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ABSTRACT

In contrast with declining interest in the study of commonly taught languages in recent years, there has been a significant growth in the demand for instruction in the "neglected" or "other" or "less commonly taught" languages; schools and universities are therefore faced with the problem of providing the opportunity for students to learn languages which in many cases have not been taught previously and for which there are no readily available instructional programs, trained teacher or tested materials. This paper examines central concepts in the development and operation of self-instructional courses in languages which would otherwise not be included in the curriculum. Among the topics discussed are: individualization of instruction, reflecting the differences in student interests, needs, aptitudes and objectives; and self-instruction, emphasizing the importance of training students in language-learning techniques. Consideration is given to material adaptation and development, participant orientation, the use of language laboratory facilities, tutorial sessions with native-speaking informants, evaluation and program supervision. (Author)

CONSIDERATIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SUPERVISED SELF-INSTRUCTIONAL COURSES IN THE UNCOMMONLY TAUGHT LANGUAGES

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PREFACE

The purpose of this paper is, as the title suggests, to indicate some of the main areas of concern that must be taken into account by those of us who are involved in the operation of the somewhat unorthodox type of foreign language program typified by a self-instructional framework. Due to the innovative character of such programs and to the insufficient understanding of the nature of language and language learning themselves, there does not yet exist a universally accepted set of principles on which to build a foolproof language learning structure; nor will this study attempt anything of such scope. An essential first step, instead, will be an examination of the questions we are faced with and a consideration of some of the possible answers which have been proposed.

The practical basis for a good portion of the ideas discussed here has been gleaned from the Uncommonly Taught Languages Program of the Language Acquisition Institute, Department of General Linguistics, University of Pittsburgh, with which I have had the privilege of being associated during this 1973-1974 academic year. Recognition and appreciation must be expressed to Professors Edward M. Anthony, Christina Bratt Paulston, and William E Norris, who have shared responsibility both for the development of the L.A.I. program and for my introduction into it. These three have done their best to encourage and support my interest in linguistics and language teaching, and specifically the uncommonly taught languages program. Acknowledgement

must also be made of the work of Peter Boyd-Bowman of the National Association of Self-Instructional Language Programs and Director of the Program in Critical Languages at the State University of New York at Buffalo; his efforts have been instrumental in the development of such programs on a national level. It is only through the dedication of such individuals as these that we have progressed as far as we have, and on which the future of such programs depends.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

1.1 Historical Perspective: Foreign Language Instruction in American Universities

Foreign language education in American universities has gone through a series of changing trends in enrollment, teaching methodology, and specific languages taught. In the early history of the country, European emphasis on classical languages was maintained, as was the 'grammar-translation' method by which they were taught. Gradually, the study of modern European languages, particularly French and German, became somewhat respectable, though following the accepted concentration on grammar study and literature. Around the beginning of this century, the need for change in methodology was recognized by progressive teachers whose aim was "a more active control of the vocabulary and grammar than could ever be won through the mere learning of rules paradigms and translation."[1] With the anti-German fervor unleashed by the First World War, however, came an abrupt decline in foreign language study, including that of French and Latin, to a low level which continued for some forty years. Some of the reasons given for this lack of attention to foreign languages were American anti-intellectualism, utilitarianism in education, political isolation, and the rejection of foreign cultural influence, even

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[1]Edwin H. Zeydel, The Teaching of German in the United States. (New York: Modern Language Association, 1961), p. 298.

by immigrants.[2] The resulting 'linguistic isolation'

> came to an abrupt end when the outbreak of World War II ushered in a new era in foreign language study. For the first time in history, large numbers of linguists turned language teachers attempted to apply the findings of linguistics to the field of language teaching.[3]

Following the war attempts were made to apply the linguistic methods of language teaching which had been developed by the Army, emphasizing comprehension of the spoken language and the ability to speak fluently. 'Audio-lingual' materials in the commonly taught languages were developed on the basis of linguistic analysis, and electronic technology began to find application in instruction. Support for language study grew steadily in the 1950's and received a major boost with the launching of the Russian Sputniks.[4] American public interest was shifting toward the rest of the world and there was a correspondingly strong increase in the study of foreign affairs and modern languages. The National Defense Education Act of 1958 provided millions of dollars in federal funds to promote improvements in foreign language programs, in an effort to fulfill national needs in many areas. During the 1960's many university and governmental programs were developed, focusing on the 'Third World'. Grittner concludes his historic sketch

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[2]Frank M. Grittner, Teaching Foreign Languages (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1969), p. 16.

[3]Richard T. Thompson, "Modern Foreign Language Teaching in the Uncommonly Taught Languages," Britannica Review of Foreign Language Education, III, ed. Dale L. Lange (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1971), pp. 280-281.

[4]Grittner, op. cit., p. 16.

of language study with the observation that "in the age of jets, internationalism, world trade, and communication satellites, the list of conceivable applications of foreign language skill is practically endless..."[5]

In the past decade, nonetheless, a general tendency among university students to demand a more 'relevant' education has led to rather strong opposition to obligatory language study. The vulnerability of FL study to this attack arose both "from the traditional and exceptional protection" afforded by language requirements and "from the widespread and well-founded belief that few students who earn the B.A. degree control the language that they have been forced to study."[6] Politzer points out that the response to the removal of the general requirement must be a "diversification of the product:[7]

> If foreign language teachers really belief that, for various reasons, as many students as possible should study a foreign language, they must learn to adapt the product to the interests and motivations of the greatest possible number of customers.

Corresponding to this demand for relevance in education, interest has grown in the study of languages which students feel they can use in relation to their particular fields of study. Indeed, concern with international affairs, which had been stimulated throughout the 60's has continued to attract students

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[5] Ibid., p. 37.

