English as a Second Language: Evaluation of a Language Program Designed for & Implemented in the Colombian Oil Company's Research Institute

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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: EVALUATION OF A
LANGUAGE PROGRAM DESIGNED FOR AND IMPLEMENTED IN
THE COLOMBIAN OIL COMPANY'S RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Patience L.C. Nave
May 1989
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ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: EVALUATION OF A LANGUAGE PROGRAM DESIGNED FOR AND IMPLEMENTED IN THE COLOMBIAN OIL COMPANY'S RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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An incredible proliferation of knowledge has generated a critical need for professionals in all fields to have access to current information and research results. Costs for study and research are extremely high, particularly in science fields, and most professionals seek to minimize loss in time and funds by avoiding duplication of efforts. Language is often a handicap, preventing the voluntary sharing of valuable information between individuals and countries, and many recognize the establishment of a universal language as a means of eliminating this unnecessary barrier. English is rapidly becoming accepted as a universal means of communication, but those who seek the skill often cannot afford the time to commit themselves to years of study to acquire it. To meet the needs of such a group of scientists in Bucaramanga Colombia, a program for study in English communicative competence was designed, implemented and evaluated in 1988, through the cooperative efforts of Western Kentucky University and Instituto Colombiano del Petroleo.
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: EVALUATION OF A LANGUAGE PROGRAM DESIGNED FOR AND IMPLEMENTED IN THE COLOMBIAN OIL COMPANY’S RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Introduction

Colombia, a developing country of South America, is a land rich in both natural resources and developed, native professional expertise. The Colombian government recognizes that it must fully utilize both of these human and natural resources if Colombia is to be established as a significant country in the world’s economy. Oil, one of its most valuable natural resources, has not been used to its fullest potential in Colombia’s development, and the government has established a comprehensive Institute for petroleum research, Instituto Colombiano del Petroleo (ICP), a research and development arm of Ecopetrol (ECP), the national oil company. This Institute has attracted some of the brightest engineers and scientists in Colombia, professionals committed to improving Colombia’s economy through the exploration, production, and exploitation of Colombian oil. Though many of ICP’s scientists and engineers are multilingual, having studied in France, Italy, Germany, Israel, Japan, Iran, and Russia, English is often not one of the languages that they have mastered. They recognize this lack as a handicap, creating for them an inability to communicate and
compete efficiently in the world market of products and ideas.

In an attempt to remedy this situation, ICP's management sought native English speakers to teach communication skills to their professionals. They established a contract with Western Kentucky University (WKU) for an English teacher who would spend extended periods of time in Colombia, concentrating on the teaching of English as a second language, with emphasis on communication competence. In effect, they established a two-semester program of conversational English for selected professional men and women at ICP. I was asked to represent the University in this teaching role in Bucaramanga for seven months during 1988: January through April and August through October.
Current Need for English as a Second Language (ESL)

The peoples of the world continue to contribute to an ever-growing data base of technological information and capability, and one of the barriers that prevents the sharing of that technology for the mutual benefit of the world community is language. The world's scientists recognize their growing need for a universal language through which they can both convey their discoveries and pose their questions. Rapidly, English is becoming that universal language, and those who do not possess oral/aural proficiency in English are seeking teachers who will help them, as quickly as possible, to develop and to perfect their English communication competence.

Many throughout the world have studied English in public schools or in colleges and universities in much the same way that North Americans have studied foreign languages--Spanish, French, German, et al. They have been taught to conjugate verbs; they have memorized extensive vocabulary lists; they have translated from their native language to English and back to their native language tremendous numbers of words that have no personal relevance. They can read with a certain degree of competence, but they cannot discuss what they have read nor can they probe another's comprehension of written material for broader
understanding. Their oral/aural English skills are no more than basic, and they are, therefore, unable to communicate meaningfully in English, the accepted common ground of language, with other experts in their own fields.

People in developing countries realize how handicapped they are as their language inability withholds from them critical information from beyond their own geographical boundaries. They recognize that they often resort to useless duplication of efforts in projects and research already completed by someone else because this intangible barrier has prevented them from finding out what those efforts were, what limitations and restrictions were discovered, and what was accomplished through specific research.

Not only people of developing countries express a need for English as a foreign language, however. Even countries that boast of state-of-the-art technology (i.e., Japan) recognize that they may suffer from their lack of English proficiency. They acknowledge a need for English communication skills for their technical, scientific, and business professionals, and, like the developing countries, they are both importing teachers whose native language is English and are sending students to the United States to study (Time, 57).

The need for ESL is being expressed today in much of the world, but often those who recognize their need do not want to participate in traditional programs of language
study, courses that take years to perfect one’s competence. They want quick results.

**Historical Perspective**

This current need can be compared with that of another era, when time was a motivating factor in the preparation of personnel, when the United States could not wait for traditional programs to satisfy its need. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, World War II made language demands on the entire world but possibly on no country more than on the United States. According to Donald Bowen, during World War II, the United States had to put in place as quickly as possible a system for learning foreign languages that would facilitate the acquisition of useful communication skills in target languages for selected members of its armed forces and security personnel. The government established contracts with several American universities, and through the joint efforts of linguists from those universities, the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) was designed (32). The ASTP discarded the "school child" method of language learning, of rote exercises that could not be transferred to life situations. Bowen reports on the work of linguists such as Franz Boaz and Leonard Bloomfield in the development of oral language programs that could be applied to a diverse number of world languages. Using their research in the anthropology and languages of several tribes of American Indians as the foundation for their new programs, and concentrating on the phonologies of the targeted languages, they developed
intensive courses in languages that varied greatly—from Thai to German (33). The United States government and military organizations and linguists such as these can be credited with taking the initial steps toward the evaluation and revision of language pedagogy, processes that are still being refined today.

The classical method, the study of grammar and translation, did not always prepare its students to speak the target language, and that problem still exists today for those who learn English by means of the classical grammar/translation method. Brown reports that students "with ten years of English instruction and even more find that when they arrive [in the United States] they have major difficulties trying to comprehend even simple sentences of spoken English" (85). Historically the initial objective of most foreign languages classes was to equip students for scholarly and literary use of the target language. Currently, however, the initial goal is communicative competence. Scholarly use of language may or may not follow as a secondary goal, depending on the learner’s need. Evelyn Hatch supports this reversal of emphases. She says,

In second language learning the basic assumption has been . . . that one first learns how to manipulate structures to use in discourse. We would like to consider the possibility that just the reverse happens. One learns how to interact
verbally, and out of this interaction syntactic structures are developed. (404)

The specific need of each student group dictates what must be included in the definition of "competence." Douglas Brown says that traditionally the term has included "several modes or levels, perhaps as many as four, since speaking, listening, reading and writing are all separate modes of performance" (27). Currently, however, many add the culture of the target language to their curricula, hypothesizing that true language competence includes contextual cultural comprehension, what Brown calls "sociolinguistic competence," or "the knowledge of sociocultural rules of language and discourse [through which] judgments [can] be made on the appropriateness of a particular utterance" (200).

Though many different pedagogies appear to be successful, depending on the student population and environment, no general agreement has been reached which allows any professional group or organization to place its imprimatur on that method, to say of any one method, "This is the way." Brown reminds that

"... all "normal" sciences go through a revolutionary pattern that begins with a successful paradigm within which to work, followed by a period of anomaly (doubt, uncertainty, questioning of prevailing theory), then crisis (the fall of the existing paradigm) with all the
professional insecurity that comes therewith, and then finally a new paradigm, a novel theory, is put together. . . . The cyclical nature of theories underscores the fact that no single theory or paradigm is either right or wrong. . . . Some truth can be found in virtually every theory. (11)

The belief that Brown is absolutely correct and that the perfect new paradigm has not yet evolved prompts many ESL teachers to choose what must be described as an eclectic approach in designing their curricula. ESL teachers must evaluate learning theories and methodologies in preparation for writing their curricula and often for developing their own materials, taking into consideration the uniqueness of each ESL teaching situation.

