four sessions was timed so that they had equal lengths, totaling ten minutes. The COMM lesson included only its PowerPoint. The LANG lesson had a similar construction with several key exceptions: (1) the PowerPoint LANG lesson was shorter and (2) in between the lesson and the test, subjects were provided a
vocabulary overview to emphasize language over communicative representations. The test given to both groups included two parts: one played in the PowerPoint, with each multiple choice questions on its own slide as text and the voices of the server and customer matching the text; the other was a plain, hard copy version of the same questions which all subjects were to mark their answers.

**An Overview of Each Lesson.** As stated above, both lessons shared similarities in content, since they included the same dialogue spoken, followed the same five part structure, and included the same characters and setting. The obvious contrast between the lessons was the presence or absence of communicative representation. For the LANG lesson, each slide contains a line of dialogue that accompanied the action, be it the server asking a question or the customer thanking the server. Each slide after the other contained a line of dialogue in the text placed above an image. It is the same image throughout, containing the two characters, the restaurant, the food served, and the pad the server writes on. The COMM lesson, however, contains the same text and story structure, but there are two clear differences. One is the visual dynamic. Many different images are shown, some repeated a few times depending on what is happening in the story. They include a variety of different angles, facial reactions, character positions, prop positions, and lighting effects. The second change is there are other sounds besides the actors’ voices, like the sounds of footsteps, a pencil scribbling on paper, and dishes hitting into each other.

The intention of these contrasts was to match a COMM lesson with communicative elements and a LANG lesson without those elements (or at least with fewer). To construct the LANG lesson this way, there needed to be text on the
PowerPoint. The only element expressing anything real-world in the LANG lesson was a sample picture of the server holding a notepad and the customer with his food just prepared on his plate, ready to be eaten. In this way, the subjects receive just enough visual input to get the idea of the story: it is about a person ordering a meal in a restaurant.

The COMM lesson contained various angles so that the subjects could actually see what is happening at that moment in the story. The subjects could not sense a real world representation unless it was presented in front of them, so if the customer asked for eggs and those eggs were not visible, then no representation of eggs would exist for the subjects. In order for the lesson to have context, a wide variety of images were supplied to accompany the action, instead of the single image shown throughout the LANG lesson. These images include close-ups of the customer looking at the menu, close-ups of the server writing on her pad, and close-ups of the food being prepared. Also, a variety of sound effects were included to match the images in the COMM lesson. In the slide, as the server wrote in her notepad the sound effect of a pencil tracing against paper was audible. The sound effect of glass and silverware placed on a dish was accompanied by the view of the server holding those items while saying “Okay, I’ll get these dishes out of your way,” which allowed the props and sound waves needed to communicate dishes to someone watching the lesson (see Appendix 3 for the script). The sound effects and speech would eventually be presented to subjects through loud speakers in the classroom for each session.

Samples from both lessons are presented in this chapter (Fig. 2.1). In order to show the contrasts between both lessons, the left half of the page includes images from
the LANG lesson and the right half of the page includes images from the COMM lesson. Although the audio cannot be duplicated, the LANG lesson is straightforward because the only sound recorded was the dialogue (which accompanied the text). The conversation in this sample focuses on the customer ordering the entrée. The image on the left remains the same throughout the presentation, while the image on the right is never the same, showing different nuances within the scene that the left-hand images do not show, such as variations in smiles, frowns, gestures, and lighting. The questions are asked by the server, followed by a response from the customer (in the audio recording, two actors supply the characters’ voices).

![Image 1](image1.png) ![Image 2](image2.png) ![Image 3](image3.png) ![Image 4](image4.png)

*Figure 2.1.* The server asks the customer a question.

For the LANG lesson (on the left) there is a general picture which remains the same throughout each slide (Figure 2.2). In the COMM lesson, only the server is shown,
which makes it clear that the text and voice match with the character shown in the image. Also, the server is clearly smiling in the right images, which shows her friendly behavior. Again, this is a stronger representation of a real-world event than the representation in the LANG lesson.