[6] Edward M. Anthony, "Curricular Innovations in Language Study at the University: an Interim Report," (University of Pittsburgh, 1970), p. 1. (mimeographed)

[7] Robert L. Politzer, "Toward Individualization in Foreign Language Teaching," Modern Language Journal, LV, 4 (April, 1971), p. 212.

to specialized studies. Foreign language surveys[8] have shown that while enrollments in the commonly taught languages have fallen off considerably, the opposite is true for the 'neglected' or 'other' or 'less commonly taught' languages. The MLA Fall 1972 Survey of Foreign Language Registrations in U.S. Institutions of Higher Education showed a growth rate of 30.1% in enrollment in these languages between 1970 and 1972 alone.[9]

Universities have been faced then with the question of how to provide the necessary opportunity for students to learn languages which had not been taught previously and for which there were consequently no readily accessible instructional programs, trained teachers, or tested materials. Further difficulty was seen in the prohibitive cost of developing and introducing new programs in languages which would probably attract relatively small groups of students. The only practical alternative was for the universities to adopt a self-instructional framework which would make the student responsible for learning the language rather than trying to 'teach' it to him. To be worked out were details as to learning strategies, course structure and procedures, and program accountability, both in terms of language proficiency progress and budgetary matters. The Modern Language Association, which has constantly emphasized the importance of language learning as "the only

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[8]Richard T. Thompson, "Uncommonly Taught Languages: Another Perspective," ERIC, 19 (1971), p. 2.

[9]Richard I. Brod, "Foreign Language Enrollments in U.S. Colleges -- Fall 1972," Foreign Language Annals, VII, 2 (December, 1973), p. 211.

means of acquiring an intimate perception of a culture, thus providing a bridge of mutual understanding between individuals of different linguistic backgrounds...," has recognized that instruction in the uncommonly taught languages must be carried out through "innovative programs, possible outside the regular ...college structure..."[10] The MLA encourages experimentation in self-instruction and independent study, and considers program flexibility to be "of the highest importance."[11]

In the next section we will look at some of the considerations involved in the development of a methodological framework for programs in the uncommonly taught languages.

1.2 Approach, method, and technique

Ideally, determinations as to language teaching methodology are based on "a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language and the nature of language teaching and learning."[12] Unfortunately, it is not so easy to agree on the correct 'set of assumptions' upon which to build a methodological structure. A summary of some points of contrast in the current controversy between the 'Structuralist-Behaviorist' school and the 'Transformational-Generative' theorists, for example, gives an idea of the uncertainties in our understanding

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[10]Report of the Committee on the Relationship of the MLA to the Less Commonly Taught Languages, Modern Language Association (April, 1973), p. 1. (mimeographed)

[11]Ibid., p. 2.

[12]Edward M. Anthony, "Approach, Method, Technique," Teaching English as a Second Language, ed. Harold B. Allen and Russell N. Campbell (New York: McGraw-Hill International Book Co., 1965), p. 5.

of language and language learning at this point:[13]

Transformational-Generative	Structuralist-Behaviorist
LANGUAGE	
A finite set of rules of infinite generating power linking, through transformational systems, meaning and sound.	A 'list' of units of form, meaning, and distribution at various levels, all the units being fully observable in speech behavior.
LANGUAGE TEACHING AIMS	
To establish the patterns of relationship between the deep structures and the surface structures of the second language; that is, to develop in the learner the linguistic competence underlying performance, and so to enable him to acquire rule-based creativity.	To provide the learner with the units of the langauge at the various postulated levels, and, in this way, to enable him to acquire "the ability to use its structure within a general vocabulary under essentially the condition's of normal communication.." (Lado, 1964:38)
THE LEARNING PROCESS	
Given the universals at one end and the primary linguistic data at the other, the process involves the gradual discovery and internalization of the relationship between the deep and surface forms via a series of hypotheses. In other words, the process involves essentially the same procedures as the first language acquisition process.	The building up of habit response in a co-ordinate system through the application of general innate learning procedures; more specifically, making habitual "slowly and systematically, and one by one, each one of these building stones that has been identified and analyzed by the linguist", (Politzer and Staubach, 1961:2), by automatizing processes, involving: imitation, rote-learning, expansion and analogy, largely in a stimulus-response-reinforcement setting, it being crucial that the learner knows he has been successful at every stage.

[13] S.J. Burke, "Language Acquisition, Language Learning, and Language Teaching," IRAL, XII, 1 (February, 1974), p. 59.

TEACHING

(i) Selection and Sequencing of Items

The starting point is the relationship between the universals and the second language...Within that as full a range of linguistic data as possible is required to allow the learner to test inferences. The 'items' will be situationally-contextually determined... Sequencing will then be in terms of situational relatedness, with a possible optimal order in syntactic terms.	Ideally, the selection of items is derived primarily from a contrastive analysis of the first and second language (and so, designed to anticipate and prevent errors) with structural considerations uppermost. Within that, frequency and usefulness for unit building and sequencing enter selection considerations. Sequencing will then be in terms of structural relatedness...with the material being strictly edited to reduce structural randomness, and to restrict the vocabulary level.

(ii) Presentation

--Practice techniques: dialogues to be imitated... Within a dialogue presentation, the learner will acquire situational variants. --Rule application with sentence formulae to help the student to see underlying patterns. --Matching ill- and well-formed items. --Correcting semi-sentences. --Identifying and verbalizing similar items, ambiguity, etc. --Repetition techniques to make automatic the surface phonological skills through 'total' system practice, not minimal pair drills.	--Basic conversations (controlled) for learning via imitation - group and individual. --Pattern practice to back up the necessary habit trace, and ihvolving -- listening, oral repetition, substitution of various types, transformation, completion, simple explanation and, later, free selection.

