DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 052 652   FL 002 380

AUTHOR   Molina, Hubert
TITLE   Factors to be Considered in Designing an
                Instructional Program in English for Spanish
                Speakers.
PUB DATE   5 Mar 71
NOTE   12p.; Paper presented at the Fifth Annual TESOL
                Convention, New Orleans, La., March 5, 1971

EDRS PRICE   EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS   Adult Education, Course Content, Cultural Education,
                *Curriculum Development, *English (Second Language),
                Instructional Improvement, *Instructional Materials,
                Language Programs, Motivation, Non English Speaking,
                Second Language Learning, *Spanish Speaking, Student
                Needs, Syntax, *Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT
                The design for an instructional program whose
objective is the acquisition of English must be viewed within wide
parameters. The dimensions discussed are those that must be accounted
for by a designer of materials appropriate for particular learners.
These parameters are discussed to make teachers aware of what to look
for and what kinds of results to expect from materials. The
monumental task of presenting precoding and encoding information to a
learner makes it necessary to organize and reduce this information to
dimensions that can reasonably be taught in the classroom. The paper
points out that the basis for the selection of information that
comprises a learner's dialect is concerned with what the learner must
know to begin to function in a different culture and strategies by
which to add to such information. (Author)

A Paper Presented at the
Annual Teachers of English to Speakers
of Other Languages Convention
New Orleans, March 3-7, 1971

FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED IN DESIGNING
AN INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM IN ENGLISH
FOR SPANISH SPEAKERS

by

Dr. Hubert Molina

In this paper I plan to discuss three factors which a developer of
materials must account for in his design of instructional materials for
Spanish speakers. These are:

1. the learner
2. syntax
3. subject matter content

First, an effective instructional program must be viewed from the

standpoint of the learner. The age and maturation of the learner

affect the way instructional objectives are accomplished as learning

experiences. Results of experimental evidence dealing with first

language acquisition described by Paula Menyuk[1] are valuable in the

development of guidelines in the selection of objectives for pre-

kindergarten, kindergarten, and first graders. For example, a program

that takes into account sentence types which are in the repertoire

of middle-class anglo children of the pre-kindergarten, kindergarten

and first grade age level, offers a Spanish-speaking child not only

the opportunity to learn "some English," but more importantly, offers

the child the opportunity to acquire the language competency of

---

[1]"Syntactic Rules Used by Children from Preschool Through First Grade,"

Child Development, XXXV (1964), 533-546.

monolingual English speakers of that age level. Menyuk's matching

of linguistic variables to chronological age illustrates how exper-

imental evidence framed within the generative transformational frame-

work has application for language teaching..

Another factor to be considered is concerned with what is known

about the teaching of English. The role of linguistic and psychologi-

cal models has to be accounted for in the design of an instructional

program. Methodological issues such as how much competency in subject

matter areas a teacher should possess to use the materials success-

fully must be examined. In discussing methodology the role of pro-

grammed homework and tutorial programs extend the learning experience

beyond the classroom. In both cases, the relationship between learner

and tutor is a one-to-one relationship. In the case of programmed

homework, the designer of the materials, in effect, is the tutor. In

both cases, the learner has immediate knowledge of results at each

step, and in both cases the classroom teacher is free to give time to

other activities. Tutors can be teacher aides or fellow students.

Within the scope of methodology the specification of objectives must

be considered. Specification of objectives in terms of learner be-

havior makes it possible for the teachers to know what is expected

both in learner outcomes and in the evaluation of student performance.

In designing materials there are a number of syntactic factors

to be considered.

Syntax

It is assumed that every language has a fixed number of rules. However, no one has ever described a full set of rules in any language. Even with the rules that have been described, it is unreasonable to include them all in a pedagogical grammar. The amount of information that would have to be presented would be so overwhelming that there would not be enough classroom time to accomplish the task. In the area of the lexicon it is also apparent that no native learns all of the words and all of the meanings. The meanings that a learner needs are not of the kind that Jerrold Katz and Paul Postal propose. However, their description is consistent with linguistic theory which is not concerned with the limited vocabulary and meanings by which a learner begins to play a role in a language community. The theoretical linguist attempts to describe the total potential of the language and selects the best grammar that explains the language system. In their book An Integrated Theory of Linguistic Descriptions[2] the word bachelor is defined in the following ways:

1. an adult male never married
2. a young knight serving under the standard of another
3. a human having the academic degree conferred for completing the first four years of college
4. a male young seal without a mate during the breeding time.

