Mosaic

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editor

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In This Issue...

Nonverbal Communication: How important is it for the Language Teacher?

W. Jane Bancroft

Nonverbal communication in the language classroom can have dramatic results – not only on the students' liking for the subject but also in the cognitive domain. Research shows that the personality and expectations of the teachers , their gestures, tone of voice and facial expressions have an important effect on language acquisition.

The term "nonverbal" is commonly used to describe all events of human communication that transcend spoken or written words. Nonverbal communication is said by researchers to be important because of the role it plays in the total communication system, the tremendous quantity of information cues it gives in any particular situation, and because of its use in such fundamental areas of our daily life as politics, medicine, the arts, advertising, television, job interviews, courtship and education. It has been said, for example, that when we receive contradictory messages on the verbal and nonverbal levels, we are more likely to trust and believe in the nonverbal message. It is assumed that nonverbal signals are more spontaneous, harder to fake and less apt to be manipulated. (It has also been speculated that those who prefer nonverbal cues over verbal ones show a right-brain dominance.) Estimates have it that, in a normal two-person conversation, the verbal components carry less than 35 per cent of the social meaning of the situation; more than 65 per cent of the social meaning is carried at the nonverbal level.

Learning has a cognitive domain, an affective domain, and a psychomotor domain. The cognitive domain of learning deals with the attainment of knowledge and the acquisition of intellectual and analytical abilities and skills. The affective domain is concerned with teaching effects which have some "emotional overtone": student likes and dislikes, attitudes, values, beliefs, appreciations and interests. (The third domain, the psychomotor domain, emphasizes muscular or motor skills and is mainly concerned with the student's ability to reproduce a neuromuscular coordination task.) In most learning environments, attention is usually focused on the cognitive domain. The affective domain, centred around the creative of positive feelings, is,

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The language graduate who never reads a professional journal and participates only minimally, if at all, in professional meetings, will stagnate. There is an onus on the profession in all areas to upgrade and keep abreast of current developments in the field.
– Peter Heffernan

Research in Progress

International/Heritage Languages in Canada:

The State of the Art

A research project is currently underway, headed by Professor Anthony Mollica, to update the status of International/Heritage Languages at all levels of instruction across Canada. The research received financial support from the Multiculturalism Program, Canadian Heritage.

The research has two main goals:

1. to compile up-to-date statistics on the variety of language programs available, student enrolment, and teacher participation and training, and
2. to define language policies at the levels of provincial and territorial governments, universities and school boards.

The first phase of our research is data gathering. We need your help in this daunting enterprise.

If you ar able to provide information on any International/Heritage language program anywhere in Canada, whether it is school-based or community-based, please contact the researcher:

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We are particularly interested in any background information about institutions (school boards, private groups), and associations which offer courses in Heritage/International languages at all levels of instruction.

All information will be gratefully received and credit given to our informants.

Culture Shock

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however, very important in the media age. The nonverbal as well as the verbal messages that teachers employ have an important effect on students' liking for the teacher, the subject matter, and the discipline area.

As was shown by Rosenthal in *Pygmalion in the Classroom* (1968), expectations can be transmitted nonverbally, and subtle nonverbal influences in the classroom can have dramatic results. According to Neill (1991: 79), enthusiastic instructors use more marked nonverbal signals, such as gestures and range of intonation, than would be normal in informal social interaction. (They also tend to give much more intense listening signals (Neill 1991: 87). Andersen and Andersen (1982) found that half of the variation in student liking for teachers was associated with the kind of nonverbal communication the teachers employed. Teachers who use positive gestures, eye contact and smiles produce interpersonal closeness, reduce psychological distance, and have a positive impact on student performance. At the secondary and university levels, videotape studies suggest effective teachers convey more enthusiasm nonverbally than average or ineffective teachers. It has been found that effective language instructors of university courses make more use of nonverbal signals to focus student attention on important points, to demonstrate or illustrate points they are making, and to encourage students by approaching them. Average teachers are more likely to use directing or threatening signals or to show anxious signals (Neill 1991: 66).

According to Lozanov's Suggestopedia (1978, 1988), "doubleplaneness" is a very important factor in education. The teacher's body language and tone(s) of voice are instrumental in the educational process, as is the physical and social environment. The teacher should have the confidence and the artistic presentation skills of the trained actor. Attention should be paid to classroom design (wall colours, seating arrangements, etc.) as it has a definite influence on student participation, performance and learning in the classroom. So, too, does the "social environment", consisting of the staff of the educational institution.

According to Mark Knapp (1980: 4-11, 21), the theoretical writings and research on nonverbal communication can be divided into the following seven areas:

1. kinesics or body motion;
2. physical characteristics (including physique or body shape, general attractiveness, clothing);
3. touching behaviour or haptics (tactile communication is probably the most basic or primitive form of communication);
4. paralanguage (including voice qualities and vocalizations);
5. proxemics (the study of the use and perception of social and personal space);
6. artefacts (including the use of objects such as jewellery and cosmetics and other decorations that may serve as nonverbal stimuli);
7. the environment or environmental factors within which the interaction occurs.

An eighth category, oculesics, or the study of messages sent by the eyes, is another important area for nonverbal communication. The areas which are especially important for education in general and language teaching in particular are:

- kinesics
- paralanguage
- proxemics
- the environment and
- oculesics.

According to Knapp (1980: 98, 115), we initially respond much more favourably to those whom we perceive as physically attractive than to those who are seen as less attractive or ugly. Higher-ranked clothing is associated with an increase in rank, whereas lower-ranked clothing is associated with loss of rank. According to Dhority (1992: 56), the teacher's mode of dress is very important; appearance and dress are part of the total nonverbal stimuli that influence interpersonal responses between teacher and students. While tactile communication is considered by many to be the most effective form of communication, and while therapeutic methods employed to put individuals "in touch" with themselves and others continue to enjoy popularity, touching behaviour in today's society can – and increasingly does – elicit negative or hostile reactions. The use of haptics, therefore, puts teachers at risk.