![Image](image1.png)

*Figure 2.2. The customer places his order.*

The customer responds with a somewhat generic answer. In the LANG lesson, it is not clear that the customer is ordering (in fact, throughout this lesson, he looks like he is about to eat the meal from the table in front of him). In the COMM lesson, he stares into the menu as the text is shown and heard. In actuality, some people look up at the server while they speak their order, but it is also common to stare in the menu to remember the order. This latter approach was used to make it clear that he is, in fact, ordering something he has read in the menu.
This is followed by a slide without text in the COMM lesson (Fig. 2.3). This slide is not present in the LANG lesson because it consists of communicative representations not present in the LANG lesson. For the COMM lesson (on the right), the server writes what the customer ordered. In the audio recording, a pencil scribbled on a page matches the actions that take place in the picture. In the LANG lesson, no such event occurs.

![Image](image.png)

*Figure 2.3.* The server records the order (for the COMM lesson only).

For more specificity (and to show the subjects what a server will say in the real world) the server asks a “How would you like?” question. In the real world, it is likely that a server to make eye contact with the customer to ask this question (though, in some exceptions, servers may look into their notepad while accepting an order). Again, none of these representations of the real world exist in the LANG lesson.

The customer gives a response that could be heard in a real world situation. It is clear that in the COMM lesson he is holding the menu, which indicates that he is ordering, but he also looks up as he says it. There is one point that is not made explicit: the customer looks up toward the server, apparently aware of what medium rare is, and does not need to recheck the menu to refresh his memory.
The server then asks about the eggs in order to be sure which type of egg he actually wants (Fig. 2.5). The angles have not changed dramatically because the server has already written ‘steak’ and ‘eggs’ in the notebook. Again, the sound effects and various images in the COMM lesson were designed to purposely put those subjects into a real world situation, whereas the absence of these in the LANG lesson removes the subjects away from the real world.

*Figure 2.4. A question-response regarding the steak.*

**The Vocabulary List.** A vocabulary list was provided for the LANG lesson. The vocabulary terms were audible as spoken by the customer in his responses to the server’s questions; therefore, a recording of his voice took place as the accompanying text was shown. One reason for providing a vocabulary list for the LANG lesson was that this allows the subjects to focus more on language instead of visuals and sounds. This focus
on language was emphasized during the sessions by including multiple copies of the vocabulary terms printed on hard copy paper. These were provided to students following the lesson and preceding the test, and the PowerPoint played a recording of the customer’s voice reciting these vocabulary terms.

![Image of a question-response regarding the eggs.](image)

*Figure 2.5. A question-response regarding the eggs.*

No such vocabulary list was provided for the COMM lesson because this would detract from the communicative focus and would instead focus on language. This was not a concern for the LANG lesson, but would have been for the COMM lesson, since that would have disagreed with the goal of effective communication.

As this was presented with the LANG sessions, the vocabulary list was made available to play on the screen as text, and each term was audible from the loud speakers in the classroom (See Appendix 2: Vocabulary for the list of vocabulary terms). Each
slide was timed based on the length of each sound clip. As each term was spoken in order (from the top down), the term was highlighted; both the typed and spoken term matched so that the subjects were able to hear “a medium rare steak” at the same time the term was highlighted (and, perhaps, at the same time the subjects saw this term on the hard copies). Then the screen was timed to proceed to the next slide, with the term below highlighted as, “Two over easy eggs”; the recorded sound clip for that term was made audible from the loud speakers in the classroom. As shown in Fig. 2.6, this continues during the lesson with “A side of vegetables,” “A water,” and the rest until “I’ll have…”

![Figure 2.6. A sample of the vocabulary list.](image)

The COMM sessions did not receive the vocabulary lesson for two reasons: (a) the treatment stage is longer than in the LANG sessions, so the time frames of both matched as long as there was a vocabulary list for LANG and none for COMM; and (b) the vocabulary is focused on language, which fits the purposes of the LANG group but lacks communicative representations needed in the COMM lesson.

**Data Collection.** The goal of the study was to compare the effectiveness of both lessons with FLLs and SLLs serving as the tested subjects. To observe this, a multiple choice test was created with questions covering material in both lessons. The students
were given this test immediately following the respective lesson. The test was based on the dialogue of the lesson given beforehand, but there were intentional distinctions between the lesson and test within a given session.