With such varying theories, it is difficult to arrive at one best method for language teaching -- as Burke suggests, "the answer might simply be in a convergence of proposals from both

sides -- indeed all sides."[14] He concludes that the approach taken depends to some extent also on "certain learning circumstances and objectives," and proposes that there be enough flexibility so that the teacher is able to evolve "a principled and informed synthesis, one that incorporates knowledge of any new proposals and of loopholes in them."[15]

Another major factor in the determination of course procedures, of course, is the design of the materials available. As we will discuss in Section 2.3 of this study, it is possible to adapt or write materials to be compatible with a chosen approach, but the basic format of materials which have already been developed will to a large extent prescribe the form the instruction will take. Thus we find, as Anthony and Norris indicate, "instead of a smooth one-way route from approach through method to technique, . . . a busy intersection where each of these three aspects of the total language learning process is continually modifying the others."[16]

Regardless of our uncertainties regarding the exact nature of language, we can identify some of the language learning processes which must be included in any instructional program. Rivers[17] offers the following analysis of such processes:

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[14], [15] Ibid., p. 66.

[16] Edward M. Anthony and William E. Norris, "Method in Language Teaching," ERIC Focus Reports on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 8 (1969), p. 1.

[17] Wilga M. Rivers, "Techniques for Developing Proficiency in an Individualized Language Program," Individualizing Foreign Language Instruction: The Proceedings of the Stanford Conference, ed. Howard B. Altman and Robert L. Politzer (Rowley, Mass: Newbury House, 1971), p. 166.

> Speaking proficiency involves cognition (both perception of units, categories, and functions, and abstraction -- the internalizing of the rules of language...; it involves production ... namely, articulation of phonological elements and construction of meaningful segments at various levels of complication -- that is, the development of physiological skill and cognitive control of elements...; and finally and essentially it involves interaction (both the reception of a message and the expression of a message in a form which is situationally appropriate and comprehensible to another person).

The question we face here is how these elements are to be included in a course and via what method(s) they are to be achieved. Since we have not been able to formulate a definite once-and-for-all approach, it may be somewhat difficult to posit a particular methodology, "no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach."[18] There is a need to be flexible in view of differences in languages, materials, students, and their objectives. The essential starting point, then, is to determine course objectives, based on these variables, and to structure courses in such a way that the objectives will be reached. Under these circumstances, the key word is individualization, a concept which will be examined in the following section.

1.3 Individualization of Instruction

The general conclusion of the previous section is that there is not necessarily a 'best' way of teaching which can be applied uncompromisingly in every situation. There are

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[18]Anthony, "Approach, Method, Technique," p. 6.

overpowering differences in students, objectives, languages, and materials that must be taken into consideration. An individualized program, then, does not impose a set methodology, but rather seeks to help provide an environment in which language learning can take place effectively. This entails "allowing for the many different ways in which students learn and giving the students opportunity to choose what the want to learn, how they want to learn it, and with whom they want to learn it."[19] The most significant aspect of this concept is the recognition of the central importance of the learner, instead of the teacher, in the learning process.

Politzer[20] has identified three areas of instruction where individualization can readily and appropriately be applied:

A. The Goals of Instruction. Obviously, language students come into a program for quite different reasons: they belong to different disciplines and have varying needs, purposes and desires. Some will see the language as a means of oral communication in travel or with foreign visitors; others will need the language as a research tool and will be more concerned with written forms; still others may be seeking general linguistic insight. Instruction, to be valid, must be aimed at helping the students acquire the ability to use the language in the way that will be appropriate to his needs.

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[19]Rivers, op. cit., p. 165.

[20]Politzer, op. cit., p. 209.

B. The Methods of Instruction. Learners, as well as possessing different goals for their language learning, have widely varying aptitudes and abilities, and thus can benefit from different kinds of instruction. While some individuals may be able to acquire proficiency through oral repetition and drilling, others may profit more from the study of grammar rules and need to see on paper what they are doing. Efficient handling of this sort of diversity will necessitate different methods and techniques, each student determining for himself the kind of work that he will do.

C. The Speed of Instruction. This is probably the most widely practiced aspect of individualization of language instruction. Students have different amounts of time which they can devote to language study, and also require different amounts of time to master given units of language. These differences in time required and time available must be taken into account in setting up an individual's program of study. Reinert[21] compares language learning with the creation of a work of art, the value of which depends not so much on the amount of time needed to do it as on how well it is done. Some basic tenets of self-pacing are:[22]

1. a student is permitted to move through a course at a rate commensurate with his own ability, interest, and motivation.

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[21]Harry Reinert, "Practical Guide to Individualization," Modern Language Journal, LV, 3 (March, 1971), p. 159.

[22]Ronald L. Gougher, "Individualization of Foreign Language Learning: What is Being Done," The Britannica Review of Foreign Language Education, III, ed. Dale L. Lange (Chicago, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1971), p. 233.

2. The student moves ahead to new material only after demonstrating near mastery of that which preceded.

3. There is as much one-to-one contact between teacher and student as time allows.

4. Credits are based on proficiency levels achieved according to preset performance objectives, not on time spent or exposure to language study.

This last point introduces a concept which merits a more thorough explanation: the formulation of performance objectives. This is undoubtedly one of the most crucial processes in a self-instuctional course, and must not be approached in a haphazard way.