Kinesics

Kinesics is communication that occurs via body movement, for example:

- gestures
- posture
- movements of the head and body
- facial expressions.

According to Ekman and Friesen (1969a), categories of nonverbal behavioural acts are:

- emblems
- illustrators
- affect displays
- regulators, and
- adaptors.

i) Emblems

These are stylized nonverbal acts or signs that have a direct or specific verbal translation or dictionary definition, usually consisting of a word or two or a phrase. They are usually produced with the hands, but they may also be produced by the face. There is general agreement among members of a culture or subculture on the verbal "translation" of these signals. Culture-specific emblems appear to be learned very much the way language vocabulary is learned, and they are usually performed with awareness and with an intent

to communicate a specifiable message.

Because they originate within cultures, emblems may cause particular difficulties for the international traveller and for the foreign language student. The meaning the traveller has for a gesture may not be shared by the citizens of the host country. If one is to travel successfully and/or be truly competent in communication in a foreign language, one needs to learn the gestures (especially emblems) of the foreign country or culture (Wylie 1977). Emblems may also pose a problem in classes where a given language (say, English or French) is being taught as a second language to students of various cultures whose emblematic gestures are very different from those used by the instructor (Neill 1991: 134).

ii) Illustrators

These are nonverbal acts or signs that are intimately linked to spoken discourse and serve to illustrate (or amplify on) what is being said verbally. Illustrators are done primarily with the hands, but they can also be done with the head, the face, and the total body. Patterns of illustration appear to be learned in the family which, in turn, reflects the larger social or cultural pattern. Mediterranean peoples, for example, use more illustrative gestures than do Anglo-Saxons. In all, six major types of illustrators have been identified:

- pointers
- pictographs
- spatials
- kinetographs
- batons, and
- ideographs.

The pointer simply points to some present object in the sense of "I want that one." The pictograph draws a picture of the referent in the air. According to Neill (1991: 69), pantomiming, which is frequently used in the classroom – especially the language classroom – is allied to pictographs; it involves demonstrating an action with a standardized imaginary object. The spatials show size or depict a spatial relationship. The kinetographs recreate some bodily action. The batons are movements which accentuate or punctuate; they beat out the tempo of the verbal statement (e.g. "I really [gesture] mean it [gesture]"). Ideographs trace the flow of an idea. They tend to be rolling or flowing movements that help the receiver see the connection between ideas or the direction in which a line of thought is moving.

Many factors can alter the frequency with which illustrators are displayed. More illustrators are used, for example, in face-to-face communication than over an intercom; more illustrators are used in "difficult" communication situations when words fail or when the potential receiver is unable to comprehend the intended message. Individuals who are excited and enthusiastic display more illustrators than do those who are not. Research has shown that effective teachers who are involved with their ideas and who play a theatrical role in the classroom use a great many illustrative gestures (Neill 1991: 153). Suggestopedic teachers are trained to use gestures in their presentation of the lesson material and pantomime to suggest the meaning of new words in the foreign language (Bancroft 1975; Lozanov 1978, 1988).

iii) Affect Displays

These are nonverbal signs or sign patterns that display affective or emotional states. The face is the primary source of affect (i.e., it is considered the primary site for communication of emotional states); however, the body can also be read for global judgments of emotion. Affect displays can repeat, augment, contradict, or be unrelated to verbal affective statements. Affect displays are often not intended to communicate (i.e. they are involuntary), but they can be intentional.

Certain display rules – cultural and professional – are learned regarding facial expressions, although these rules are not always present at a conscious level of awareness when we use them. Although the face is capable of making hundreds of distinct movements and communicating many emotional states, those displays that have been uncovered by virtually every researcher since 1940 (and which are called primary affect displays) are:

- surprise
- fear
- anger
- disgust
- happiness
- sadness, and
- interest.

In addition to information about specific emotions, people also seem to judge facial expressions primarily along the following dimensions:

- pleasant/unpleasant;
- active/passive; and
- intense/controlled.

The face is a multi-message system, which can communicate information regarding one's emotional state(s) and personality as well as interest and responsiveness during interaction. It is a particularly important means of communication in the classroom. One of the most powerful (and most positive) cues is the smile on the face. A smile may temper a message that may otherwise be interpreted as extremely negative. A smile is one of the primary ways by which affiliativeness is communicated and may produce positive therapeutic effects in relationships. A teacher who smiles frequently communicates "immediacy"; i.e., warmth, closeness, spontaneity and enthusiasm (Andersen and Andersen, 1982) and, since smiles are reciprocal behaviours, invites smiles in return. Students at all levels are sensitive to smiles as a sign of positive interest and concern.

iv) Regulators

These are nonverbal acts or signs that maintain and regulate the give and take of speaking and lis-

tening between two or more interactants. They tell the speaker to continue, repeat, elaborate, hurry up, become more interesting; they give the other person a chance to talk; and so on. Familiar regulators associated with turn-taking include head nods, hand movements, and eye behaviour. Some of the behaviours associated with greetings and leave-takings may be regulators to the extent that they indicate the initiation or termination of face-to-face communication. Regulators seem to be on the periphery of our awareness and are generally difficult to inhibit. While they have an involuntary nature when we use them personally, we are very much aware of these signals when they are sent by others.