At one moment during the dialogue, the customer at one point is asked “Would you like something to drink?”, and he responds, “Just a water, please.” In the test, “A water” is given as the correct choice, so the text is slightly different. This prevents the learner from easily knowing the answer based on the wording. The test questions roughly follow the input (the lesson that preceded the test). The questions were what the server asked (“How would you like your steak cooked?”) followed by a set of multiple choice responses to indicate what the customer could say (“A water,” “a steak,” “the menu”). The responses covered only terms given in the test.

After the subjects were given the lesson, hard copies of the test were distributed to all subjects present. There were eight questions, each with three choices from which the subjects would choose the correct answer. The test was constructed on a question-answer basis, the questions being what the server asks and the multiple choices being three possible responses from the customer (one of which is the correct choice). For the LANG lesson, this test was given after the vocabulary overview. Pauses between the lesson, the vocabulary overview, and the test took place so that time could be made to hand a hard copy test to all subjects present.

As the lesson played, the subjects were able to look at the hard copy handout that matched the questions. This allows the subjects to hear the PowerPoint sounds, see the PowerPoint text, and mark the answer of their choices. This is how the test would look to students on the hard copy form (see Appendix 1 for the hard copy test questions).
The phrasing of terms in the test was changed from the lessons. Instead of “I’ll have it medium rare,” as in the lesson, the correct customer response in the test was “Medium rare.” Also, “Just a water, please” became “A water,” “No, thank you,” becomes “No.” Although the test was distributed to subjects as a hard copy handout to each subject, the questions and answers were accompanied by the projected PowerPoint and were timed to run during the time the students take the test (Fig. 2.7). This included a voice-over recording of the question the server asks, then each of the three multiple choice responses that the customer would likely speak.

![How would you like your steak cooked?](image1)

How would you like your steak cooked?
A: Hi.
B: No, thank you.
C: Medium rare.

![Do you need more time to look over the menu?](image2)

Do you need more time to look over the menu?
A: Yes, please.
B: Medium rare.
C: A side of vegetables.

Figure 2.7. A sample of the test questions.

**Subjects.** The lessons were designed as sample instructions for FL/SL subjects being taught English as a second or foreign language. This made it necessary to use students in either an ESL section of ENGL 1110 or in the A.L.I. The subjects themselves were students from somewhere on the campus of The University of Toledo. They were students whose do not speak English as their native language, and were therefore attending classes either in the A.L.I. or in ENGL 1110 within the university curriculum.
As this study was intended for FLLs and SLLs, there were many options to choose from regarding who would be tested. The options included two levels of ESL classes within the University of Toledo (ENGL 1020 and ENGL 1110-College Composition I) and designated levels of proficiency in the A.L.I. on UT’s campus (intermediate, basic, advanced), which are also divided according to different English abilities (Listening/Speaking, Reading/Writing, Grammar). To achieve the results desired for the hypotheses, each session was tested on only one lesson, not both.

The subjects had to be students from other nations who were placed into second language classes. The sessions of ALI subjects consisted of students without a passing TOEFL score, whereas the 1110 subjects were already enrolled as university students. Because the 1110 subjects spoke English as a second or foreign language, however, they were placed into an ESL level of College Composition I. The differences between the native speaker composition courses and the ESL composition courses is that ESL composition focuses on higher order concerns and a small range of assignments (like an essay or a research paper), whereas a native speaker composition course focuses on a range of writings (essays, research, reviews, analysis, letters) and expects higher expectations from the students regarding their English proficiency.

For each session, an almost equal numbers of subjects were needed for all four sessions. Such factors as drop outs and absences were ignored, as long as the numbers were close to equal among all sessions. Subjects from each session would receive just one of the two lessons — COMM or LANG — and an even number of sessions (four) were planned in order to make comparisons for a t-test.
Because of time constraints and difficulties in contacting many instructors, only two different types of classes were considered. Within such a setup, two English classes for the LANG lesson and two English classes for the COMM lesson could be compared, offering the possibility for clear contrasts among groups and no test bias.