Performance Objectives. If we accept the conclusion reached above that students have different interests, needs, aptitudes, and time limitations, it follows that realistic objectives of each individual must be determined on the basis of his particular requirements. The formulation of goals, which should be done by the student in consultation with the teacher or supervisor, can not be overly rigid; we must leave open the possibility for modifications as the course progresses and as it becomes clearer what the student can hope to learn. In all cases, though, the orientation of the objectives must be toward active use of the language in one form or another.[23] According to Valette and Disick,[24] the goals for beginning and

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[23]Victor E. Hanzeli and William D. Love, "From Individualized Instruction to Individualized Learning," Foreign Language Annals, V, 3 (March, 1972), p. 327.

[24]Rebecca M. Valette and Renee S. Disick, Modern Language Performance Objectives and Individualization: A Handbook (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1972), p. 65.

intermediate students will include

> the categories of Mechanical Skills (correct pronunciation, demonstrated through a memorized dialog or set of sentences), Knowledge (knowledge of new grammatical forms, new drill patterns), and Transfer (ability to use these new elements in unfamiliar situations).

Mager defines instructional objectives as a description of "a desired state in the learner," which includes the following components: (1) an identification of the terminal behavior which the learner proposes to be able to perform at the end of the instructional unit, (2) a further definition of the desired behavior "by describing the important conditions under which the behavior will be expected to occur," and (3) a specification of the criteria of acceptable performance "by describing how well the learner must perform to be considered acceptable."[25] Such clearly defined objectives are necessary, according to Mager, in order to "evaluate a course or program efficiently" . . . and as a basis "for selecting appropriate materials, content, or instructional methods."[26] Steiner adds that the advantage of setting performance objectives is that they communicate both to the student and to the learner or supervisor just what the student expects to learn and how well.[27] In this way the learners will be encouraged to take a greater share of the responsibility for the

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[25]Robert F. Mager, Preparing Instructional Objectives (belmont, Cal.: Fearon Publishers, 1962), pp. 10-12.

[26]Ibid., p. 3.

[27]Florence Steiner, "Behavioral Objectives and Evaluation," Britannica Review of Foreign Language Education, II, ed. Dale L. Lange (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1970), p. 42.

achievement of course goals, which is in itself a worthy objective of any program of study.

PART II

COMPONENTS OF A SELF-INSTRUCTIONAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM

2.1 The Student

With our emphasis on the central role of the learner in a self-instructional program, it is fitting that in this consideration of the components of the learning structure we start with a discussion of the student and his contribution. We have already observed that students come into a course with widely varying interests, aptitudes, personalities, etc., and that these factors can play a significant role in the design and effectiveness of a program. Experience has shown, nonetheless, that those attracted to a self-instructional course do tend to possess a rather uniform high level of motivation, which is certainly one of the most crucial factors in the success or failure of the program. It certainly reduces the need to have someone (a teacher for example) spend futile hours trying to forcibly spoon-feed the language into the student's brain. In this respect we are indeed fortunate! Adding to the motivation the student brings with him is the fact, as specified earlier, that he has a hand in the determination of course content, scheduling, and pace. The students are naturally aware of the relevance of the language study, according to their own needs, and as Steiner notes,[28] there is strong motivation which derives "from a sense of purpose, of

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[28]Florence Steiner, "Individualizing Instruction," Modern Language Journal, LV, 6 (October, 1971), p. 364.

knowing why one is engaged in an activity, of knowing what good it will do him, of knowing the consequence of his learning."

In order to control the quality level of the students to some degree, Boyd-Bowman suggests a thorough screening process to determine their maturity, motivation, and self-discipline. In fact, he proposes that the self-instructional program be treated "as a kind of 'honors' course to which only serious students of very high potential and emotional stability will be admitted."[29] Included in his selection procedures are (a) the administration of the Modern Language Aptitude Test (eliminating perhaps those who score below the 70th percentile), (b) reports from deans, counselors, and professors "to assess maturity as well as past performance," and (c) personal interviews, to assess motivation. Admittance to the program, Boyd-Bowman suggests, should be based on the candidates' ability

> to explain convincingly (1) why they want to study a given language; (2) how they plan to fit it into their academic schedule and for how long; (3) how they hope to follow it up in graduate school or with an NDEA summer language fellowship; and (4) what they hope to do with it ultimately.[30]

Emphasis might properly be placed on the last item, the interview, since it has been observed that purpose and motiva-

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[29]Peter Boyd-Bowman, Self-Instructional Language Programs: A Handbook for Faculty and Students, Occasional Publication No. 20, The University of the State of New York, The State Education Department Foreign Area Materials Center and Council for Inter-Cultural Studies and Programs, in cooperation with the National Association of Self-Instructional Language Programs (July, 1973) p. 5.

[30]Ibid., p. 6.

tion can overcome deficiencies in aptitude or previous performance. Anthony adds that psychological orientation could be used as the basis for selecting students; perhaps only those with "integrative" orientation (i.e. who wish 'to learn more about the cultural community of native speakers of the language') should be encouraged to attempt to learn the language.[31]

The task of the program then is to capitalize on the motivational advantage that the students bring with them into their second-language learning experience. This entails the coordinated efforts of the staff members (tutors and supervisors), whose roles will be discussed in the following two sections.