Head nodding is a kinesic behaviour that communicates "immediacy," especially when head nods are used by a listener to respond to a speaker (Andersen and Andersen, 1982). It is believed that in both primates and human beings, head nods originated as ritual bowing gestures which signal submission and approachability. Research indicates that head nods are approval-seeking behaviours and tend to be used to increase communication and friendliness. Head nods are used by effective classroom teachers to communicate warmth, spontaneity, and enthusiasm and to provide reinforcement to students. These nods provide a student with feedback that the teacher is listening to, and understanding his/her communication.

v) Adaptors

Adaptors are nonverbal markers that originate in the satisfaction of self needs, such as eating, cleansing oneself, rubbing tired eyes. Adaptors are not intended for use in communication as such, but they may be seen when a person is alone or they may be triggered by verbal behaviour in a given situation associated with conditions that occurred when the adaptive habit was first learned. (For the observer, the adaptor may have sign value; it may be an informative indicator of the performer's inner state.)

Ekman and Friesen (1969a) identified three types of adaptors:

- self-directed
- object-directed, and
- alter-directed.

Self-adaptors refer to manipulations of one's own body, such as holding and rubbing. These self-adaptors will often increase as a person's anxiety level increases. Alter-adaptors are learned in conjunction with our early experiences with interpersonal relations -giving to, and taking from another, attacking or protecting, establishing closeness or withdrawing. Object-adaptors involve the manipulation of objects and may be derived from the performance of some instrumental task - such as writing with a pencil. There may be a close link between body-touching and preoccupation with oneself, reduction of communicative intent and withdrawal from interaction. Teachers who use too many adaptors convey tenseness and uncertainty.

Some of the investigations of body movements and posture have examined various communication outcomes rather than specific types of nonverbal behaviour. These outcomes or communicative goals include:

1. attitudes of liking/disliking
2. status and power
3. deception.

According to Mehrabian (1972: 16-30), liking is distinguished from disliking, and positive attitudes from negative attitudes toward another or others by more forward lean, a closer proximity, more eye gaze, more openness of arms and body, more direct body orientation, more touching, more postural relaxation and more positive facial and vocal expressions. Insofar as kinesics is concerned, postural relaxation and open body positions communicate increased warmth or "immediacy." Folding one's arms and holding one's legs tightly together communicate defensiveness and coldness. The use of an arms-akimbo (hands on hips) position by a standing communicator is indicative of dislike. Teachers who are tense and anxious and who maintain closed body positions are perceived as cold, unfriendly and not very responsive; they communicate negative attitudes to their students. Andersen and Andersen (1982) found that more "immediate" college teachers demonstrate more relaxed body positions.

Other investigators have explored similar liking/disliking behaviours under the labels of "warm/cold." Warmth indicators include a shift of posture toward the other person, a smile, direct eye contact, and hands remaining still. A "cold" person looked around the room, slumped, drummed fingers, and did not smile. Warmth cues were effective in increasing verbal output from the other person.

Kinesic "immediacy" is also communicated through more gestural activity. Howard Rosenfeld (1966, 1967) found that smiles, head-nodding and a generally higher level of gestural activity characterized approval seekers. Mehrabian (1971) found that more hand and arm gestures per minute were a part of communicating greater affiliation with others. Andersen and Andersen (1982) found that more "immediate" college teachers employed more overall body movement. In contrast, as reported in Neill (1991: 33), uncertain teachers communicate their uncertainty to the class by "movements of escape," i.e., agitated, jerky movements, as opposed to the smooth movements of the confident individual. Some researchers believe that people who have very similar attitudes will share a common interaction posture, whereas non-congruent postures may reflect attitudinal or relationship distance. It has been shown that posture sharing (the extent to which teachers and students assume symmetrical body positions) has a positive effect on student-teacher rapport (Andersen and Andersen 1982). Generally speaking, we do communicate in-

terpersonal attitudes of liking and disliking, warmth and coldness, persuasion and affiliation, through our body movements. Properly used gestures (especially expansive ones) communicate interest and warmth, not only in interpersonal interactions and therapy, but also in teaching. Gestures not only help the teacher to illustrate ideas, but also convey more enthusiasm for his or her subject area.

According to Knapp (1980: 138), Mehrabian's work provides us with information concerning the role of status in kinesic communication. Generally speaking, high-status or dominant persons are associated with less eye gaze, postural relaxation, greater voice loudness, more frequent use of arms-akimbo, dress ornamentation with power symbols, greater territorial access, more expansive movements and postures, and greater height and more distance. Teachers should be aware of research in this area and, while they should not strive to be too "authoritarian," they must, according to Lozanov (1978), play the dominant or leadership role in the classroom.

An increasing number of researchers are asking which nonverbal cues are linked to deception and/or convey a negative image. Nonverbal behaviours linked to deception and which are to be avoided by teachers include:

- higher pitch;
- less gaze duration and longer adaptor duration;
- fewer illustrators (less enthusiasm)
- more hand-shrug emblems (uncertainty);
- more adaptors (especially face play adaptors) and less nodding;
- more speech errors;
- a slower speaking rate; and
- less immediate positions relative to their partners (Knapp 1980: 140; Ekman and Friesen 1969b).

Nonverbal signals such as bodily signs of nervousness and vocal signs of stress may contradict speech, and leak information that the teacher is uncertain, has low expectations for, or limited interest in a particular student. Because of a lack of conscious awareness, emotions which a teacher would prefer to remain hidden may be revealed by "nonverbal leakage" (Neill 1991: 8). Teachers who wish to have a positive impact on their students should follow Lozanov's advice and consciously create a harmony between the verbal and nonverbal elements of their presentations in the classroom.