One concern that had to be avoided when finding appropriate classes was making sure that the group treatments would remain balanced. Assume that four sessions are present for the experiment, two sessions of 1110 subjects and two sessions of ALI subjects. The 1110 subjects are considered more “advanced” because the students have taken their TOFEL test, have entered university, are given more complex papers, and have already proven on their tests to have a certain level of English fluency. The COMM lesson was provided for both 1110 subjects while the LANG lesson was provided for both sessions of ALI subjects. If this happens, the hypotheses have not been tested. The 1110 subjects would easily score higher because of their English background, not because of the difference in effectiveness between LANG and COMM lessons.
Chapter 3

Results and Discussion

Introduction

For this study, two lessons were designed to be compared for their communicative effectiveness, and students who studied English as their second or foreign language were the subjects. The results were measured based on correct answers to the test questions, while the data was a record of the number of correct answers from the subjects immediately following the presentation they saw.

The values were the correct answers to the test questions themselves. Using four independent t-tests, the results showed that there was no significant difference among the groups. The tests showed that the subjects answered most of the answers correctly (there were four sessions total, two sessions for each lesson). There were 45 subjects, each provided with the same set of eight questions.

Data Analysis. The correct answers were computed in the data according to the level (1110 vs. ALI) and the lesson (COMM vs. LANG). A t-test showed there was no difference in the mean number of correct answers based on student level (t = 1.240, d.f. = 42.921, p = 0.222, $\bar{x}_{\text{ALI}} = 7.56$, $\bar{x}_{1110} = 7.75$). Another test showed there was no difference in the mean number of correct answers based on the teaching approaches (t = -.661, d.f. = 42.850, p = .512, $\bar{x}_{\text{COMM}} = 7.59$, $\bar{x}_{\text{LANG}} = 7.70$). Two other t-tests compared scores within the levels and lessons. A t-test comparing the two teaching approaches using only the 1110 groups showed that there was no difference in test scores between the COMM and LANG lessons (t = 1.567, d.f. = 14.918, p = .138, $\bar{x}_{1110,\text{COMM}} = 7.60$, $\bar{x}_{1110,\text{LANG}} = 7.90$). A t-test comparing the two lessons with only the ALI classes had shown that there was no
difference in test scores between the COMM and LANG lessons ($t = -.190$, d.f. $= 22.410$, $p = .851$, $\bar{x}_{\text{ALL-COMM}} = 7.58$, $\bar{x}_{\text{ALL-LANG}} = 7.54$).

The results of the t-tests for each hypothesis showed p-values above .05. Therefore, there was no difference among the four sessions, regardless of the fluency level or the lesson.

**Discussion.** As the results for the study showed no difference, the experimental lessons and tests were re-examined. Below are several issues that may have caused the study to show no significant difference among the groups.

*A Consideration of the Test Questions.* Although there was no difference in the study among values, there were certain questions which were answered incorrectly more often than others. The results reported two questions without answers, leaving 358 responses, only 14 of which were incorrect. The 1110 LANG session had only one incorrect response, while the rest ranged 3-5 incorrect responses. The most common incorrect answers were Numbers 3 (“Would you like vegetables on the side?”) and 5 (“Can I start you off with something to drink?”). Number 5, in particular, created confusion between “Yes” and “A water” (the latter was the correct answer). Although “a water” fits the context, “yes” is the true response. FLLs and SLLs may believe that “yes” is correct based on a presumption of the grammatical form of the question. Some students also may have treated this as a “yes/no” question, perhaps because their previous teachers taught with a language focus. Even considering the parallel incorrect responses, the significance shown in the tests was greater than .05 for all groups.

*A Lack of Communicative Representation.* It is possible that the lessons did not show a clear distinction. These lessons included the same basic content (a scene in a
restaurant) but were meant to have a strong contrast in communicative effectiveness. When considering the final polished versions of these lessons as they were presented to the subjects, it was found that there were more similarities than originally intended.