Theories Behind the Pedagogy

Cognitive theorists offer ESL teachers interesting concepts for consideration. Eric Lenneberg suggests that language is a "species-specific behavior," biologically determining both perception and categorizing abilities (19). His thesis is compatible with Noam Chomsky’s theory that in all men there exists a "little black box," a "language acquisition device" (LAD), which enables them to learn not only a native language but also additional ones (32). An innate cognition allows a person to generate original statements in a logical syntactical sequence. Unfortunate-
ly, over emphasis on this theory of acquisition encourages studying language form and how it is generated rather than focusing on practical language function.

Brown takes this theory into the practical realm. He says that learning a new language is not a matter of establishing a new structure but of fitting a new language into an existing structure. He says that if there is

... a universal deep structure, common to all languages ... then second language learning is merely the learning of a new surface [italics added] structure, a new set of forms for the basic meanings already established. ... Meaning and thought seem to be as culturally determined as surface structures are. So the quest for universals is a slow and tedious process. ... The best we can do in applying universals ... may be to look for commonalities between the first and the second language itself and to examine the process of acquisition. (55)

And Stephen Krashen, in what he calls a Monitor Model, describes both the conscious and unconscious means that adults have for internalizing language. The first he calls "acquisition," the unconscious reception, somewhat childlike, in which a person receives or "picks up" language. The second he calls "learning," a conscious sorting and selecting process, a determining of rules. "Fluency in
second language performance," says Krashen, "is due to what we have acquired, not what we have learned" (99).

David Ausubel offers an explanation to Krashen's "sorting" principle. He contends that man relates new concepts to existing knowledge that he has stored in his total cognition, a process that Ausubel calls Cognitive Learning (CL). Ausubel's theory is that when new material becomes part of one's cognitive domain, it is internalized; it attaches itself to some existing area of knowledge, allowing for a process known as "systematic forgetting" (8). New data replaces old, and the old is discarded; only data that is relevant is "subsumed," and the very fact that information is subsumable defines the new information as relevant (422). If Ausubel's theory is correct, rote exercises could not be internalized for long-term retention, and their use in language learning would, therefore, become questionable. His theory also reinforces the observation that, particularly for adults, learning seems to occur more readily when adults can relate new information to already existing data.

Peter Farb supports this theory of universals and commonalities, and he adds a new dimension. He says:

... since a human child can learn any of the thousands of languages spoken in the world with equal ease, depending solely upon the speech community in which he grows up, the implication is that languages must have in common the same deep structure ... "universal grammar" for all human
beings. Actually, the more we learn about languages, the more we find they are alike rather than dissimilar. (328)

Similarity of language, commonalities of native and target languages, may facilitate learning in the usual areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking; however, that "speech community in which [one] grows up" may also construct a barrier to learning. Cultural determination of meaning and thought requires that the culture of the target language also be learned in order to grasp the fully intended meaning of a given term and to avoid transferring a previously learned cultural understanding of that term to the new language. Cultural competence has not often been considered a significant aspect of traditional language classes, but it is currently receiving considerable attention in ESL pedagogy as necessary for communicative competence.

Of course, behavioral psychology influenced all aspects of education, and language learning was no exception. B. F. Skinner's theory of "operant conditioning" became a foundation for developing the audiolingual pedagogy with its highly structured, carefully prepared materials, and though this method received wide acceptance initially, it is not a method favored by ESL teachers today. Hubbard points out that "we have seen that there has been a shift in emphasis in recent years from teaching language forms to teaching language functions" (251). In other words, the techniques
of the behaviorists for programming response based on memorized paradigms no longer are considered adequate.

Hubbard reminds that "perhaps the biggest problem for the teacher is to bridge the gap between artificial use of language [in the classroom] and genuine use outside the classroom" (191). Lest the classicist should begin to tremble, Brown maintains that structures, paradigms, have not been forsaken. He says that "the culmination of language learning . . . is not simply in the mastery of the forms of language, but the mastery of the forms in order to accomplish the communicative function of language" (202).

Since the student population I am interested in was entirely an adult one, the theory of adult learning, to which Malcolm Knowles assigned the European term "andragogy," must not be overlooked (16). Society determines that there is a prescribed age for students, and unfortunately that expected age is very young. Current college and university trends have raised the age so that no longer are most campuses filled with students of twenty to twenty-five years of age. The terms "traditional" and "non-traditional" are frequently used, however, to describe the just-out-of-high-school student and the late-in-life student. Knowles suggests that these non-traditional students present a special challenge to the teacher, who must help them overcome society's conditioning and help them "develop an attitude that learning is a lifelong process" (23).
Adult education theorists recognize that environment and motivation are crucial to successful adult education. Knowles says that learning activities for adults must be "based on the real needs and interests of the participants" (60), and that real andragogy requires a high degree of participant involvement in decision and policy making (63). Involving students in planning, identifying problems, establishing priorities, establishing goals, interpreting needs, and assisting in evaluations, according to Knowles, contributes significantly to their motivation and attitude toward learning and thus toward their success. Maintained motivation is critical to successful adult education (68).

Knowles says that two highly important facets of andragogy are helping adults recognize and become interested in their own needs and setting realistic objectives to meet those needs (79). In his own hierarchy of adult needs, Knowles ranks "growth" second, and he says learning is important for the adult because "the mere act of learning something new gives one a sense of growth" (82).

From these theories of language learning, education in general, and adult education specifically, I drew principles that influenced my choice of methodologies for teaching ESL to educated adults in Colombia.

Several Methods for Teaching Second Languages

Brown's statement, mentioned earlier, that "some truth can be found in virtually every theory" (11), prompts a thoughtful consideration of several current pedagogies that
have evolved from those theories. He challenges the second language teacher, "with eyes wide open to the total picture... to form an integrated understanding of the many aspects of second language learning" (3). That understanding must include some methodologies whose techniques do not currently enjoy broad acceptance because it is highly possible that, even within these, techniques may exist that can be incorporated in an effective but eclectic approach to teaching ESL. Without intending to develop or prescribe a new method, I considered five methods from which I selected components that are compatible and that could be used as the foundation for writing a very specific curriculum for a unique student population.

Audiolingual Methodology. The audiolingual method (ALM), developed by linguists and strongly supported by behavioral psychologists, uses a deductive approach to teaching. Grammar based, this method uses drills, repetition, and carefully prepared materials, presupposing that repetition will produce habit, and habit will result in proper usage. Perhaps this method creates less stress in the teacher than some other methods because the classes are more predictable, with carefully planned materials. Unfortunately, however, those materials are often irrelevant to the life situations of the students, requiring them to do "mindless memorization" in the course of their study and causing them to feel defeated as they fail to learn to use what they are learning. R. Wardhaugh says that this does
not need to be the case, and, though he does not advocate the ALM, he does believe that the ALM can be effectively incorporated into language learning when used by competent teachers. He challenges ESL teachers who do choose to use some AIM techniques in their classrooms to be sure that they choose "context-oriented work." Even in ALM classes, Wardhaugh warns that

all linguistic activity must be associated with meaningful activity so any techniques designed to encourage meaningful activity are obviously important in language learning. Consequently, movement, involvement, and situation, and the concomitants of these--laughter, games and stories--are important in teaching. (111, 114)

Wardhaugh advocates a relaxed and varied atmosphere in which the students are free to be involved, and his picture of an ideal classroom does not describe the typical ALM classroom. History has proved that often classes based entirely on the ALM become rigid, with much emphasis placed on learning the correct forms of the language through repetition and little actual application to real life situations.