---

[2] Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1964, p.14

Following is their linguistic description of bachelor showing
various meanings:

bachelor

noun

```
                         (Human)            (Animal)
        (Male)              [Having the academic      (Male)
      (Adult)  (Young)       degree conferred for      (Young)
        |         |          completing the first
    (Never        |          four years of college]        (Seal)
    Married)   (Knight)
            [Serving under the        [When without a mate
            standard of another]       during the breeding
                                       time]
```
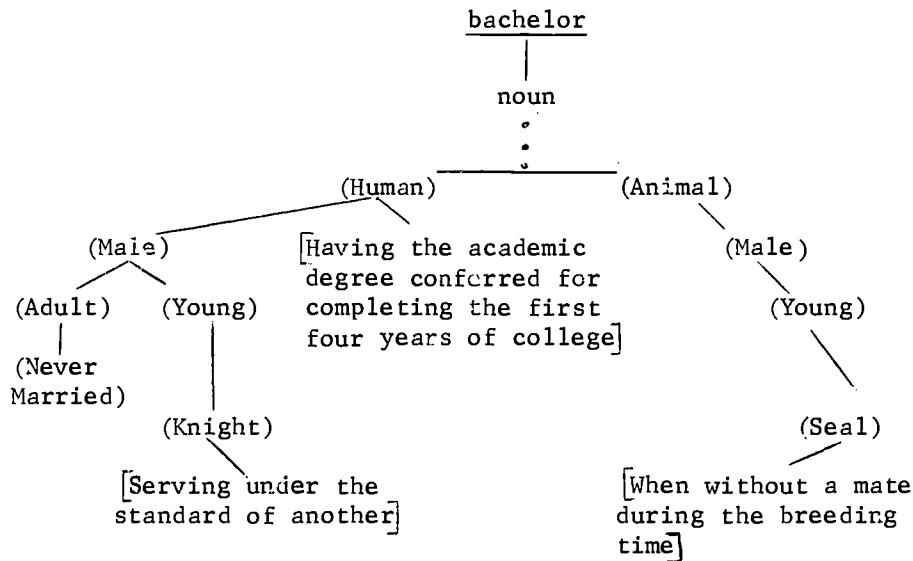
The description above does not restrict the meanings of the
word <u>bachelor</u> and thus does not serve the communication requirements
of the learner. Most native speakers do not know all of the meanings of
the term above. Consequently, the selection of the lexicon and
meanings of words must meet the communication requirements of the learner.
This leads to the conclusion that for lexical reasons as well, there has
to be a different approach when discussing a pedagogical grammar. For
the purposes of teaching a second language, a different kind of grammar
must be written. Primarily, a pedagogical grammar must be written which
describes what is useful to the speaker. For example, the definition of
<u>bachelor as an unmarried male and having the academic degree conferred</u>
<u>for completion of four years of college are both useful definitions.</u>

The other definitions of the word are useful only if one is concerned with the compilation of a dictionary. Talking about a young seal is an unlikely possibility for most learners.

Since pedagogical grammar cannot provide all of the information, the learner needs to internalize the complete system of the language, a reasonable goal for the learner is to control the inescapable and obligatory conventions of the languages. High frequency usage dictates that vocabulary be taught that is needed to carry on those indispensable activities such as social amenities, survival activities such as those involving eating, buying, seeking shelter, transportation, using money, and vocabulary relevant to health. In the case of very young learners, special attention has to be given to the lexicon that deals with mathematics and science so that learners will have the prerequisite knowledge to be able to carry out learning tasks that deal with those subject matter areas. Included with high frequency usage and other indispensable categories are:

> Lexicon
> Determiners
> Functional and syntactic relators
> Pronouns
> Verbs including the copula
> Basic morphology which includes tense
> and number
> The phonemic system, including intonation
> Phrase structure patterns
> Some transformational rules, e.g.,
> pronominalization, relativization

The information that a learner acquires, then, is incomplete in nature. In effect, the goal of a pedagogical grammar is to equip the learner with a Learner's Dialect and with strategies by which to add

to the information he possesses. The Learner's Dialect presented by
the pedagogical grammar furnishes the framework which is critical to
the learner of English so that he can function in the English speaking
environment.