Oculesics

The study of messages sent by the eyes is called oculesics. Throughout history we have been preoccupied with the eye, its expression of human emotion, and its effects on human behaviour. Our fascination with the eyes has led to the exploration of almost every conceivable feature of the eyes (size, colour, position) and the surrounding parts (eyebrows, circles, wrinkles). One important area of research (and one that relates to pedagogy) is concerned with eye contact (mutual glances, visual interaction, gazing or the line of regard).

Gaze refers to an individual's looking behaviour, which may or may not be at the other person, whereas mutual gaze refers to a situation in which the two interactants are looking at each other, usually in the region of the face. Gazing and mutual gazing can be reliably assessed. What should be considered "normal" gazing patterns will vary according to the background and personalities of the participants, the topic, the other person's gazing patterns, objects of mutual interest in the environment, and so on. According to Knapp (1980: 185 ff.), gazing involves regulating the flow of

- communication
- monitoring feedback concerning others' reactions
- expressing emotions
- communicating the nature of the interpersonal relationship.

Gazing and mutual gazing is often indicative of the nature of the relationship between two interactants. With all other variables held relatively constant, it has been found that gazing and mutual gazing are moderate with a very high-status addressee, maximized with a moderately high-status addressee, and minimal with a very low-status addressee (Knapp, 1980: 188-89). Gaze is related to dominance in adults of both sexes (Neill, 1991: 39).

Eye contact communicates interested and friendly involvement with another/others. Generally speaking, we seem to gaze more at people we like (Mehrabian, 1972; Knapp, 1980: 189). Therapist warmth is related to more glances at patients. Extroverts seem to gaze more frequently than introverts and for longer periods of time, particularly when they are talking. A person who is trying to be persuasive will generally look more. We gaze more when we are interested in someone else's reaction and when we are interpersonally involved. Listeners seem to judge speakers with more gaze as more persuasive, truthful, sincere and credible. It has been found that speakers rated as sincere had an average of 63.4 per cent eye gaze, whereas those who were rated insincere had an average of 20.8 per cent (Knapp, 1980: 194).

Eye contact, then, is an invitation to communicate. Numerous researchers have shown eye contact and gaze to be important components of "immediacy." (For example, Argyle (1967: 105-116), found that perceptions of intimacy were, in part, a function of increased eye contact.) Eye contact performs an important monitoring function which communicates to others that one is "taking account of them," is available for, or open to communication, and/or is really involved in the discussion, once it begins.

Andersen and Andersen (1982) have found that eye contact is an important part of teacher "immediacy." Avoiding the gaze of the

"audience" by constantly looking at one's notes conveys a lack of enthusiasm and a lack of competence. Teachers who use more eye contact can not only more easily monitor and regulate their classes (gaze is a feature of dominant behaviour), they can also communicate more warmth and involvement to their students. (Absence of visual attention is perceived as unwillingness to become involved; fixing the gaze on one or two individuals at the expense of others may be interpreted as favouritism). Greater eye contact increases the opportunity for communication to occur and enables the teacher to respond to the many nonverbal behaviours of students such as eye-closing, for example, a sign that the student is closing off incoming stimuli. Teachers should position themselves so that they can and do establish eye contact with every student in the class. It is probable that "immediacy" cannot be successfully communicated by a teacher in the absence of eye contact.

Paralanguage or Vocalics

Paralanguage (i.e., language alongside of language) deals with *how* something is said, as opposed to *what* is said; vocalics deals with the nonverbal elements of the human voice. Paralanguage or vocalics encompasses the range of nonverbal vocal cues surrounding common speech behaviour. According to Trager (1958), paralanguage has the following components:

a) voice qualities (including such things as pitch range, rhythm, tempo, articulation, resonance);
b) vocalizations (including vocal characterizers, vocal qualifiers and vocal segregates).

Vocal characterizers comprise such elements as

- laughing
- crying
- sighing
- yawning
- coughing
- groaning
- yelling
- whispering

Vocal qualifiers include

- intensity (over loud to over soft);
- pitch height (over high to over low) and extent (extreme drawl to extreme clipping)

Vocal segregates are related to the somewhat broader category of speech nonfluencies and include such things as "uh-huh," "um," "ah," and variants thereof.

Work on such topics as silent pauses and intruding sounds would also be included in this category.

Numerous research efforts have been aimed at determining whether certain personality traits are expressed in one's voice, and whether others are sensitive to these cues. Studies of content-free speech indicate that the voice alone can carry information about the speaker and his or her emotions, and that emotional meanings can be communicated accurately by vocal expression. (For example, affection can be conveyed by a soft, low, resonant voice speaking at a slow rate, with a regular rhythm, steady and slight inflection and slurred enunciation (Knapp, 1980: 217). Speakers vary in their ability to produce expressed emotion. Some people are more conscious of, and have more control over their expressive behaviour. Individuals who have a high degree of self-monitoring behaviour are better able to express emotions intentionally in both vocal and facial channels (Knapp, 1980: 215).

In addition to its role in personality and emotional judgments, the voice also seems to play a part in retention and attitude change; this has been primarily studied in the public speaking situation. Typical prescriptions for use of the voice in delivering a public speech include:

1. use variety in volume, rate, pitch, and articulation;
2. decisions concerning loud-soft, fast-slow, high/low or precise-sloppy should be based on what is appropriate for a given audience in a given situation;
3. excessive nonfluencies are to be avoided.

Nonfluencies and hesitations are likely to be interpreted by a listener as symptoms of stress and uncertainty; overuse may reduce the speaker's credibility, appearance of competence, and effectiveness.

It is clear that we can communicate various attitudes with our voice alone -for example, friendliness, hostility, superiority, submissiveness. Mehrabian and Williams (1969) conducted a series of studies on the nonverbal correlates of intended and perceived persuasiveness. Extracting only findings on vocal cues, the following seem to be associated with both increasing intent to persuade and enhancing the persuasiveness of a communication:

- more intonation
- more speech volume
- higher speech rate and
- less halting speech.