For the adult learner, however, certain AIM techniques can offer encouragement. Adults are often "programmed" to study language through memorization and drills. Although Brown warns that "rote pattern drills often evoke surface
imitation . . . without the vaguest understanding of what the sounds might possibly mean" (30), he later admits that "adults, with their full cognitive capacities, benefit from deductive presentation of grammar" (40). Often adults become frustrated when they have no "exercises" to complete, exercises that can prove, not to the teacher but to the students themselves, that they are learning.

**Total Physical Response.** An alternative to rule-governed ALM, called Total Physical Response (TPR), was developed by John Asher (Richards 87). Encouraging students to use language rather than talk about language, he delays emphasizing the speech of the learner and has his students concentrate on listening to the target language. He places more stress on "chunks" of language than on individual words, a concept which challenges students to listen for meaning rather than to attempt to hear and process every spoken word. He concentrates on imperatives, giving the students commands that require physical responses from them. As the students' appropriate actions confirm that they understand the commands they have been given, their confidence in their own ability is enhanced.

The method is demanding from the teacher's perspective, for there are few prepared materials, and each teacher must exhibit a high degree of creativity; however, the rewards for the teacher's efforts are high when students respond with enthusiasm, realizing that real communication has actually taken place between them and the teacher. They
begin to recognize that they are learning. Donald Bowen supports the use of TPR in classrooms at all levels. He says that the "one clear advantage of the method [is that] it can be tailored to the level and experience of the class, from early beginning to advanced courses" (75).

**Natural Method.** Tracy Terrell advocates still another teaching approach, known as the Natural Method (NM). Like Asher, Terrell suggests that the students be given the benefit of periods of listening to the target language before they are asked to speak. Little emphasis is placed on correctness in oral communication in the classroom because communication can take place without perfect phonology and syntax. Communication is the ultimate goal (Richards, 129). Terrell encourages "selective listening": discourage students from trying to receive and process every word but instead teach them to attempt to determine meaning from those words which they do understand. (This concept fits well with Asher's TPR and "chunking.") Proponents of this method argue, and rightfully so, that this is exactly the manner in which native language is learned, received and processed, with communication as the ultimate goal of the language learner.

Because this approach provides little tangible evidence of learning in the early stages of the process—no vocabulary lists carefully memorized, no exercises completed and positively graded—the method may seem unattractive to language learners who need a more concrete measure of their
performance and growth. Teachers must be highly sensitive to their students at this point, offering them some tangible evaluation of their progress. One such reinforcement is to give the students written exercises that can be completed outside the formal classroom.

Since the students have limited ways in which to measure their progress, one particular burden falls on teachers who choose this method: they must very early in the course of instruction establish themselves as competent professionals who are genuinely interested in their students' progress. It is imperative that the students hold their instructor in high esteem because the techniques may not be typical of traditional classroom experiences and may "violate student views of what learning and teaching are supposed to be" (Richards, 138). They must trust that the instructor's direction and their own high degree of motivation will result in communicative competence.

Suggestology. Another method, which could be a complement to NM, is Suggestology, developed by Lozanov. It too requires that the students have confidence in their instructor, and as is suggested in much current pedagogy, a student/teacher rapport must be established in a relaxed, informal, non-threatening atmosphere. The instructor should be prepared to give generous positive reinforcement to the students, with tangible assurance of progress whenever possible. One of the initial goals of Suggestology is to replace negative attitudes toward language learning with
enthusiasm for the task and confidence that it can be accomplished. Students may be given new names, appropriate to the target language, allowing them to begin to associate a new identity with their new language. Music and art from the culture of the target language may become components of the instruction, exposing the students not only to the traditional morphology, phonology, and syntax of the target language but to the sounds and sights of the culture of the language as well. Students tend to learn very quickly in this environment, and Lozanov "promises success through [this method] to the academically gifted and ungifted alike" (Richards, 142).

Suggestology, however, does have several negative aspects that tend to discourage teachers from using this method exclusively. It is more effective when used with homogeneous student groups and when the teacher is bilingual. Also, since no specific attention is given to grammar and phonology, students taught by this method alone will probably lack strength in these areas. Used as a complement to other pedagogies, Suggestology is not without merit.

Communicative Competence. One final method for consideration, Communicative Competence (CC), may be the most significant, for not only does its very name suggest the goal of students and teachers alike, but its methodology is highly successful in teaching any targeted second language.
No review of foreign language pedagogy would be complete without its inclusion.

As in the Natural Method, the function of the language receives more attention than the form of the language. Diane Larsen-Freeman says that "students must be able to apply [knowledge of form, meanings, and functions] in negotiating meaning" (123). Teachers place more emphasis on encouraging their students to use the target language than in helping them to learn about the target language. In the relaxed atmosphere required, students are encouraged by their early ability to "speak"; however, as has been mentioned before, for certain groups of students this atmosphere can be disconcerting. Because the classes are much less formal and less highly structured than language classes have historically been, the approach may appear to be haphazard, much too laissez faire. Such a criticism is, however, unfounded, and a close look at the underlying methodology of those relaxed and often laughter-filled class sessions reveals clear objectives, careful and thorough teacher preparation, and subtle but definite teacher guidance. Richards says that the "students are learning by doing" (68).

Adults, expecting to be "doing something productive," often do not realize that learning is taking place when they cannot see some completed assignment. Attempting to assuage the fears of such doubters, Eugene Hall says in the preface to a reader for second language learners that "a great deal
of successful language learning comes from experiences in which the learning is largely unconscious" (vi). Brown takes this theory one step further. Reminding us that children usually are not aware that they are learning language, he suggests that it is "possible that a language learner who is too consciously aware of what he or she is doing will have difficulty in learning the second language" (47). Unfortunately, adults in particular have been taught that learning must not be "fun," thus the relaxed atmosphere of CC classes may not suggest to them an appropriate learning environment. Since this method has proved highly successful, their suspicions present an obstacle that ESL teachers must overcome.

Sociolinguistic aspects contribute significantly to CC classes, enabling students to know such things as when certain sounds, words, or phrases would and would not be appropriate and how language learners can communicate non-verbally. Brown reminds us that language learning involves more than mastering a set number of words and grammatical patterns:

... mastery of vocabulary and structures results in nothing if the learner cannot use those forms for the purpose of transmitting and receiving thoughts, ideas, and feelings between speaker and hearer, or writer and reader. (202)
A further strength in the CC methodology is the fact that the teacher’s role of prominence in the classroom recedes as the students’ proficiency increases, and the students themselves have greater opportunity to use their new skill. The teacher must, however, be constantly aware of all activity, guiding conversation with only subtle assistance; and while teachers are not required to prepare carefully planned lectures or exercises, they must maintain the focus of each learning step. Teacher awareness in homogeneous groups is particularly important, for difficulty in communication prompts students to lapse into their native language rather than to attempt to solve their communication problems in the target language.

Summary

What kind of curriculum would accommodate the teaching of function, form, and culture to educated adult students so that they could achieve communicative competence in English as a second language?

Each variable, and there were many, influenced my approach to teaching the Colombians: varied educational theory, a wide selection of second language pedagogy, a need to consider andragogy, realistic goals established by both the learners and me, the location of the classes, the time allocated to the learning process. The complexity of the teaching situation determined that no one method could be used exclusively. Thus the need arose to select effective techniques from several methodologies in order to develop an
effective student-specific curriculum for teaching engineers, scientists, administrators, and one lawyer at ICP in Colombia.
The Approach: Objectives and Students and Design

Objectives

ICP has five division chiefs, comparable to North American corporate vice presidents, who must regularly interact with citizens of the United States and Canada as well as with English speaking people in other countries. These men were handicapped because they always had to function with the assistance of an interpreter. ICP initiated the English program at the Institute to give them an opportunity to become proficient in English communication skills. Originally this was not the primary objective; it was the only objective that the Director designated for the first semester’s English program in Colombia.