On the lexical level, the learner must be equipped with the
necessary general terminology, and have enough control of the language
to be able to add meanings to words he already uses. He must also be
able to add words to those he already knows. In addition to syntactic
categories such as determiners, prepositions, the words the learner
acquires first should be cover terms. The cover terms are the basis
by which he classifies new vocabulary words. For example, it would
be expected that a learner would be able to talk about a <u>tree</u> though
he might not be able to label a particular species. If he hears
"oak," a speaker should be able to ask "<u>What is an oak</u>"? Upon being
informed that it is a <u>kind of tree</u>, he should be able to continue
with the conversation, decoding the term <u>oak</u> and encoding it under
the category of the cover term <u>tree</u>.

In designing a pedagogical grammar, it is difficult to predict
the precise vocabulary that a learner will find useful. This is the
case whether pedagogical grammars are written for children or for
adults. Consequently, from the standpoint of efficiency, again, the
pedagogical grammar should contain the necessary cover terms that
enable the learner to be understood by a native speaker. When the
learner defines his field of interest, then he can expand his lexicon.
<u>Tree</u> was used as an illustration. Doctor is another illustration of

a cover term. Most native speakers do not know all the various special
terms used to describe a person who is classified as a medical doctor,
e.g., surgeon, oculist, pathologist, dermatologist, pediatrician,
ophthalmologist. Most native speakers of either English or Spanish do
not know all the above terms unless they are associated with the medi-
cal profession, and it is unreasonable to expect learners to attempt
to master such specialized terminology. A learner by the use of the
cover term doctor, for example, can ask for an opthalmologist by
referring to him as an eye doctor.

Content

It must be kept in mind that there is an inescapable relationship
between vocabulary items and structure. Upon selecting a lexicon,
then, particular syntactic patterns have to be taught to allow the word
to be used in natural communication. To illustrate, if the word red
is introduced, then the structure Adjective + Noun must be available
to produce the red crayon. Other patterns must be available to produce
What color is it?, The crayon is red, Is the crayon red?, Which crayon
is red?, What's red?, Which one is red? Morphological distinctions
must be built into the syntactic content to account for The crayons
are red. The sequence of presentation should emphasize the relation-
ship of structures to each other, though the primary goal should be
communication. It follows that an instructional sequence must be de-
veloped that specifies the syntactic patterns and vocabulary content.
A sequence of specific outcomes becomes the basis by which children
acquire basic English skills while they are acquiring prerequisite and

enroute skills in important subject matter areas such as mathematics, social studies, and science. Whenever feasible, pictorial materials in the lessons should reflect objects and experiences common to the Spanish-speaking child. Phonological refinement should be accomplished by having the child hear good models and by communicating in different contexts and situations, so that his teacher or tutor may have many opportunities to produce the sounds correctly and correct the learner's utterances in a meaningful context.

It is expected that a student will learn in two or three years to express himself within modest limits in acceptable English. However, let's not forget that even the Ph.D. training in a foreign language does not produce a bilingual. The best that can be hoped for is acquisition of a Learner's Dialect so that bilingualism is attained through exposure to and involvement in the culture of the second language. The Spanish-speaker has the advantage, in many cases, of communicating in both his first and second language at school and also in his community.

In addition to acquiring a limited lexicon consisting of cover terms, the learner must also learn to use other strategies by which to expand his lexicon. He must use additional strategies commonly used by most native speakers. For example, a person going to a hardware store looking for a certain object which he cannot call by name might say, "I'd like to buy a 'gadget' or 'gizmo' that fits into the upper drain of the sink." In the same way, a native speaker of English who knows nothing about chemistry can speak with a chemist and acquire

the information he needs. By having the competency to ask questions
and by being able to ask for examples and more explanations, a native
speaker learns to add to his knowledge and language competency.