A speaker's perceived credibility may profoundly affect his or her persuasive impact.

Vocalic communication is an important nonverbal element in the classroom. According to Neill (1991: 74), effective teachers use more varied and more animated intonation than ineffective teachers who use more neutral intonation. Great importance is attached in Suggestopedia to the voice qualities and intonation(s) of the language teacher. In the presentation of the lesson, the teacher is expected to vary the pitch, loudness and tempo of his or her speech in the manner of a well-trained actor. During the "concert session," the voice has to be positioned correctly so that a soft, soothing, persuasive tone is achieved for the artistic reading of the lesson-text over a background of baroque music. In a series of studies it has been shown that interpersonal liking is, in large part,

a function of vocal cues (as well as facial cues), rather than verbal/content ones. Voices which are expressive, enthusiastic and varied (particularly in pitch and tempo) seem to convey the greatest "immediacy."

Another vocalic behaviour which communicates interpersonal "immediacy" is laughing. Considerable literature exists indicating that this vocal characterizer operates physiologically as a tension reducer and contributes to relaxation, especially during tense interactions. As reported in Andersen and Andersen (1982), an early study by Barr (1929) found that "good" teachers engaged more often in laughter, including laughing along with the class. According to Neill (1991: 90), effective teachers use a mixture of self-deprecating and pupil-directed humour. (Self-directed humour on its own is seen as weakness, pupil-directed humour alone as stern and/or sarcastic). It seems that teachers who are more willing to laugh with their students communicate more warmth and spontaneity to the class.

Vocal cues frequently play a major role in determining responses in human communication situations in general and in the classroom in particular. Vocal cues do not only concern *how* something is said; frequently (like other nonverbal cues), they are *what* is said. Teachers should pay heed to Lozanov's advice: there should be a harmony between the vocal message and the verbal message.

Environmental Factors

This category concerns those elements that impinge on the human relationship but are not directly a part of it. Environmental factors include the furniture, architectural style, interior decorating, lighting conditions, colours, temperature, additional noises or music and the like, within which the interaction occurs. Variations in arrangements, materials, shapes, or surfaces of objects in the interacting environment can be extremely influential in our lives and in the outcome of an interpersonal relationship as well as of a teaching situation.

Mehrabian (1976) argues (like Lozanov) that we react emotionally to our surroundings and that the nature of our emotional reactions can be accounted for in terms of how aroused (i.e., stimulated, active and alert) the environment made us feel, how pleasurable (or satisfied) we felt and how dominant (or submissive) we are made to feel. Environments that are novel, surprising, crowded and complex will probably produce feelings of higher arousal. According to Knapp (1980: 54-55), more intimate communication is associated with informal, unconstrained, private, familiar, close, and warm environments.

Each environment is made up of three major components:

1. the natural environment – geography, location, atmospheric conditions;
2. the presence or absence of other people; and
3. architectural and design features, including movable objects.

Insofar as the natural environment is concerned, temperature fluctuations and changes in humidity and barometric pressure have an impact on groups and individuals. According to scientific investigations, monotonous weather is more apt to affect one's spirits; seasonally one does one's best mental work in late winter, early spring and fall; and the ideal work temperature should be neither too high nor too low. Classroom temperature should be maintained between 66 degrees and 72 degrees Fahrenheit, according to Todd-Mancillas (1982), in order to assure optimal performance when students are engaged in mental and physical activities. During winter months, classroom humidity should not fall below 30 per cent or rise above 50 per cent, as humidity levels either above or below this range are associated with student illness and absenteeism. Serious effort should be made to provide air conditioning in the classroom during the summer months.

Other people can be perceived as part of the environment and will have an effect on one's behaviour. These people may be regarded as "active" or "passive" participants, depending on the degree to which they are perceived as "involved" in one's conversation (by speaking or listening). The presence of others may increase our motivation to "look good" in what we say or do, which may either be detrimental (information-distorting) or beneficial. Lozanov, as has been mentioned above, emphasizes the importance of the social environment, as well as the physical one.

Insofar as architectural and design features are concerned, a greater sense of well-being and energy has been found in rooms that are well-appointed or beautiful, as opposed to neutral or ugly (Maslow and Mintz, 1956; Mintz, 1956). Well decorated, attractive classrooms convey warmth and excitement to students, whereas a drab, depressing classroom suppresses student enthusiasm and spontaneity. To facilitate positive classroom interactions, educators should select and arrange in an esthetically pleasing fashion furnishings and other artefacts which lend a pleasant ambiance to the learning environment. The presence of plants and art objects (as in suggestopedic language classrooms), as well as an appearance of neatness and the attractive arrangement of furniture, all have an impact on students' comfort level and performance. Students, where appropriate, should also be encouraged to contribute "art work" to the classroom (Todd-Mancillas 1982).

Studies have provided evidence on the impact of visual-esthetic surroundings on the nature of human interaction in the following areas: colour, sound, lighting, movable objects, structure and design.

Colour

Findings from environmental research suggest that colours, in conjunction with other factors, influence moods and behaviour. Although optimal use of colour probably varies as a function of context and individual preference, according to Mehrabian (1976: 90), the most pleasant (and relaxing) hues are blue and green, and the most arousing hues are red, orange and yellow. There is a body of educational and design literature which suggests that carefully planned colour schemes have an influence on scholastic achievement. For younger students, classrooms should be painted warm colours, including yellow, peach and pink, while for older students (secondary school age and older), classrooms should be painted cooler colours, including blue and blue-green (Todd-Mancillas 1982). Lawrence Rosenfeld (1977) summarizes research done by Ketcham (in 1958) establishing empirical support for the proposition that learning is affected by variations in colour of classroom environments. Children's IQ scores can be dramatically affected by variations in classroom colour. Those playing in warm, bright-coloured rooms experience an IQ gain while the reverse is true for children playing in white, black or brown rooms. In addition, students feel more pride when attending schools with refurbished colour schemes. Todd-Mancillas (1982) suggests that, when it is not possible to repaint classrooms, every effort should be made by teachers to incorporate colour variations in the actual learning and testing materials.