2.2 Program Staff

It is obviously difficult to find fully qualified teachers who are (a) fluent in the target language being studied, (b) professionally trained in linguistic investigation and teaching methods, and (c) available to conduct specialized courses for small groups of students. If it were possible to find a group of such teachers, one for each of several languages offered under a program, the cost of employing them would be prohibitive. Therefore it becomes necessary to divide up these functions of the traditional teacher, and combine the abilities of different people into an efficient, practical and economical system. The key staff functions are fulfilled by native-

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[31]Edward M. Anthony, "Language Teaching in the University," University of Pittsburgh (Fall, 1969), p. 3. (mimeographed) The term 'integrative' is from Lambert (1961) and the definition is Rivers' (1964).

speaking tutors and linguistically-trained program supervisors. Here we will examine the roles and requirements of each:

2.2.a Native-Speaking Tutor-Informants

In large universities, perhaps located in metropolitan areas, it is fairly easy to find natives of many countries who are willing and even eager to work with students trying to learn their language. Boyd-Bowman[32] specifies only one requirement, which is that they speak the standard 'educated' form of the language, since this is the form students will most likely be exposed to on langauge tapes, and which will prove to be most useful to them. Outside this stipulation, it really does not matter what professional field the native-speaker is in, though this and other such secondary factors as age, sex, and personal interests, may have some bearing on their relationship with the students. It would be advantageous, naturally, to find tutors who are reasonably mature, friendly, adaptable, patient, tactful, even-tempered, and, of course, reliable and punctual.[33] Hammelmann and Nielson suggest also that the native-speaker be well-educated, well read, and well traveled, and so relieved of his 'provincial attitudes': "the broadmindedness and flexibility that is important to develop in students must certainly be identifiable in the person chosen as a native speaker . . . in order to promote the successful exchange of opinions,

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[32]Boyd-Bowman, op. cit., p. 3.

[33]Ibid., pp. 4-5.

ideas, and information."[34]

In a survey conducted among students of the uncommonly taught languages at the University of Pittsburgh, the characteristics of the tutors cited as most important included (a) native command of the language, enabling the students to master pronunciation, practice speaking, and learn 'everyday language' which is not always found in the course material, and (b) insight into the cultural patterns of the country, through which the students could begin to understand 'shades of meaning' in the language. It was felt that the native-speaker filled a necessary function in language study "because he has a 'feel' for the language and usage as only a 'native' can."

Since the native-speaking tutor is not usually trained in linguistic theory or teaching methodology, however, there must be people in the program who can provide professional assistance to the students, insure that appropriate instructional procedures are being followed, and handle administrative details. These functions are best carried out by language learning supervisors, whose role we will now examine.

2.2.b Language Supervisors/Administrators

In a program of individualized instruction, it is the task of the supervisory staff to help provide the student with the kind of support he needs in order to get the most out of his course. The primary structural requirement which must be satisfied is the bringing together of the aspiring language

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[34]William M.R. Hammelmann and Melvin L. Nielson, "The Native Paraprofessional: Identifying His Role in the Foreign Language Program," Foreign Language Annals, VII, 3 (March, 1974), 350-351.

student, materials which will provide course content, and a native speaker with whom he will be able to practice what he learns. Therefore it is necessary for the supervisor to be directly involved in course planning, operation, and evaluation. In the planning stage, the supervisor must take into consideration the student's capabilities, learning styles, and objectives, providing these factors can be determined, and arrange an appropriate course according to said factors; he is responsible for the evaluation and acquisition of suitable materials, including texts and tapes, and must train the students to use them effectively. As the course progresses, it is the supervisor who has the responsibility of continual student evaluation, offering suggestions and applying controls wherever necessary to assist the student in his learning tasks. He also keeps up-to-date records on student work, and in general makes himself available for student consultation whenever any questions or problems present themselves. It is important that he work closely with the native speakers in order to help with any problems in tutorial methodology or student discipline. The supervisor is likewise in charge of scheduling of tutorials and arranging student groupings where appropriate. Wolff[35] suggests that the supervisor be trained in language learning theory and well-versed in the language being studied in order to explain grammar and other language-specific patterns to the students, since the native speaker is usually not

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[35]John U. Wolff, "Introduction," Beginning Indonesian, Part One (Ithaca: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 1971), p. xiv.

equipped to deal with such questions. Thus it is imperative, if the supervisor does not know the target language, that he have an opportunity to become familiar with the material and at least the basic patterns of the language so as to be able to better direct course work during the crucial initial stages. The procedures to be followed in carrying out these supervisory responsibilities are discussed in Part III below.

2.3 Materials: Evaluation, Adaptation and Development

We have observed that the materials used in a self-instructional course determine, to a large extent, the learning methodology and content. Therefore it is extremely crucial that care be taken to select the materials which will best fill the student's needs. Very useful listings of materials in the uncommonly taught languages are the Center for Applied Linguistics' A Provisional Survey of Materials for the Study of Neglected Languages (Blass, Johnson, and Gage) and "Sources for Obtaining Texts and Tapes in the Critical Languages" (Appendix F of Boyd-Bowman's Handbook). There are relatively few good texts available in these languages, however, and it is not always possible to find material that is designed for an individualized self-instructional program. In fact, by Steiner's standards, "there are no sets of materials that allow for individual learning styles among students."[36] Thus there often must be modification either of the course, to conform with the materials, or of the materials, to fit the course requirements,

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[36]Steiner, "Individualizing Instruction," p. 368.

or both. If the text is used as is, individualization is possible only in terms of speed. In order to offer variant content or direction in a course, the materials must be adapted or rewritten.

The first step in any decision about adapting, rewriting, or writing is to evaluate existing materials. Stevick[37] asserts that a successful lesson must have four essential components:

> 1. Occasions for use: Every lesson should contain a number of clear suggestions for using the language.... As many occasions for use as possible should be in the form of 'behavioral objectives': what students are to do should be described so clearly that there can be no question as to whether any one student's performance meets the requirements...
>
> 2. A sample of language use: Every lesson should contain a sample of how the language is used. The sample should be 1.) long enough to be viable... 2.) short enough to be covered... 3.) related to a socio-topical matrix that the students accept as expressing their needs and interests.
>
> 3. Lexical exploration: ...the student expands his ability to come up with, or to recognize, the right word at the right time....it would be desirable to relate lexical exploration not only to the basic sample, but also to projected occasions for use.
>
> 4. Exploration of structural relationships: ...the exploration of structural relationships may take the form of drills, charts and diagrams, or grammar notes.