In their final form, the lessons had to include the same script to control for intervening variables. There were three main differences: the visual difference (one image for the LANG lesson vs. multiple images for the COMM lesson), the presence/absence of sound effects, and the presence/absence of a vocabulary lesson. Since there was no difference in the results, there are two possibilities that can be considered. One is that the differences between the two lessons, although apparent, are minimal; either there are no representations of people and their environment in the COMM lesson or there are too many representations in the LANG lesson. As Klein (1997, p. 101) stated, the person locked in the room and exposed to Chinese will only be able to learn to communicate if s/he is exposed to two types of input, the sound waves of speech, and parallel information (situational context, accompanying information, gestures, and other actions). Yngve (1996) added that, in a classroom, removing language would leave the speech signal (delivered by the teacher to a person’s eardrums) as the primary input. However, assuming there is nothing else in the room — something present besides the person and other elements mentioned above — the person will not learn Chinese, even if s/he is exposed to that language in the room for several years.

Without those two types of experiential information, and without the learner’s interpretive processes that brings them together, no acquisition of a particular language is possible. Whatever a speaker knows about a particular language stems from his or her interpretation of the sound stream produced by other people and the actions that go with this production of sounds. (Klein, 1997, p. 101)
Klein (1997, p. 101) adds that as long as the speaker breaks down the sounds and interprets the linguistic information, such linguistic knowledge is only present if these two types of input are also present with the speaker. In the LANG lesson, however, there were still communicative representations left, making it difficult to decide which lesson truly represented communication. The LANG groups received at least some of the parallel information that they were not intended to receive. As shown in Fig. 3.1, only one image is used for each slide, because too much parallel sensory information would make it less dependent on language. However, the image used is actually created specifically for that lesson and is not used anywhere in the COMM lesson. The intention was to encapsulate enough elements so that the LANG subjects would receive just enough information without letting the images remove focus on the words (thus making the lesson dependent on language). To accomplish this, a mid-range view of the two characters was used. The customer is seated with his food, indicating that he is the one being served; the server holds a pad and pencil in her hands while smiling, indicating that she is the server recording the order.

A dilemma with this picture is that it assumes to minimize communication when it actually does not. This means that the image shows too many representations of real-world elements to make it distinctly language-dependent (and not communicative). Perhaps if the food was removed to make it less clear who the server is, this would have made the lesson more language-dependent. In fact, removing the image completely is likely the best way to make the lesson more language-dependent. None of these approaches were taken, however, so the basic roles of both characters are made too plain through communicative representations. Also, on a note of common sense, the image
information is incongruous: Servers often do not write the entrée a customer wants to order when the customer already has that entrée.

Figure 3.1. A sample of the image from all slides in the LANG lesson.

**Technical Mistakes.** There is not enough specific parallel information in the COMM lesson. The images do not provide enough visual detail for the lesson to truly represent communication. In one such instance, there is a slide that shows the full plate set on a table, about to be eaten. The server speaks one at a time ("One medium rare steak, two over easy eggs, and a side of vegetables"). Rather than singling out each item as it is spoken, all items are included in the same image, which must have caused confusion from the subjects deciding which item is which. For a COMM lesson, these must be clearly deciphered.

The sound effects are meant to match the image. However, there are instances where there is a mismatch, thus destroying the real world believability, as described below. First, there are two instances where we hear the server say something regarding the dishes. She sets an object on the table when the food arrives, but we do not see the food being set. There is one image of her holding the meal and the next image showing the food on the table. There is no transition between the two. Also, the image of the food
on the table is shown as the server describes what she has placed (“One medium rare steak,” etc.), then the sound effect is heard even though the subjects have been looking at that image for at least five seconds. This is not a clear representation of what this situation would look like in the real world. Second, in the slide where the server says “I’ll get these dishes out of your way,” she is already holding the dishes while she says this and while the sound of silverware, plates, and glass touch each other. What has already happened in the image is only in the process of happening on the soundtrack. It is as if she somehow transported the dishes into her hand without effort.

_A Consideration of the Subjects._ The lessons apparently do not cover any new information for the subjects. This is likely because the subjects understand what some of the elements are, such as a medium rare steak and over easy eggs are. Even in the LANG sessions, the subjects connect the word with their own idea of what that looks like (even without a view of the steak and eggs). Since this may not to be new information for either group, the subjects are left to choose only the option they already know. It is likely that this happens to be the case for most of the information in the lesson.