Sound

The types of sounds and their intensity also affect interpersonal behaviour. A large enclosed space – such as an open classroom – creates a relatively hostile acoustic environment for the purposes of teaching (Neill 1991: 122), although carpeting can reduce the noise of impact from students' feet, the movement of furniture, etc. and partitions can attenuate noise levels. According to Mehrabian (1976: 49-51), music can have a strong and immediate effect on arousal level and pleasure. Generally speaking, the more pleasant the music, the more likely we are to engage in "approaching" rather than "avoiding" behaviour. According to Todd-Mancillas (1982), playing soothing music is one means of generating positive emotions and cooperative behaviour. The effect of slow, simple, soft and familiar sounding music is to lower our arousal levels while maintaining pleasure and eliciting an easygoing and satisfying feeling. Since there is a positive correlation between soothing music and the heightening of pleasant interactions, music helps to establish suitable class moods and counteract class boredom. In addition, according to Lozanov (1978, 1988) and Schuster and Gritton (1986), the use of suitable music in the classroom stimulates memory and memorization (of language materials, for example).

Lighting

Lighting also helps to structure our perceptions of an environment, and these perceptions may very well influence the types of messages we send. If we enter a room that has dim lighting, we may talk more softly and presume that more personal communication will take place there. Bright lights, on the other hand, are more apt to be arousing, add to initial discomfort in interacting with strangers, and thus lead to less intimate interaction. Whenever possible, in the classroom, ordinary reduced-spectrum fluorescent lighting should be avoided with either incandescent or full-spectrum fluorescent lighting used instead (Todd-Mancillas, 1982). In the atmosphere of fluorescent lighting, children experience significantly greater nervous fatigue, eye strain, anxiety, irritability, lapses of attention, hyperactivity, and decreased classroom performance. Many educators have expressed the belief that natural light sources are preferable to artificial light sources and that all classrooms should have windows, preferably ones that open. In any event, static lighting systems which disallow modification of light intensity or hues, regardless of the weather conditions or the classroom activity, and which make for marked contrasts between lit and unlit areas, are to be avoided. Individuals seek maximum control over their physical environment. When they are prevented from exercising this control, there is frequently a diminishing quality of their work and interpersonal relationships (Todd-Mancillas, 1982). Lighting in the classroom, as in the best restaurants, should be adjusted to minimize jarring harshness and to communicate a sense of comfort.

Movable Objects

Since the arrangement of certain objects in our environment can help structure the communication that takes place there, we often try to manipulate objects in order to bring about certain types of responses. The desk seems to be an important object in the analysis of interpersonal communication. Most classrooms have a desk separating the students and their teacher, and it has been shown that student-teacher relationships are affected by desk placement. (A desk can be not only a physical barrier but also a psychological one.) Researchers have labelled environments which separate communications as sociofugal and environments which bring communicators together as sociopetal (Andersen and Andersen, 1982). (Sociofugal classrooms include fixed seating in rows, teachers hidden behind podiums, and hard chairs for students). "Unbarricaded" professors have been rated by students as more willing to encourage the development of different student viewpoints, as ready to give individual attention to students who need it, and as less likely to show undue favouritism. Teachers who want to convey warmth and "immediacy" must ascertain if the classroom has physical (or psychological) barriers which reduce communication.

Structure and Design

Architecture can also have an affect, whether positive or negative, on human interaction. Like office buildings and dormitories, classrooms tend to be constructed from a standard plan; they are rectangular in shape with straight rows of chairs. Classroom seats are often permanently attached to the floor for reasons of tidiness and ease of maintenance. Most classrooms have some type of partition (usually a desk) that separates the teacher from the students. Overall classroom structure and design can have a definite impact on student-teacher behaviour.

Traditional row and column arrangements are appropriate in those instances where listening and note taking are the preferred instructional activities (Sommer, 1977). Modular arrangements are appropriate for facilitating multiple small group interactions, such as those that occur when students are divided into several small groups and all are working independently toward the resolution of a given problem (Todd-Mancillas, 1982). Sommer found that the odds of a student participating in class discussion are slightly greater for small classes. In seminar rooms, most participation comes from students who are seated directly opposite the instructor. In straight-row rooms, the following observations have been made:

1. students within eye contact range of the instructor participated more;
2. there was a tendency for more participation to occur in the centre sections of each row and for participation to decrease from the front row to the back (this tendency, however, was not evident when interested students sat in locations other than those that provided maximum visual contact with the instructor);
3. participation decreased as class size increased (Sommer, 1969, 1974).

It has been found that high verbalizers tend to select seats in the zone of participation more than low or moderate verbalizers (Knapp 1980: 67ff). As reported in Neill (1991: 113) high verbalizers are also likely to be the most dominant individuals. Central seats in university classes are the most strongly defended if someone else takes them during a break; the central group of students is also more committed to learning.

Since spatial distance, proximity and setting can have a great impact on human interaction and communication, teachers should consider arrangements that reduce the number of students who are seated behind other students. For purposes of encouraging discussion among the greatest number of students, a circular or horseshoe arrangement is preferred, with the instructor at the head. As in the original suggestopedic language class, this arrangement fosters interaction among the students, but also maintains the instructor as a moderator in control (Harrison, 1974: 153-54; Bancroft, 1975). Insofar as group interaction is concerned, the more visual information one has about other group participants, the more likely one is to engage in verbal exchanges with them (Todd-Mancillas, 1982). Teachers should also move around the classroom to establish contact with all their students. Environment influences our behaviour, but we can also alter environments to serve our own communication goals.