Many professionals in the company, however, expressed strong interest in studying with a native-speaking English teacher, and a second objective was added. I suggested that my time could be wisely used by including for instruction a small group of designated company leaders who already had some English proficiency. The proposal was well received by both the administration and the prospective students, and the company’s objective for the first semester was broadened to include seventeen students: the original five plus twelve more.

The second semester evolved due to the company’s perception of the first semester’s success, and the objective
was broadened even further: continued focus on the oral skills of the division chiefs and instruction for as many other employees as time permitted.

**Students and Design**

The native language of all the students for whom we developed this ESL curriculum is Spanish. Many of them had learned a language other than English during times of study outside Colombia, so second language classes were not new to them. All had studied English within their prescribed educational system; some had studied English in private lessons. With one possible exception, however, all lacked confidence in their listening/speaking English skills.

The one exception to this apprehensive attitude was a man who had completed a master's degree in library science in the United States and who regularly used English in reviewing, developing, and cataloging resource materials in the library at the Institute. He was very competent in his reading skills, but limited opportunity to use conversational English had caused even his confidence in his oral/aural abilities to wane.

Almost all the students had bachelor's degrees in engineering, and some of them had pursued additional degrees at master's and doctoral levels in either specialized engineering or in areas related to petroleum production and research. Only one—a young attorney—had no degree related to engineering. They were bright, competent, experienced students.
Furthermore, their motivational levels were high. Knowles proposes an interesting motivational chart, portions of which are apropos for these students:

\[
\text{Antecedents to an Act of Behavior} \\
\text{Needs (Motivating Forces) + Psychological Field = Behavior} \\
\text{Physical Growth Security New Experience Affection Recognition} \\
\text{Situational Forces and Personal Equipment} \\
\text{= Behavior}
\]

Knowles' chart shows that "growth," which we have already acknowledged to include learning, is a perceived human need. He says that "self-induced dissatisfaction with present inadequacies, coupled with a clear sense of direction for self-improvement, is . . . a good definition of 'motivation to learn'" (42). My Colombian students experienced just such a dissatisfaction, and we provided an opportunity for their self-improvement (growth), giving them the intrinsic motivation needed for successful behavioral change.

The third need in Knowles' hierarchy is "security," and our program dramatically offered an opportunity to satisfy that need. ICP had previously notified its management employees that their continued association with the Institute would require proficiency in English oral/aural communication skills. This presented an obvious threat to the professionals' sense of security, thereby giving them the
extrinsic motivation necessary for successful adult learning. Thus, our program offered them an avenue for developing the necessary skills to meet the company’s expectations and thereby maintain their own job security.

Not without significance is a third human need that Knowles mentions and that our program met. Knowles’ chart shows that adults need “new experiences,” and English classes that were both productive and enjoyable were indeed a new experience for most of the students.

First Semester. For the first semester at ICP, there were only seventeen students, but they were divided into two distinct groups. The company’s priorities determined the amount of teacher-time with each class.

Initially, the five division chiefs and I planned a schedule that would accomplish the objectives they had set for themselves. We planned for them to spend the maximum amount of time with me, either in private instruction or in a class structured to include only the five of them. Each would have a minimum of four hours per week in private instruction, and no less than once a week they would meet together for from one to three hours for various group activities. The schedule would remain flexible to accommodate more time for study as their work schedules permitted. Both the individual instruction and the group activities would take place during the regular work day, either in their offices or in mine.
We then planned for the remaining twelve students—engineers, chemists, two librarians (both of whom also had degrees in petroleum engineering), and the company’s comptroller. They would attend ninety minute classes late in the afternoon, three days a week. We were not permitted to schedule their classes during usual working hours; the study was to be on their own time, after a full day in their jobs. All of their instruction would take place in a well-equipped classroom in the same building that housed their offices. The only individual instruction they would receive would be in occasional private conferences.

For all seventeen of these students, we would focus our attention on improving oral/aural skills, with some minimal effort being directed toward improving reading ability. Inevitably, we would occasionally concentrate on understanding North American culture, but neither culture nor writing skills would receive significant emphasis.

Second Semester. The second semester was considerably more complicated than the first. The students in the first semester’s study had influenced others in the Institute to desire to participate in the second semester’s classes. As a result, over 75 students applied for admission to classes; we accepted only 58.

The acting director of the company (who was one of the division chiefs from the first semester’s study) asked me to accommodate as many students as possible, and this required a complete revision of the schedule. Enlisting the help of
the five division chiefs, three of whom were new both to their positions and to the English program, we arrived at an innovative but demanding schedule.

We divided the allotted time into four segments and divided the students into four groups or classes. The chiefs asked for an intensive program for each group of students and agreed to underwrite the entire cost of the program.

The students agreed to give two days a week of their own time for classes (weekends), and the institute agreed to their using one and a half days a week of company time (regular work days). The classes were planned to give each group a total of 72 hours of intensive study in conversational English: three and a half days per week—Friday through Monday noon—for three weeks. Besides my contract for the semester, the Institute agreed to provide the following:

1. A facility for classes away from the institute that would allow the students to be undisturbed.
2. All equipment needed (textbooks, overhead projectors, video recorders and screens, and miscellaneous supplies).
3. Transportation for both the students and teacher to and from their homes each morning and afternoon.
4. Morning coffee, lunch, and afternoon refreshments for each class day.
Based on Michigan Test scores, work schedules, and the approval of the division chiefs, we divided the students into four classes.

**Class No. 1.** The first class included twelve male students: the acting director of the institute, the five division chiefs, and six department heads. The proficiency of the students varied, but they were placed in this class by virtue of their positions in the Institute.

**Class No. 2.** The second class included fourteen men and one woman, all engineers but engaged in varied tasks from research to communication. Their oral/aural proficiency at the beginning of the course was intermediate.

**Class No. 3.** The third class included fourteen men and three women. Fifteen of them were engineers, one was an administrative accountant, and the other an engineer assigned to library systems. The proficiency level of this class was also intermediate.

**Class No. 4.** The final class was considerably less homogeneous than the second and third, but the proficiency level for most was very low. Some were almost beginners. Eight men and five of the women were engineers; the sixth woman was a lawyer.

**Summary**

Since ICP had had no in-house English program prior to my arrival, my first semester there served several important functions. The initial target group not only broadened their English conversation skills, but they also acquired a
confidence in me as a teacher who used an approach radically
different from anything they had ever known. As company
administrators their support for continuation of the program
was critical.

The small group of engineers from the first semester’s
class was also important to the program’s growth. As com-
pany leaders, they influenced their peers for second semes-
ter participation. And the resulting growth in program size
required radical adjustment in program format.

Several factors influenced my planning and acceptance
of an enlarged and broadened schedule for the second semes-
ter. The Institute’s strong commitment to encouraging its
professionals to study English was evident both through its
willingness to support my time in Colombia and its generous
support in time, facilities, and materials for the classes.
Also, the number of students who wanted to be involved in
the program was so large that we could not accommodate all
of them if we continued with a schedule similar to that of
the first semester. Furthermore, at least three of the
classes could be somewhat homogeneous, placing students with
similar abilities in the same classes. But one of the
strongest reasons for accepting the plan was the obvious
enthusiasm with which almost all of the students received
it. It was their program; they were committed to it.
The Classroom: Setting and Instruction

Setting

Research in educational psychology indicates that students learn best when they feel secure and when their self-esteem is not jeopardized. Knowles includes the self-concept in his definition of "security." He says that the "need for security goes [beyond physical safety] into the requirement of psychological safety--protection against threat to our self-respect and our self-image" (82). Furthermore, Charles Curran believes that security and classroom atmosphere are interrelated; he maintains that classroom atmosphere is a crucial factor in the learning process and that feelings of intimidation and insecurity handicap learners (18). According to Brown, teachers must be "facilitator[s], discarding masks of superiority and omniscience"; they must "communicate openly and empathetically with students," demonstrating that they consider their students as "worthy, valuable individuals" (71).