The fact that the subjects correctly identified the objects (dishes, eggs, vegetables, steak, water, and so on) for both lessons could be because enough information was provided by the images in both cases. Another possibility, however, is that the information itself may be already familiar to the subjects that any approach in the lessons is irrelevant, because the subjects would be able to identify a plate of eggs or a cup of water without having to see such objects represented in the lessons.

**Implications.** As there is still debate among linguists and teachers regarding the effectiveness of communication for teaching FLLs and SLLs, studies such as this should
be refined so that it will be possible to distinguish teaching materials based on communicative effectiveness. After considering the possibilities for why there was no difference between the lessons, what follows provides implications to be considered for future studies.

**Images with Fewer Communicative Representations.** The visual differences between the lessons could be altered, especially the images presented throughout the LANG lesson. An even more effective method is to exclude the image completely and to include only the text itself against a blank screen as the sole aid in the lesson. This would move the lesson further away from being communicative, which would sharply distinguish it from the COMM lesson.

**Images with More Communicative Representations.** For the COMM lesson, the emphasis should be to create communicative effectiveness, which is the exact opposite of the other lesson. This does not suggest there should simply be more images for the COMM lesson, but that there should be more communicative representations within those images. This can be done by making the relationships of elements in the images to the speech more obvious. For example, Fig. 3.2 shows an image that contains a representation of a plate of food, accompanied by the text which the server speaks. Representations of three food items (eggs, steak, and vegetables) are included in this image. It should be impossible for a non-native speaker to decide which is which without prior knowledge. However, based on the test scores, confusion was not apparent. But as this is a COMM lesson, it is crucial to show what the object is; what is heard in the audio and seen in the text must match with the image. The image failed to match what had been recorded in the dialogue. A way to fix this is to split each component of the group. This
would mean one slide states "One medium rare steak" with the steak singled out by highlighting, changing the color in relation to the rest of the image, or simply as a close-up filling the entire picture. This way there is no way the viewer will think the tall red bottle (hot sauce) is “a steak” or that the tall white cylinder (a cup of water) is “a steak.” It is made distinctly clear to the viewer. The same process should be applied to the other food representations as well (eggs, vegetables).

![Image of a meal with text: One medium rare steak, two over easy eggs and a side of vegetables.]

*Figure 3.2. A close-up of the customer’s meal.*

This approach is similar to lessons referred by Richards (1985), in which people communicating in the classroom is achieved when the teacher names objects in the real world (“The book is red”) while showing the object being referred to (a book with a red cover). This is an economical method that requires little use for rules about syntax or vocabulary and yet is still comprehensible to a language learner (p. 82, 83). This can be a useful tool for the COMM lesson by distinguishing the objects individually. An example of this could be an individual slide with a steak on it while the instructor points and says “This is a steak.” Then the same process could take place with other representations, such as eggs and water.
**Possible Changes to the Representations.** The lessons in their final form are clip shows with sound. Another possibility for communicative representation, however, is to videotape the events instead of animating them. This would require a camera with live actors, props, and set pieces in place of the animated versions that were ultimately part of the lesson.

A video recording of people in a realistic environment could be especially effective for the COMM lesson in order to effectively represent people communicating. Also, if future studies apply computer animation, the images could include movement for the COMM lesson. The reason for this is that people communicating in the real world do not remain in static postures. The gestures of hands lifting objects and heads turning are more effective means of representing people and props, as opposed to the static images that were present in the lesson.

**New Material.** To see a significant contrast between COMM and LANG lessons, much of the information in both lessons needs to be altered, replaced, or removed. This could include choosing foods that the subjects may not easily identify or identifying food characteristics like over hard, over easy, steamed, and fried. If this will be the approach, however, this means that much of the lesson needs to focus on these terms for some time before testing the students on this information. Otherwise, there is no clear way to find out if they have understood the information.

**A Potential Test Revision.** Information about age and language background can also be taken into account. This can be done by considering the current English fluency of individual subjects, as opposed to a group of multiple students. It is best to revise the test so that it does not include information the subjects already know. The representations
should not be familiar to the subjects, because if they already know that eggs can be cooked over easy it is pointless to have those representations in the test. To decide what questions are known to most SL students and which are not, one method is to conduct a pre-test in which subjects are provided a list of terms (over easy eggs, over hard eggs, medium rare steak) accompanied by photographs of objects that match those terms; the subjects could be told to checkmark the items that are unfamiliar to them.