If a text is chosen which is seriously deficient in any of these areas, it may be necessary to augment the material; this could be a cooperative venture of a language supervisor and a

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[37]Earl Stevick, Adapting and Writing Language Lessons (Washington: Foreign Service Institute, Department of State, 1971), pp. 54-61.

native speaker, to provide pedagogical expertise and correct langauge usage, respectively. The expert advise of a number of specialists, including perhaps a psychologist, a cultural expert, professional writers, etc. would also be advisable for any serious undertaking in material development or adaptation.[38]

For evaluation or writing purposes, we must look for three qualities throughout the material:[39] (1) 'strength,' which refers to the practical situations to which the material can be applied; (2) 'lightness,' meaning that the language presented should not be overly difficult due to utterance length or sound complexity; and (3) 'transparency,' that is, the learner should be able to understand the units covered and their relationships with each other clearly.

Tape recordings. It is also essential that the self-instructional materials employed in the program be accompanied by high quality tape recordings which the student can use to practice the language forms he is learning. This introduction of electronic technology into language learning processes is especially valuable in a self-instructional program in that it allows the student to hear accurate native speech, using precisely those forms and patterns with which he is concerned, at any time and for as long and as many times as he wishes. Well-

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[38]"Reports and Recommendations: Committee on Curriculum Development for Individualized Foreign Language Instruction," in Altman and Politzer, pp. 156-162.

[39]Stevick, op. cit., pp. 46-48.

constructed exercises provide students with the opportunity they need to drill the material to the point of making automatic use of the language; tapes also provide responses to exercise items, permitting the students to confirm or correct their responses. Perhaps the greatest value in the utilization of tapes is the possibility of self-pacing, since the student can repeat sections of the material as much as necessary in order to learn it adequately.[40] In this way the amount of time spent on basic skills in class is significantly reduced and tutorial sessions can be devoted to review of the drills and to the application of the language to more meaningful uses. In the evaluation of material, then, it is important to consider the quality and completeness of the tapes and to explore the possibility of recording additional exercises in those areas where the commercially prepared tapes are deficient. This is another area where the language supervisor and native speakers can work together to provide the student with the kinds of tools he will need in order to achieve proficiency in the language.

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[40]Edward M. Stack, The Language Laboratory and Modern Language Teaching (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 1-5.

PART III

PROCEDURES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A SELF-INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Now that we have briefly examined some of the most basic components of a self-instructional language program, we must consider the procedures by which they can be brought together into a sound, efficient learning experience. It is essential that all the necessary activities be included in a course, that a proper balance and coordination among them be found, and that the desired results be achieved in terms of language proficiency and the achievement of course objectives. The emphasis throughout this paper has been on the need for flexibility: different kinds of learning activities are required for different students based on individual differences in aptitude, interests, objectives, learning styles, and time availability. Care must be taken, therefore, not to impose overly rigid course frameworks, and provision must be made for the individual needs within the general structure of the course, the implementation of which consists of the following steps:

3.1 Orientation of Students and Tutors

No program of this type, regardless of the hours of planning and preparation, the quality of the materials and equipment, the motivation of the students, or the excellence of the tutors and supervisors, can be very effective if the students do not know how to use all these components in an efficient and productive manner in the acquisition of a second language. One

of the major objectives of the program, then, is to teach the students how to learn; as Anthony points out:[41]

> Most imperative in this type of operation is the need to stress the learning part of the teaching/learning dichotomy. The teaching of languages is less important than the teaching of methods and techniques for the learning of languages.

At the outset of the program, a general orientation meeting with students will serve to introduce them to the methods available to them, and to instruct them in the procedures to be followed in the course. They should be shown how to use taped materials and texts to their fullest advantage, and it must be pointed out to them that the tutorial sessions are designed to afford them realistic practice in the language they are learning on their own. In short, they must be made to realize that they are ultimately responsible for their own progress and that the program structure is designed primarily to provide them with the resources they will need. In addition to the general orientation meeting, it would be useful to follow up with group meetings for each language included in the program, where the specific material can be examined and discussed in some detail, course objectives can be outlined, and a realistic schedule of activities arranged. Needless to say, it is of paramount importance that all the students, the native speaker, and the language learning supervisor work together during this introductory phase of the course so that everyone knows what is

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[41]Edward M. Anthony, "The Pittsburgh Plan for the Study of the Uncommonly Taught Languages," The Linguistic Reporter, 14, 4 (August, 1972), p. 2.

expected of him and how the various components of the program will fit together.

It is likewise important that the native speakers have sufficient orientation to course procedures, and particularly to their function in the program, as described below. In view of the lack of formal training and teaching experience of most of the native speakers, it is important that they be introduced to basic concepts of language learning, including techniques of pattern drills. For this purpose a series of demonstration lessons and procedural explanations would be useful; it could be valuable in this sense for the tutors (as well as the students) to view an orientation film which has been produced by the National Association of Self-Instructional Language Programs (NASILP), entitled "The Do's and Don'ts of Drilling," in which drilling procedures are demonstrated and discussed.[42] By means of such orientation as this, students and tutors will better be able to work together toward objectives agreed upon by all, using methods understood by all.