The creation of classroom atmosphere and student-teacher relationships in accordance with these principles became important goals for me as my students moved toward English communicative competence. One aspect of my role was to help all the students overcome their fear of language study, so that they could perceive acquiring a new language
as a positive experience and an attainable goal. I also wanted them to reevaluate their understanding of the role of a teacher so that I might become a competent friend, there to help them meet a need in their own lives. Therefore, throughout the two semesters, whether the classes were held in my office, in a student’s office, or in larger and more traditional classrooms, the places of instruction became very informal.

Especially in the chiefs, at first I sensed great tension and lack of ease. They have very important positions in their company, and they are accustomed to being in control. In language classes they lost that control and felt threatened, afraid.

Richards and Rodgers say that teachers must "develop their own teaching procedures, informed by a particular view of language and a particular theory of learning" (19), and my approach became one of relaxed informality. I attempted to use whatever was at hand to create an atmosphere as unlike the much-feared traditional classroom as possible.

In the private offices, we maintained an almost social atmosphere rather than one of "instruction." We sat reasonably close, in comfortable chairs or at a table, side-by-side. Especially in the earlier stages of each semester, we began our class time by discussing—at whatever level of proficiency they had—their jobs, their homes, their families, their country, or their soccer team; and often these casual conversations occurred while we drank coffee or tea.
During the first semester, when the chiefs met in a conference area for their group classes, we sat close together, around a table or in a sitting area, and we did not begin what they considered to be "the class" until we had "visited" together briefly. The Colombians are very social by culture, and, though at first they were suspicious of my assurance that this "social" time was an important part of their learning, they enjoyed the time and began to relax. They soon even began to initiate topics of conversation for this informal time, asking about American basketball, American families, the presidential election, or what I thought of Colombia.

In the larger groups, such informal beginnings for classes were more difficult to orchestrate. Prolonged periods of conversation were not always possible, and I turned to music and rhythm, which Richards and Rodgers say is "a most conspicuous feature of Suggestopedia [Suggestology]" (143). I used conversation with arriving students as an introduction to class when only two or three were present and social interchange was manageable, but often the size of the group required that we move rather quickly to a group activity such as a jazz chant (Appendix A, Example No. 7) or a song. Jazz chants focus on the rhythm of English, and songs can teach several aspects, such as the sound reductions featured in "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands" (Gilbert 23).
During both semesters, when everyone arrived and [what they considered] the "real" classes began, the students in the larger classes sat in a circle or in randomly grouped chairs. My "position" varied, depending on the nature of the day's activity; sometimes I sat; sometimes I stood. Often, when one of the students was leading the class in an activity, I sat in the back of the room, apart from the students and as inconspicuous as possible.

During the second semester when all the students and I traveled to the classroom by bus, classes actually began as soon as they boarded the bus. We maintained a rule that only English was to be spoken from the time of getting on the bus in the morning until departure from the bus in the afternoon. Conversation between students or between a student and me, songs, and often games were productive ways to pass the time in transit. The classroom was not always in the same place, and on occasion we traveled some distance, providing plenty of "warm-up" time in preparation for what they considered to be the "real" class.

The Formal Texts

Even with my informal approach, I recognized that the language learners also needed to have something in their hands that had the appearance of a textbook and to which they could refer, something they could take home at night and "study." I chose several specific texts to satisfy this need during their seven months of English classes.
1. **English Pronunciation for Spanish Speakers:**

_Vowels and English Pronunciation for Spanish Speakers: Consonants_, by Paulette Dale and Lillian Poms. These texts take an audio-lingual approach to learning, but they address specific problems in pronunciation that are common to Spanish speaking people and, therefore, use examples relevant to Spanish speech and culture.

Brown says that the "forms of language used to accomplish the functions must become part of the total linguistic repertoire of the second language learner" (204). I used these texts to concentrate on pronunciation, but while those lessons were being learned, forms were also being inductively assimilated into the students' cognition.

2. **Clear Speech: Pronunciation and Listening Comprehension in American English** by Judy Gilbert. Gilbert's text focuses not on pronunciation of individual words but on units. She emphasizes the importance of stress (pitch, length, clarity) and rhythm, and provides material that can bring a broader dimension to the study of pronunciation. Bowen says that "the intelligibility of spoken English is reduced more by errors in stress than in mistaken sounds" (85). Gilbert's text provides exercises to help overcome this communication
3. *Idioms in American Life*, by Julie Howard. The sociolinguistic aspect of language has often been overlooked in language classes, and while we did not focus on North American culture, we could not study North American English without some attention to American idioms.

Howard's text allows the students to be taught selective listening, determining from the "chunks" they understand the rest of the intended meaning, encouraging them to "guess" the meaning of the idiom from its context in speech before they look for the written definition. The text also teaches students to consider language that is appropriate/inappropriate for a specific situation, based on the cultural setting in which it is being used.

4. *The Language of the Petroleum Industry in English*, by Eugene J. Hall. Hall's reader afforded an opportunity to focus discussion on information that was well-known to the students in their own language, and though the technical information contained in the reader is considerably below the competence of all of the students, the subject interested them and provided a focus for meaningful discussion. The book also gave the students an opportunity to increase their technical English
vocabulary in their own field of petroleum engineering.

**Specialized Exercises**

These were the formal texts for the two semesters, but I supplemented them with many materials that I developed myself specifically for this group of students. Brown says that we "must try to encourage our students to put their newly acquired language into action . . . ," (191) and on that principle I planned "exercises" for the two semesters. Every day, whether we met in a one-hour class during the first semester or an eight-hour one for the second semester, the students had to participate in exercises that required each one to speak English, either in a brief report or in a small or large group discussion. Finocchiaro and Brumfit say that "the target linguistic system will be learned best through the process of struggling to communicate," (67) and that "intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in what is being communicated" (68). For some, overcoming shyness took time, but the students were given many opportunities to speak: to present, to question, to debate. Several of the exercises that I used, original plans designed for these specific classes, illustrate the ways in which we helped them "struggle to communicate" in English.

For one assignment the students worked in pairs, and they were asked to plan a vacation together, agreeing where they would go, how they would get there, and for how long they would stay. They had to reconcile many differences: a
preference for the sea versus a preference for the mountains; an ideal of quiet and rest as opposed to a week of parties and dancing; an expensive plane flight or a conservative trip by car. Once they had completed their deliberation, one of them was asked to share their decision with the rest of the class.

The students enjoyed the in-class assignment, and I expanded it for out-of-class preparation. I asked them to decide one place in their country they would like for me to see before I returned to the United States, to tell me how to get there, how long I should stay, and any other important information I might need for a good holiday. They were asked to give their suggestions to me in an oral presentation to the class, giving as much detail as they chose. They made maps, brought pictures, and shared folklore and crafts from the areas about which they spoke. Class discussion following each presentation gave additional opportunity for persuasive use of English. The students enjoyed a sense of pride as they "taught" me about Colombian geography, history, and folklore.

Another assignment involved role play, when students prepared oral presentations to be given to the "Board of Directors of Ecopetrol," giving details about some aspect of their work or some project of interest to them and asking for "the Board's" support in the initiation or continuation of their research project. (Appendix A, Example No. 1) One student was appointed "Board Chairman" for each presenta-
tion. The other class members, serving as "members of the Board," listened to the presentation, questioned the presenter, and then decided whether to support, table, or reject the proposal. Two class members were given evaluation sheets (Appendix A, Example 2), on which they made suggestions for language improvement for each presenter; I also completed an evaluation. Their presentations were video-taped, and the students were invited to my office for a private review of that tape. At that time we also reviewed the three written evaluations, and looked for the areas where need for improvement had been suggested. If the students wanted a copy of their video presentation, they were free to make one for themselves. Many did.