Proxemics

Proxemics is generally considered to be the study of our use and perception of social and personal space. The influence of architectural features on residential living units and on communities is of concern to those who study human proxemic behaviour. Our personal space orientation is sometimes studied in the context of conversational distance and how it varies according to sex, status, roles, cultural orientation and so forth. The term "territoriality" is frequently used in the study of proxemics to denote the human tendency to stake out personal territory – or untouchable space – much as do animals and birds in the wild.

Our use of space (our own and others') can dramatically affect our ability to achieve certain desired communication goals. In *The Hidden Dimension* (1966), Edward Hall identified three types of space:

- fixed-feature space, the type created by immovable walls and objects;
- semi-fixed feature space, created by large objects such as chairs and tables;
- informal space, the bubble of personal space individuals carry with them as they move from interaction to interaction.

He further classified informal space into four subcategories:

- intimate
- casual-personal
- social-consultative, and
- public.

Intimate distances (at least for Americans) range from actual physical contact to about 18 inches; casual-personal extends from 18 inches to 4 feet; social-consultative (for impersonal business) ranges from 4 to 12 feet; and public distance covers the area from 12 feet to the limits of visibility or hearing. Spatial relationships in cultures other than American, with different needs and different norms, may, however, produce different distances for interacting.

Distance is said to be based on the balance of approach and avoidance forces. Factors modifying the distances we choose include:

1. age and sex;
2. cultural and ethnic background;
3. topic or subject matter (pleasant topics attract);
4. setting for the interaction (lighting, temperature, noise and available space affect interaction distance);
5. physical characteristics of one's interaction partner;
6. attitudinal and emotional orientation (subjects choose closer distances when interacting with a "friendly" person);

7. characteristics of the interpersonal relationship (as status is associated with greater space or distance in our culture, those with higher status have more and better space and greater freedom to move about);
8. personality characteristics (closer distances are seen when people have a high self-concept, high affiliative needs, are low on authoritarianism and are "self-directed") (Knapp, 1980: 82 ff).

In addition to studying human spatial behaviour in overcrowded situations and in conversation, some researchers have examined such questions in the context of meetings or small groups – particularly with regard to seating patterns. The study of seating behaviour and spatial arrangements in small groups is known as small-group ecology.

It appears to be a cultural norm that leaders are expected to be found at the head or end of the table. Cooperation seems to elicit a preponderance of side-by-side choices in seating. Spatial orientation and seating selection are influenced by

- age and sex;
- motivation (as motivation for contact and conversation increases, persons want to sit closer to, or have more eye contact with another/others);
- introversion/extroversion (extroverts choose to "sit opposite" and disregard positions which would put them at an angle; introverts generally choose positions that keep them at a distance, both visually and physically) (Knapp, 1980: 90 ff).

It is clear that our perceptions and use of space contribute extensively to communication outcomes.

At least two proxemic cues are thought to signal warmth and spontaneity during communication and create a positive atmosphere in the classroom:

a) reduced or closer physical distance between teacher and students;
b) body angle of the teacher in the classroom.

Since researchers have found that communicators stand closer to people they like than to those they dislike, closer distances result in more positive attitudes and establish greater teacher/student contact and closeness in the classroom. Many teachers, according to Andersen and Andersen (1982), fail to establish much interpersonal closeness with a class because they remain physically remote. Standing at the front of the room or sitting behind a desk are all too common forms of teacher behaviour. In these "remote" positions, it is quite difficult for a teacher to develop a close relationship with a class, even if the teacher wants to develop such a relationship. Nervous, insecure teachers establish their "territory" around their desk, whereas confident teachers use the entire room and frequently move among their students. As reported in Neill (1991: 111), "itinerant" teachers are viewed as more encouraging and more supportive of students' ideas.

The second proxemic behaviour that signals closeness and warmth is body angle or body orientation. More "immediacy" is communicated when two or more interactants face one another (Andersen and Andersen (1982). Many teachers do not fully face their class when teaching. They hide behind desks, podiums and tables and often continuously write on the blackboard, with their backs to the students. Not only does this behaviour reduce the "immediacy" between teachers and their classes, it also removes any visual communication between the teacher and the class members. In this situation, the teacher cannot see behaviour problems, fails to receive any nonverbal communication from the students, and cannot field questions or comments. Experienced teachers learn to do most of their blackboard work before the class begins and spend the largest amount of their teaching time facing their "audience."

According to Knapp (1980: 231 ff), the ability to send and receive (encode and decode) nonverbal cues accurately is essential for developing social and professional competence. Effective senders of nonverbal signals are outgoing, active and popular. According to research findings, individual teachers (among other professionals) who were rated "excellent" at their jobs did well on the PONS instrument (the Profile of Nonverbal Sensitivity, developed by Robert Rosenthal, which measures nonverbal decoding ability). Much of the ability we have in sending and receiving nonverbal signals is derived from motivation, attitude, observation, and experience.

It is well established in the study of interpersonal communication that nonverbal behaviours can communicate feelings of warmth and positive emotions (Andersen and Andersen, 1982). Of the three domains of learning, nonverbal "immediacy" behaviours have their most powerful impact on affective learning. However, since affective learning influences cognitive achievement, the skilled use of nonverbal communication probably has positive effects on cognitive learning as well (Andersen and Andersen, 1982).