3.2 Use of tape recordings

The value of recorded language samples and drills in a self-instructional course is obvious (see Section 2.3 above). Therefore, it is imperative that students have the opportunity to work with the tapes in a profitable manner and for as long a time as is required to master the material there presented. An adequate introduction to laboratory procedures during the

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[42]Boyd-Bowman, op. cit., p. 7.

orientation period will contribute to that end, as will the availability of (1) quality recordings, (2) good listening equipment, and (3) sufficient time devoted to laboratory work. In order to provide these elements, the language supervisors and tutors must work closely with the language laboratory staff (if it is separate from the program) to make sure that the tapes and listening facilities are at the disposal of the students when they need them. With the availability of inexpensive cassette recorders, it has become increasingly popular for students to have tapes duplicated for their use outside the confines of the laboratory, and this is naturally of great value and is to be encouraged. However, there are additional advantages of working in the laboratory itself, such as the superior quality of sound reproduction, the acoustic and psychological privacy of working in a booth, and the possibility of recording one's responses and comparing them with the original.[43] The students should be encouraged to schedule at least some of their work with tapes in the laboratory. It would be useful for such laboratory time to be scheduled for a set time, so that the tutor or supervisor could be available to assist the student or to monitor and evaluate his work.

3.3 Tutorial sessions

Primarily for the purpose of reviewing material already practiced individually, two hours per week (under regular semester arrangements) are scheduled with the native-speaking

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[43]Stack, op. cit., pp. 3-17.

tutor of the target language. Since this time is to be devoted mostly to intensive drilling, at least in beginning courses, it is best to have the two hours divided into two or more separate sessions to prevent the students from becoming tired or bored. The most valuable aspect of these sessions is that the tutor is able to work with the students to perfect their pronunciation, intonation, and fluency of speech, things which the student may not be able to do alone. What a student hears as accurate pronunciation and natural speech may actually be quite deficient to the ears of a native; the student will profit greatly from the tutor's comments and from the opportunity to improve upon his language usage. Work in these sessions should be done as much as possible without books, concentrating on material which has already been studied by the students. In tutorial practice, they should

> repeat dialog or drill material swiftly and accurately until all traces of hesitation are lost. Since the goal of pattern drills is to make sound features and grammatical patterns of the target language as completely automatic as they are in the native language, the tutor should not be satisfied with utterances constructed gropingly or at less than normal conversational speed.[44]

To get the most out of the limited time with the native speaker, only the target language should be used in the tutorial sessions; to take up time speaking English, whether for explanations or extraneous talk, is counterproductive. Grammatical explanations, where necessary, can usually be found in

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[44]Boyd-Bowman, op. cit., p. 8.

the text. At any rate, the native speaker is not always capable of 'explaining' grammatical forms, any more than a native English speaker is able to 'explain' why or in what cases the three sounds /t/, /d/, and /id/ are used to form the past tense of regular verbs, or to 'describe' the formation and use of the past perfect tense. One thing which a native speaker can contribute in addition to the material in the textbook is some exploration, where relevant, of common vocabulary. Boyd-Bowman's restriction that the tutor should "never introduce something new -- no alternate forms, different words or expressions,"[45] may be somewhat too strict, since we hope for the students to learn a natural form of language as spoken by natives, not necessarily as presented in textbooks. A further "don't" listed by Boyd-Bowman in his instructions to tutors involves talking about local culture; this seems, however, to be one of the truly unique contributions the native speaker <u>can</u> make to the learning process, certainly more so than most commercial materials or the language supervisors. Language and culture are so intimately related that some acquaintance with aspects of the foreign civilization should be gained from the study of the language, particularly for students who are preparing to travel to, or be involved in research about, the foreign country.[46] This is not to say that

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[45] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 23.

[46] Gerald E. Logan, "A Comment on Including Culture in an Individualized Foreign Language Program," <u>Foreign Language Annals</u>, V, 1 (October, 1971), p. 100.

cultural discussion should be allowed to overshadow language practice; but, especially in more advanced courses, it is possible and necessary to combine the two.

Another question is the optimal size of tutorial groups. The question is automatically answered if there is only one student at a given level of proficiency in a language; but with larger groups there is cause for discussion. Would it be more productive for students to work with the native speaker individually in order to concentrate on particular problems, or would work in small groups be more rewarding? The latter choice has a number of advantages, it seems, in that motivation can be enhanced through interaction among students, "a highly desirable condition for best educational results."[47] If the students are at approximately the same levels of proficiency, and studying the same material, they can obviously profit from participating in the same learning activities. An upper limit of three or four students may be best, on the other hand, so that each will receive a sufficient amount of individual attention. Here again, a self-instructional program must remain flexible enough to alter the composition of tutorial groups when differences in proficiency levels develop.

3.4 Supervision

It was mentioned in Section 2.2.b that the supervisory staff in a self-instructional program is responsible for providing the students with the kind of support they need in

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[47]Gougher, op. cit., p. 232.

language learning, including the formulation of objectives, direction in learning activities, and feedback on student progress (necessitating continual evaluation), as well as for the tasks of record-keeping and other administrative functions. In order to keep in close touch with student work, it is advisable to hold regularly scheduled individual meetings at which the student can report his activities and discuss any difficulty he has encountered. At these meetings the students should be able to demonstrate their mastery of material which has been covered, by means of a short taped quiz prepared beforehand (see Evaluation, Section 3.5). This would also be a good time for the supervisor and the student to look ahead at the work to be done during the next period (a week or two) and try to anticipate any particularly difficult items, thereby alerting both to the kind of material the student expects to master before the next meeting. Clark points out that the control imposed by such monitoring will be more essential for some students than for others with whom "one merely needs to stand aside and allow them to, literally, take off on their own."[48] For all students in the program, however, the supervisor must be constantly aware of progress, problems, and needs; in those cases where weekly meetings are not deemed necessary, the student may communicate his progress on a written report form, on which he indicates the amount of time he has spent with the text and tapes, in tutorial sessions, and in related

[48]Arvel B. Clark, "Planning for Individualized Instruction: An Administrator's Perspective," Altman and Politzer, p. 54.

study, as well as any comments he may have on progress or problems. With the information gained through such feedback instruments, the supervisor can recommend additional work, changes in strategy, etc., or suggest activities that the tutor may be able to use to help the student.