Often we used small clippings, called "Snapshots," about economics, current events, health, politics, sports, or entertainment in the United States from the newspaper USA TODAY. Several of these "Snapshots" appear in each edition of the paper, and in a few words, with the aid of graphs or pictures, they give information about something of interest in a specific category. The students chose the ones that interested them, figured out the meaning from the pictures, graphs, or words, and then told the rest of the class about the "Snapshot." Sometimes they studied and reported individually, sometimes in pairs, and sometimes in groups.

Richards and Rodgers say that materials designed to direct and support communicative competence curricula should include "pair work, each containing different information
needed to enact role plays and carry out other pair activities" (79). One exercise I designed used this pair approach in role play. We simulated a telephone conversation, and I prepared a set of facts for the caller and another set for the receiver of the call. (Appendix, Examples Nos. 3 and 4) I bought two toy telephones, chose two students and gave each a phone and one set of facts (neither had the other’s facts), and placed the students in chairs, back-to-back. One then had to call the other, give or request information, and draw certain conclusions from the information received and given. The rest of the class listened, and when the telephone conversation was completed, they pointed out any lack of information, any misinformation, or any social impropriety.

Cloze exercises also became a regular part of the class day, and I wrote them based on some previous experience that we had had together. (Appendix, Examples Nos. 5 and 6) I tried to focus on some aspect of the language that we had been considering (i.e., past tense forms and their pronunciation: ed, d, t), some idioms they had been learning, and new words or ideas we had been discussing. Each exercise was written for the specific class to which it was given, so that it had relevance to that group of students. I used these exercises for listening practice and encouraged the students to listen for understanding as well as for the specific "missing" words. I reminded the students that they would hear about something familiar, and they were to fill
in as many missing words as possible while I read the exercise. Then, based on what they saw or on what they had heard, they tried to guess as many as possible of the remaining missing words. The exercise helped them recognize appropriate articles, pronouns, and tenses as well as proper use of the forms and idioms we had been studying, but it also served as a positive reinforcement for them as they began to understand more and more of what I said to them.

Impromptu Exercises

Always I found it profitable to seize unexpected opportunities for effective teaching. On one occasion, in a class using the Gilbert text, we were completing exercises directed toward thought units and emphasizing the importance of focus. The sentence in the exercise reads, "Do you think it is harder to speak or to hear a foreign language?" (40) Immediately upon hearing the sentence read, the class exploded in argument concerning the "correct" answer to the question. I put the text aside, asked for a show of hands of those who favored hearing as more difficult, of those who considered speaking more difficult, and of those who were not sure. I divided them into three groups, according to their preference, and for an hour or more they argued—often quite persuasively—about something about which they obviously felt strongly.

On another occasion, the bus on which we were traveling slid on the pavement and struck the back of a turning automobile. Our wait for officers to investigate the accident
proved to be a long one, and rather than waste the time there, we redeemed it by conducting an impromptu class on the bus. Our waiter, who traveled with us and seemed always prepared for the unexpected, served us coffee, and the students danced in the aisle to our jazz chants and our songs. We actually made a game of learning new words to describe our unexpected situation, and they took the opportunity to "instruct" me in the concepts of Colombian law, prompted both by the accident and the presence in this class of one student who is an attorney.

There are two things that Colombians seem to enjoy more than anything else: dancing and soccer. There were limited opportunities to incorporate dancing into the curriculum, but soccer became a good "tool" when our class was located in an area with a field. We prolonged lunch breaks, and the men and women played soccer, always with the understanding that they would speak only English to their teammates. They soon learned that this was a difficult assignment because they had to remember in the heat of play to shout directions in English, and often I heard one shout, "Speak English. I don't understand Spanish!"

Summary

Knowles says that good adult educators must be aware of the unique needs of their students as they plan and implement programs of study. They should expose the students to "new interests, new friends, and new ways of doing things"
in a physically comfortable atmosphere that encourages the students' sense of well-being (83).

Past experiences in studying English had not always been positive for my students at ICP. I wanted them to accomplish the objectives they had set for themselves and learn to use English conversationally, but I also wanted their learning experience to be a pleasant one. Knowles' principles reinforced my philosophy, and I "tailor-made" exercises for the adults at ICP and chose formal texts specifically for this group, always keeping in mind their unique needs.
Conclusion: Evaluation, Need for Further Study, and Implication for Use of This Curriculum with Other Adults

Evaluation

Earlier, after considering both some of the theories of teaching language and of teaching adults, I asked the question, "What kind of curriculum would accommodate the teaching of function, form, and culture to educated adult students so that they could achieve communicative competence in English as a second language?" In an attempt to answer that question, I considered a portion of the vast amount of knowledge available on these subjects and designed a curriculum for a specific group of adults. After using that curriculum for a two-semester course of study, I ask a second question: "Was the project successful?" Just as the original question required a complex answer, so does the latter one need to be considered from several points of view:

1. Objectively, based on scores received by the students on an internationally approved test.

2. Objectively, from the point of view of the company.

3. Subjectively, from the point of view of the students.

4. Subjectively, from my point of view as teacher.

Objective Evaluation: Student Scores. I chose the Michigan Test, a test designed at the University of Michigan
and used throughout the world as a measure of English competence, for use in ICP’s English program, and it was given for both pre- and post-course evaluation. The test has three parts.

**Part 1.** The first portion of the test is divided into three segments, and students have 90 minutes to complete it. The first segment covers form and usage; the second vocabulary; and the third reading comprehension. Students work independently, using commercially printed test booklets and Scantron answer sheets. Questions are in multiple choice format. The highest possible score is 100.

**Part 2.** The second portion is a listening test, which has two types of items: questions and statements. The students have test booklets that give multiple choice answers. If the tester asks a question, the student must choose the appropriate answer to the question. If the tester makes a statement, the student must choose the answer that means the nearest to the statement. Again the highest possible score is 100.

**Part 3.** The third part of the Michigan Test offers the students several topics from which they may choose one. They are then given 30 minutes to write a very brief essay on the topic chosen.

Since the emphasis of the instruction at ICP was to be on listening and speaking skills only, the written portion of the test was not considered as part of the whole. Only the
section on form and the aural section were administered to the students. The two test scores were averaged for each student, and I used that average score for objective evaluation.

For the first semester, the five division chiefs were given the test to determine their level of proficiency at the beginning of the program and to measure their progress at the conclusion of the study, but their test scores had no bearing on whether or not they would be included in the program. For the second semester's study, division chiefs were again admitted to class without regard for their level of proficiency as demonstrated on the Michigan Test. The acting Director of the Institute (a position comparable to that of a North American corporate president) also placed himself on that roll. In addition to these six, six department heads enrolled, chosen for the class by virtue of their corporate positions and not by their level of proficiency. With the exception of these twelve students, proficiency scores were considered when assigning students to classes.

For the first semester, only those professional men whose scores ranged 50 or higher were considered for the small class of designated leaders, which we added when we expanded the objectives for the semester. For the second semester, those who had been participants in the first semester's study were automatically admitted to either Class No. 2 or Class No. 3, and additional students, both men and women, were chosen for these two classes from other appli-
cants who scored 50 or higher on the Michigan Test. The fourth and final class consisted of those who desired to take the English class but whose entrance scores were below 50.

The post-test scores of the students for both semesters showed improvement in almost all cases, with some making dramatic gains, as indicated on the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Score Change*</th>
<th>No. Students First Semester</th>
<th>No. Students Second Semester</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1--4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5--9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 or more</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*There were no decreases in scores.

This table shows the test scores in a most simplistic fashion, but it does permit an objective observation that the students did demonstrate progress in their proficiency during the one or two semesters in which they studied English, most of them improving their English proficiency by 10 to 20 percentage points after only 72 hours of instruction.