Another important strategy deals with sets. Knowing that parti-
cular words make up acceptable sentences is not sufficient, for a
learner must be able to substitute other words within syntactic pat-
terns that he already controls. To illustrate, to choose the prepo-
sition in in the sentence Put the pencil in the drawer., the learner
must know that something is to be placed in a container. This, then,
accounts for that preposition in the following phrases:

                    the pencil in the box
                    the book in the drawer
                    the girl in my office
                    I'll keep you in mind, etc.

On the other hand, when something is placed on a surface, the prepo-
sition on is used:

                    the book on the shelf
                    the girl on the beach
                    the leaf floating on the water
                    raindrops falling on my head, etc.

Rather than memorizing long lists of words, a learner must learn
the basis for the categorization of words. Thus, as he learns new
words, then can he know how they operate in the language system. It
is much more economical to learn how categories of words operate
rather than to attempt to memorize isolated words by rote. By learn-
ing a small number of words to reveal the set and the characteristics
of the set, the learner is better able to classify additional words.
The distinction between in/on is an example where the Spanish speaker

learns to make two separate distinctions, while one Spanish preposition

can be used in both cases:

<div align="center">

in the box   -   <u>en la caja</u>

on the box   -   <u>en la caja</u>

</div>

Practice should be provided to make sure that the learner has

learned to make the conceptual distinction and to automatically produce

the correct response.

If the Spanish-speaker learns to classify words into sets as he

hears them, he can become aware of the restrictions imposed by the

English language system and thus is able to produce these words in

combinations which he has not heard before. For example, by hearing

<u>the man is cold</u>, <u>the coffee is cold</u>, the learner can be made aware that

in these structures using <u>to be</u>, animates and inanimates are collapsed,

while Spanish uses different verbs, for example:

<u>animate/inanimate</u>

The |boy | is   cold .
      |cat |
      |water|
      |room |

                                   <u>animate</u>

El |muchacho| tiene   frío.
    |gato |
    |etc. |

                           <u>inanimate</u>

El |agua | es   frío(a)
    |auto | está
    |cuarto|

The memorization task must be minimized. Rote memorization does

not reveal how the language system operates. To further illustrate, in

English <u>to have</u> can be followed by a *direct object* representing an

entity: I have a book. However, <u>have</u> cannot be followed by direct

objects which describe animate physical states:

      * I have   hunger.
                 thirst.

Thus, it must be made clear to the learner that in English possession

of a physical state the verb <u>to be</u> is used.

ENGLISH	SPANISH
<u>Possession of entity</u>	<u>Possession of entity/</u>
I have a book.	<u>possession of physical state</u>
<u>Possession of physical state</u>	tengo | un libro.|
—— I am |thirsty. |	| ged
|hungry. |	| hambie|

When a learner differentiates conceptually between <u>I have a book</u> and

<u>I am hungry</u> and uses different verbs, he is learning how to use <u>to</u>

<u>have</u> and <u>to be</u> in a meaningful way. Learning how the English system

operates is much more economical than attempting to memorize unrelated

parts.

    Another strategy used to increase vocabulary is to make the

learner aware of the meanings he already knows, e.g., <u>eye glasses</u> is

composed of two words. If a learner already knows the meaning of

"eyes" he probably will be able to infer that with the word <u>glasses</u>

the meaning is "eye glasses." Another strategy related to the one

just described, concerns the meaning where a suffix offers a clue.

If the learner is taught the fact that <u>-er</u> means "one who does the

action described in the other part of the word," then <u>painter</u> must

mean "one who paints."

The learner can also increase his word power by becoming aware of cognates. Important and <u>importante</u> resemble each other in both form and meaning. Older learners must develop the strategy consisting of looking for regularities between the two systems. In the following examples, the English cognate can be identified by deleting the final vowel of the Spanish form:

<u>English</u>	<u>Spanish</u>
important	importante
potent	potente
telephone	teléfono
effect	efecto

Once a learner has mastered a set of words, there is no reason for not using this information in a different language.

In conclusion, the following interrelated factors have been discussed:

1. An instructional program in English equips a learner with an incomplete mastery of the English system. The best that can be accomplished is to equip the learner with a Learner's Dialect so that he can function in an English speaking culture. Strategies also have been discussed by which the learner can add to the information that he already possesses.

2. Particular syntactic patterns are taught to allow content area to be used in natural communication.

3. Consideration must be given to the age of the learner and to the fact that he comes from a Spanish-speaking environment.