3.5 Evaluation and Grading

In any academic work involving credit and grades, there is a need for accurate evaluation of accomplishments; such measurement will also be a direct indication of the effectiveness of the program itself. Thus there is a twofold purpose of evaluation, as was recognized by the Committee on Evaluation at the Stanford Conference of Individualization:[49]

> A. ...to provide information to the student on his progress... the immediate intent is to diagnose learning difficulties and thereby assist the student in overcoming such difficulties...
>
> B. We must constantly assess the program in order to ascertain its continuing suitability for individual needs...

For both purposes it is essential that the evaluation give a valid indication of the learner's achievements. But we are faced with the questionsof exactly what is to be measured, by whom, and how. Anthony has stipulated "that credit be related to achievement or proficiency,"[50] which entails the establishment of acceptable proficiency requirements for each

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[49]"Reports and Recommendations: Committee on Evaluation in Individualized Instruction," Altman and Politzer, p. 228.

[50]Anthony, "The Pittsburgh Plan...," p. 1.

level of each language. If specific and adequate course objectives have been set in advance, it is important that the evaluation of student performance be based on their attainment of these goals, and that it be related "in some way to native speaker competence and performance."[51] Valette and Disick refer to tests which measure the attainment of Objectives in this way as criterion-referenced tests, of which there are two kinds:

> Formative tests . . . are given in the course of instruction . . . to determine the degree to which a learner has mastered a learning task and to determine what precisely remains to be mastered.
>
> Summative tests cover all the material taught during the semester or year. Summative tests can also be extramural tests, such as the commonly used commercial standardized tests. Summative evaluation is used to make a general assessment of the outcomes of a course of instruction and is used to grade the students.[52]

The formative tests, for our purposes, can be constructed on a periodic basis by the language learning supervisor and the native speaker, based on the material which has just been covered. These short tests, which can be on tape, may consist of "(1) utterances from the text . . . for student repetition; (2) short questions spoken by the tutor requiring the student to invent a prompt, reasonable reply; and (3) English words or expressions . . . to be promptly converted by the student into the target language."[53] These quizzes are not to be graded,

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[51]Thompson, "Uncommonly Taught Languages...," p. 5.

[52]Valette and Disick, op. cit., pp. 67-68.

[53]Boyd-Bowman, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

but to serve as an indication of achievement and to suggest direction of subsequent work.

Summative tests, on the other hand, must provide an accurate measure of language proficiency in accordance with a recognized standard, so as to reflect the quality of the program as well as the work of the student. Unfortunately, as Thompson observes, "language proficiency tests now available -- and there are few for the uncommonly taught languages -- are inadequate because they attempt to measure something that has not been well defined."[54] Boyd-Bowman insists that the only valid method of evaluation currently available is to bring "...a visiting specialist in each language ... to examine the students enrolled in the program."[55] These examiners determine the "general level of oral proficiency" of each student, and assign grades accordingly. Potential difficulties with this approach are (1) possible discrepancies between the student's objectives and the kind of performance the examiner is looking for, and (2) the possibility that, with the expansion of this type of program, there will not be enough qualified examiners to go around. An alternative procedure is for the examination to be conducted by tape or long-distance telephone,[56] but this also has its obvious drawbacks. Evaluation, then, is an area where there is a definite need for continued research.

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[54]Thompson, "Uncommonly Taught Languages...," p. 5.

[55]Boyd-Bowman, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

[56]Peter Boyd-Bowman, "National Self-Instructional Program in Critical Languages," Academic Report, Modern Language Journal, LVI, 3 (March, 1972), p. 165.

CONCLUSION

It has been the objective of this paper to provide a general overview of the operation of self-instructional courses in the uncommonly-taught languages -- an unusual program which makes it possible for highly motivated students to study foreign languages which would not otherwise be available in the university curriculum. We have seen that through the combined efforts of language learning specialists and native-speaking tutor-informants, taking advantage of the few instructional materials currently available, we can design needed courses of high quality.

The key concepts discussed here are: individualization, which derives from the recognition that students have very different interests, needs, aptitudes and objectives in language study, and that these differences must be reflected in their instructional program; self-instruction, emphasizing the learning process and the importance of training students in language learning techniques, more than actual teaching of languages; and program flexibility, which allows for the student differences noted above as well as differences in time availability, and for differences in the particular languages offered. The generality (vagueness?) of many observations made in this paper are due principally to the basic differences in languages; it would now be useful to outline more specific recommendations for the learning of particular languages, based on their particular linguistic patterns.

Other areas where considerable research and development are still required include the following: (1) the writing and adaptation of materials which will conform to the individualized nature of courses in the uncommonly taught languages, and (2) the establishment of evaluative criteria and the designing of testing instruments, and a way of implementing them in self-instructional programs. Of tremendous importance for success in these areas is a higher degree of cooperation among the various universities experimenting with similar programs. Organizations like the National Association of Self-Instructional Language Programs and the Modern Language Association can and must play a central role in future improvement and expansion of the self-instructional concept.

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