Objective Evaluation: Company Point of View. The company's evaluation must be considered from several vantage points. The chiefs who participated in the initial program
perceived it to be successful from an administrative point of view, and they approved the funding of its continuation for a second semester. Furthermore, one of those men who later became the Acting Director of the Institute not only continued in the classes after assuming his new role but also used his influence and leadership to encourage the other chiefs to expand their private class for upper-level administrators to include six department heads.

He, as Director, and the five chiefs began having brief meetings in English, apart from the regular class activity. They initiated telephone conversations in English within the company. These six men also began to demonstrate their English proficiency on a regular basis as they welcomed foreign advisors into their office for discussions without the benefit of a translator. Their increased ability, confidence, and enthusiasm were apparent inside and outside the classroom.

These Institute administrators expressed interest in the continuation of the program and would have proposed continued funds for another year had not national budget cuts prevented their doing so. At the conclusion of the second semester, the new Director indicated that he considers reinstatement of the program as a viable option when funds are available.

Subjective Evaluation: Students' Perspective. The most revealing evidence of the students' positive evaluation of the program was the fact that the testimonies of the origi-
nal seventeen motivated more people than I could possibly teach to want to take the course. Many of the seventeen original students were extremely quiet when the course began, but by the time it was over, they were openly supporting the continuation of the program in the Institute. The students were asked to respond to a teacher-prepared evaluation at the conclusion of the first semester. (That evaluation form indicating the summary of students' responses is found in Appendix B.)

The second semester's first three classes were equally as positive, and they were instrumental in encouraging some of the other professionals in the company to petition for the final class to be directed toward those whose English proficiency was more limited. This was an entirely different group of students, but they came to class with high expectations due to the response of their peers to the previous classes.

Probably the most evident measure of the student's subjective evaluation, however, was the fact that they no longer had to be prodded to attempt English. Voluntarily they began to use their new language with consultants whose first question usually was, "Do you speak English?" More and more the students came to class reporting triumphantly that they had had the courage and confidence to respond, "Yes, I speak English," to the once dreaded question.
Subjective Evaluation: Teacher’s Point of View. I consider the two semesters highly successful, and I base my evaluation on much more than the Michigan Test scores.

What permeated the entire Institute was the awareness by the six upper-level administrators that acquiring English communication proficiency is an attainable goal. Their own increased ability and the courage they exhibited to use what they were learning gave courage to their subordinates in both administration and research.

I often walked through the company’s office facilities, and I saw evidence of increasing interest in using the English that was being learned. One sign posted in a department read, "Speak English Please! No Spanish Spoken Here!" I heard them placing long distance calls to the United States, without the assistance of a translator. I saw them meeting in pairs for lunch, designating their time together as "practice time" for English conversation.

I heard the students singing the songs, or rhythmically chanting the chants learned in class, or shouting, "Don’t go to pieces!" (their favorite idiom) to some friend across the courtyard. I went with them and their families on picnics and saw fathers practicing English with their children. I attended American movies with them and afterward discussed the films. We shopped, swam, ate, and danced together, and they took the initiative to arrange these times so that they could practice English.
One chief who, when I first arrived, would not enter my office without an interpreter became one of the strongest students and the most outspoken advocate of the program. His and other Michigan Test Scores indicated advancement; their behavior reinforced what the scores revealed.

The program was not without its problems, however; there were factors that had negative influence. The students were all very active professional men and women, and they added their study of English to already busy schedules. As a result, they had very little time for out-of-class preparation, and almost all lesson plans had to be self-contained, planned for completion during a specific class. The only exceptions to this were the longer, oral reports, and there were few of these.

Also, especially for the first semester’s schedule, the attendance was erratic; the students often traveled to other parts of Colombia during the first of the week and sometimes missed one or two classes. Furthermore, those missing on Monday might be back on Tuesday, but others would be gone; thus a class could not easily continue into a following day.

Nevertheless, despite the obstacle erected by the students’ busy and demanding schedules, objective and subjective evaluations indicate that the students did improve in their English competence, some significantly.

**Need for Further Study**

At the conclusion of the second semester, the English program, with its focus on communicative competence, was
discontinued at the Institute. That discontinuation came as
the result of a severe loss that the oil company suffered at
its largest refinery, necessitating dramatic cuts in the
budget. If the program is to be reinstated, several ques-
tions should be carefully considered.

First of all, the cost of the entire program was very
great. There may be a more efficient way to offer courses
to the ICP employees than having a North American brought
there, with salary and all expenses paid by ICP.

The demands on one teacher were tremendous. A more
effective and efficient contract may be for a team of
teachers who could share the responsibilities and at the
same time serve a greater number of employees.

Many employees at the Institute, with varying degrees
of English proficiency, want to enroll in classes such as
these. A long-term plan to include more of them with a
specified time for each student’s involvement and for the
program’s continuation may need to be considered. Western
Kentucky University could present a proposal for such a
long-term program to ICP.

The two semesters’ schedules were very different. The
students, the Institute and the teacher need to evaluate the
merits of both and determine which is the more effective.

More students were taught during the second semester,
but the cost for the second was far greater than the cost of
the first. The company’s analysts should determine which
semester was the most cost-effective.
The students were "using" English by the end of each term. Evaluation after six months or one year away from the course itself would determine whether or not they have maintained confidence in their ability and whether or not they continue to speak English when possible.

The answers to these questions should influence ICP's decision to continue or discontinue the program, and they should also be of interest to anyone preparing to go there to teach.

Implications for Use of the Curriculum with Other Adults

Opportunities for using the curriculum that was developed for the petroleum engineers at ICP may be great, and only incidental changes would have to be made to accommodate it to a variety of student populations. Before I left Colombia, several people there--at the Institute and in other businesses--asked about the possibility of offering the course to two other companies that are similar to ICP.

CarboCoal is the government owned and operated coal company, just as Ecopetrol is the government owned and operated oil company. El Banco del Republica is the government owned and operated bank. Both of these companies have experts coming to Colombia from all over the world who use English as the international language, and Colombians in both companies need the language to help them as they obtain important technical advice for the expansion of their developing economy.
Ecopetrol, CarboCoal, and El Banco del Republica are under separate management, and often their branches are not located in the same area of the country; however, one proposal could be made to the Colombian government for establishing English programs in the three companies. Such a program would be a large undertaking, would require travel to the major cities of Colombia, and would require a staff of teachers, but it could also be exciting, challenging, and rewarding.

The materials used in ICP’s program could easily be adapted to such a program by changing only the reading book, which came from a series that includes similar readers for other professions.

Summary

Objective and subjective evaluation of the two semesters in Colombia indicate that most of the students did improve significantly in their English communicative competence. Though there were complications that prevented the program from being more effective, the evidence does indicate that the time was productively spent and that similar programs, using this model, could be established in Colombia.
Example No. 1: Oral Presentation

You are especially interested in a project that you would like ICP to implement. The Board of Directors at Ecopetrol has asked you to present your ideas to them. You may have from five to fifteen minutes to make your oral presentation. You may use visual aids if you would like.

A very simplified outline might be as follows:

A. Introduction
   (Clearly identify the proposed project.)

B. The Proposal
   1. Why are you interested?
   2. How could the project be implemented?
   3. How could it benefit ICP or ECP?

C. Conclusion
   (A very brief summary of what you have said.)

In preparing your presentation, remember who your audience is, remember to maintain good eye contact with your audience, and remember to speak not read your presentation.

If I may be of any help to you in your preparation, please tell me, and we will schedule an appointment at a convenient time for you.
Example No. 2: Oral Presentation Evaluation

Name of Speaker______________________________
Name of Evaluator______________________________

Clear Audible Voice
Good Eye Contact with Audience
Good Organization of Ideas
Pronunciation (List Problems)
Word Usage (List Problems)
Stress and Intonation (List Problems)
Example No. 3: Telephone Conversation

(The following information was printed on separate sheets. This sheet of information was given to the caller.)