**Conclusions.** This study was designed with the intention that teachers of SLLs and FLLs would have materials that would prompt students to communicate, as opposed to simply memorizing grammatical rules. The study considered two separate branches of linguistics as a basis for designing lessons for learning to communicate: hard science for communication and soft science for language. A lesson was created based on each of these branches in order to show that a lesson representing communication is more effective for students than one that uses language. After discovering that no significant difference took place, this leaves room for future studies to refine the lessons. If this can be done, this will allow the possibility of a clearer contrast in effectiveness between the lessons of this study.
References


Appendix A

The Test

Multiple choice questions from both lessons of “Ordering a Meal in a Restaurant”

How would you like your steak cooked?
A. Hi
B. No, thank you
C. Medium rare

And how would you like your eggs?
A. Yes
B. The bill, please
C. I’ll have them over easy

Would you like vegetables on the side?
A. No, thank you
B. Medium rare
C. Hi

Do you need more time to look over the menu?
A. Yes, please
B. Medium rare
C. A side of vegetables

Can I get you started with something to drink?
A. I’ll have them over easy
B. Yes
C. A water

Okay. I’ll get that ready for you.
A. No, thank you
B. The menu
C. Thank you

Can I get anything else for you?
A. The bill, please
B. Thank you
C. Hi

Okay, I’ll get these dishes out of your way.
A. Okay, thank you
B. No, thank you
C. A water
Appendix B

The Vocabulary List

The following is a list of vocabulary terms used only for the LANG lesson, as it appears in the hard copy handout.

A medium rare steak
Two over easy eggs
A side of vegetables
  A water
  Dishes
  The bill
  The menu
  Hi
  Yes
  No
  Please
  Thank you
  Okay
  I’ll have…
Appendix C

The Script

This is a planned, typed script of the lesson. It includes dialogue spoken by the server and customer during both lessons. Time shifts and character actions are in parentheses.

1. (The server introduces herself)

Server: Hello, I’ll be your server for today. Can I start you off with something to drink?

Customer: Just a water, please.

Server: Okay. I’ll get that ready for you.

2. (Two minutes later: the server returns with the water)

Server: Here’s your water. Do you need more time to look over the menu?

Customer: No, I’m ready.

Server: All right. What would you like to order?

Customer: I’ll have a steak with two eggs on the side.

Server: How would you like your steak cooked?

Customer: Medium rare.

Server: And how would you like your eggs?

Customer: Over hard.

(The server writes this order on paper)

Server: Okay. Would you like vegetables on the side?

Customer: Yes.

Server: Can I get anything else for you?

Customer: No, thank you.
Server: All right, I’ll place your order for you.

Customer: Thank you.

3. (Half an hour later)

Server: Here you are. One medium rare steak, two over hard eggs and a side of veggies. Let me know if you need anything else.

Customer: Okay.

4. (Twenty minutes later: The customer is done with his meal)

Server: Can I get you anything else today?

Customer: No, just the bill.

(The server takes the plate and glass with him)

Server: Okay. I’ll get this out of your way.

Customer: Thank you.

5. (Two minutes later: The server brings the bill)

Server: Here you are. You have a wonderful day.

Customer: You too. Thank you.
Appendix D

Samples of the Language Lesson

The following images are from the LANG lesson and are provided as simple figures in the study.

*Appendix D. Figure 2.1.* The server asks the customer a question.
Appendix D. Figure 2.2. The customer places his order.

Appendix D. Figure 2.4. A question-response regarding the steak.
Appendix D. Figure 2.5. A question-response regarding the eggs.
Appendix 5

Samples of the Communicative Lesson

The following images are from the COMM lesson and are provided as sample figures in the study.

*Appendix E. Figure 2.1.* The server asks the customer a question.
Appendix E. Figure 2.2. The customer places his order.

Appendix E. Figure 2.4. A question-response regarding the steak.
Appendix E. Figure 2.5. A question-response regarding the eggs.