You need the following information from a school in the United States. Study the sheet and become familiar with the facts there. Make the call.

You are ______ (your name) ______, a Colombian engineer. You’d like to go to the U.S. to do graduate study in engineering at North Carolina State University. Call the graduate college at NCSU and ask appropriate questions to secure the following information:

1. What test(s) is/are required for admission of international students?
2. Where and when you can take the test(s)?
3. What you should do to apply?
4. Are scholarships available for international students?
5. Is housing available for married students?
6. How long to expect to study for an M.S.? . . . for a Ph.D.?

(This sheet of information was given to the respondent.)

You are Herman Voss, an employee in the graduate office at North Carolina State University (NCSU) who works with international students. All international graduate students must

1. Take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) before being admitted.
2. Both tests can be taken at a U.S. Consular office or affiliate (Ex. Colombo-Americana in Colombia).
3. Complete an application for admission and send a certified transcript of undergraduate studies.
4. Scholarships may be awarded to second year graduate students.
5. Rooms for single students are available in dormitories. Some apartments are available for married students.
6. An M.S. may be completed in two years. A Ph.D. may be completed in three additional years.
Example No. 4: Telephone Conversation

(The following information was printed on separate sheets. This sheet was given to the caller.)

You are Roger Young.
You're in Dallas, Texas, and you're not sure of the arrangements made for you to go to Bucaramanga for two months as an ICP consultant.

Call ICP.
Ask the necessary questions to find out
1. When you are to travel
2. If the reservations have been made for your travel.
3. If someone will meet you.
4. Where you are to stay.
5. When you are expected at Guatiguara.

Important Note: You met ___ (the man you're calling) one time when you and your wife, Vera, visited Bucaramanga.

(This sheet was given to the recipient of the call.)

All the information you need to respond to a call you receive from a man in the U.S is given here. Respond to the call when you receive it.

You are ___ (your name)___, a professional man at ICP.
You receive a call from Roger Young, an engineer in Texas, who will fly to Bucaramanga on October 1 to serve as a petroleum production engineer.
Roger Young has a Ph.D. in engineering.
Reservations have been made for him at the Hotel Chicamocha.
Lorenzo will pick him up at the airport when the early plane arrives from Bogota.
You have scheduled a meeting with other ICP employees at 2:00 on October 1.

Important Note: You met Roger Young one time when he and his wife, Vera, came to Bucaramanga.
Example No. 5: Cloze Exercise

The daily trips to ____________ for the first week ____________ the intensive English program ____________ two surprises. The first ____________ came on Saturday!

The ____________ came down steadily almost ____________ day, and on Friday ____________ only gone a few ____________ when we knew ____________ have problems. "What’s the ____________?" we heard someone say. "__________ the driver stopping?" Then ____________ saw several cars ____________ trucks up ahead, and ____________ stopped in the road. ____________ driver knew the road ____________ heart, and he tried to ____________ through, but he finally ____________ up and stopped the bus. ____________ road was just blocked! ____________ brought some old shoes, ____________ I quickly changed to ____________, and we began our ____________ to the farm. The ____________ walked in front along ____________ muddy road, and I ____________, enjoying our mile walk ____________ our classroom. But that ____________ the only adventure we ____________ in our weekend of ____________!

On Sunday the sky ____________ become dark when we ____________ our bus to return ____________ Guatiguara. Our driver took ____________ easy as we approached ____________ small bridge, and we ____________ that heavy rain had ____________ the river to flood ____________ the bridge. My students ____________ go to pieces. They ____________ joked and made fun of ____________ one and a half ____________ delay. Even our driver ____________ waiter didn’t complain.

I ____________ impressed by the good ____________ of Colombian people and ____________ way they often accept ____________ problems.

Note: In the following order, these words should fill the above blanks: Garantivar, of, held, one, rain, all, we’d, miles, we’d, matter, Why’s, we, and, they’d, Our, by, get, gave, The, I’d, so, them, walk, students, the, followed, to, wasn’t had, classes, had, boarded, to, it, the, saw, caused, over, didn’t just, the, hour, and, was, manners, patient, life’s.
Exhibit No. 6: Cloze Exercise

When we were down _______ the valley, the mountain _______ like a small challenge, ______ we decided we’d get _______ and hike to the _______ on the peak. Many thought _______ rather climb than study _______. Some made fun _______ those of us who _______ out of shape. "________ the matter?" they asked. "You’d _______ take it easy or _______ have to give up _______ you get to the _______!"

The hike wasn’t easy _______ all. Some of the _______ took turns helping _______ grey-haired teacher up the _______, and everyone made _______ to the top. Right _______ we found that we’d been _______; the cross wasn’t on _______ mountain’s top! It was _______ a small mesa, and _______ the mountain path continued _______ a steep slope. Some _______; some walked to another _______; others climbed all _______ way to the very _______. The view was beautiful, _______ we decided it made _______ to begin our walk _______. We knew we’d all _______ to pieces if we _______ too late for the _______ which Luis had prepared _______ us.

Note: In the following order, these words should fill the above blanks: in, seemed, and, busy, cross, they’d, English, of were. What’s, better, you’ll, before, top, at, students, their, mountain, it, the, mistaken, the, on, then, up, stopped, mesa, the, peak, but, sense, down, go, were, snack, for.
Example No. 7: Jazz Chant

Latin music, Latin music
Brings on dancing binges!
English bodies, English bodies
Lack the proper hinges!
## Appendix B

### ENGLISH COURSE EVALUATION

Your evaluation of our English classes this year at ICP is important. Please respond to the following questions, using an agree-disagree scale as follows:

- **SA** = strongly agree
- **A** = agree
- **U** = undecided
- **D** = disagree
- **SD** = strongly disagree

Indicate your opinion by circling the appropriate letter(s) following each of the statements presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Structure and Organization</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The relaxed atmosphere was good.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Each class should have met at least two hours instead of the scheduled one and a half hours.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. There should have been more out-of-class assignments (homework).</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Three class meetings per week were adequate.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Classes would have been more effective if they had met in the early morning.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. More time should have been made available for individual instruction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. A laboratory with tapes for individual study would have been helpful.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. More time for out-of-class practice should have been planned (such as informal social gatherings.)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. The emphasis on sounds in English was helpful.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Lessons on stress and intonation were helpful.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Making speeches was good practice.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Seeing myself on video tape was helpful.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Evaluating video-tapes of others' speeches helped me to recognize my own errors.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Quizzes in which blanks had to be filled in from what the teacher read helped to improve my listening skills</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Reading exercises were helpful.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B. (continued)

16. Idiom instructions and exercises were helpful.  
   6 7 0 0 0
17. More time should have been devoted to discussion of U.S. culture.  
   0 6 5 1 1

Progress
18. Anything learned in this class could have been learned at Colombo-Americana.  
   0 0 3 2 8
19. The four months of study were worth my time.  
   2 7 2 0 0
20. My vocabulary has been increased.  
   3 8 2 0 0
21. My listening skill has improved.  
   5 8 0 0 0
22. My reading skill has improved.  
   3 9 1 0 0
23. My English has improved.  
   3 9 1 0 0

On-Going Use of English at ICP
24. Planned activities at ICP where English could be spoken would be helpful (such as lunches, sports activities, or social activities).  
   8 5 0 0 0
25. Brief meetings in divisions in which English is the designated language would be helpful.  
   9 4 0 0 0
26. If more English classes are offered at ICP, I will be interested in taking those classes.  
   9 3 1 0 0

Suggestions and Comments (Use the back of this page if you need more space.)

Thank you for participating in the English classes and for the time and thought you have given to this evaluation.
   Pat Nave

NOTE: Only thirteen of the seventeen students of the first semester responded to this questionnaire.
Works Cited