Students feel more positively disposed towards teachers who are skilled in the positive use of nonverbal communication. In fact, half of the variance in college student liking for an instructor could be accounted for by "immediacy" behaviours of the teacher (Andersen and Andersen, 1982). A study of college student preferences indicated that responding warmly to students was a major characteristic of an ideal teacher. In contrast, college students responded very negatively to a formal, "nonimmediate" instructor. Across many grade levels, it has been observed that creating a friendly atmosphere is one of the most important elements in establishing good teacher-student relationships.

"Immediate" teachers (i.e., those who are warm, spontaneous and friendly) also produce a more positive student attitude toward the course, the subject matter, and the educational institution. As reported in Neill (1991: 158), a nonverbally positive teacher is regarded by students as more effective. College students are more likely to enrol voluntarily in future classes in the same subject area when the instructor is "immediate." On the other hand, researchers found a greater percentage of students interested in dropping a class after a session with an instructor who was formal and "nonimmediate" (Andersen and Andersen, 1982).

Teacher "immediacy" is also associated with more class participation. A variety of experimental studies have consistently supported the finding that subjects in conditions with more "immediate" interactants are more likely to engage in greater amounts of verbal interaction. When college students were given a description of an instructor, 56 per cent of the students initiated interaction with the instructor when the latter was described as warm, while only 32 per cent initiated interaction when the instructor was described as cold (Andersen and Andersen, 1982).

Students are also more likely to engage in continued reading and studying when the teacher is "immediate." A strong relationship has been reported for secondary school students between affiliative behaviours of teachers and self-initiated work by students. A more "immediate" teacher is more persuasive. Andersen and Andersen (1982) found that students of more "immediate" teachers are more willing to engage in the communication strategies suggested in the course.

While some researchers suggest that a genuinely warm, positive attitude towards students is probably a prerequisite for a teacher to communicate "immediacy" successfully, others have found that teachers who were trained to be more enthusiastic did, indeed, develop more enthusiastic attitudes towards teaching (Andersen and Andersen, 1982). Nonverbal skills may be acquired (or improved upon) by observation and imitation of model-teachers, by self-observation and/or by specific training or instruction. Direct training approaches which focus on specific behaviours are considered more effective than indirect training, which aims to change more general personality attributes. According to Neill (1991: 157), effective direct training courses in nonverbal communication contain at least two of the following four elements: presentation of theory, training in discriminating nonverbal signals, modelling of the skills involved, and practice of the new skills with feedback. Since teacher "immediacy" behaviours have the potential to make the teacher and the learning environment more attractive to the student, it is important that all teachers have an awareness of, and skill in nonverbal communication. Clearly, knowledge of research in nonverbal communication is essential for the language teacher.

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Oops... we've goofed!

The last issue of **Mosaic** incorrectly identified the dates for the conference of the *Canadian Association of Second Language Teachhers/L'Association canadienne des professeurs de langues secondes (CASLT/ACPLS).*

The Association will hold its annual meeting in conjunction with SPEAQ at the Hotel Four Points, Laval, Quebec, from October 23-25. This is the 25th annual convention for SPEAQ.

For further information about the conference and a copy of the program, contact:

CASLT/ACPLS
176 Gloucester Street
Suite 310
OTTAWA, Ontario
K2P 0A6
Tel. [613] 234-6567
Fax: [613 230-5940.

The Editor regrets the error and apologizes for any inconvenience it may have caused our readers.

Our best wishes to CASLT and SPEAQ for a successufl Conference!

The Effect of Free Reading on Language and Academic Development: A Natural Experiment

Jin Sook Chang and Stephen Krashen

Free reading done outside of school makes an important contribution to literacy development. Most of the studies showing this, however, are correlational: those who read more show greater literacy development (Krashen, 1993). It is therefore possible that factors other than reading were responsible for the readers' greater literacy development. Studies using multivariate designs (Gradman and Hanania, 1991; Y.O. Lee, Krashen, and Gribbons, 1996; Constantino, S.Y. Lee, Cho and Krashen, 1997) can help resolve this problem, but far preferable is a natural experiment in which subjects differ only in the variable under examination. The case of two Korean-speaking junior high school students comes close to being such a natural experiment.

Both J and K came to the United States when they were in the sixth grade, and neither had studied English in Korea (at the time they lived in Korea, English instruction began at grade six). They went to the same public school in the United States, and went to the same junior high school. They were also in the same or similar ESL classes throughout their elementary and junior high school years in the US.

J and K also come from similar socioeconomic backgrounds, but there is a profound difference in parental attitudes: J's parents encourage their children to read. J had been an avid reader in her first language. In an informal interview, conducted in her first language, J told one of us (J.C.) that in Korea she read comic books, story books, biographies, and magazines, and read, on the average, one book a day in Korean. K read much less in Korean, averaging only one book every two months.

Progress after two years in the United States

J's reading habit transferred to English. She continued to read, in English, the kinds of books she enjoyed in Korean. After two years in the United States, she owned 39 books in English and averaged about one English book every two days. K owned only five English books and read about one book per month in English.

The difference between J and K's English proficiency was not evident in their ESL grades: both were "A" students in ESL classes. An informal study, however, confirmed that a difference clearly existed. We obtained two writing samples from their summer ESL class (see appendix) and presented these samples to 25 graduate students in Education at the University of Southern California enrolled in a class in language education. We asked our judges to indicate, using whatever criteria they wished, which composition was better. *All twenty-five judges rated J's composition to be better.*

Progress after six years in the United States

Four years later, J continued to read more in English, reading for pleasure about one hour per day. Her reading included *Newsweek, and novels such as Clockwork Orange, Damion, Go Ask Alice,* and *The Color Purple.* K reported that she reads English magazines, but only for about 20 minutes at a time, two or three times a week.

J has been very successful in school. She was selected to participate in the Young Scholars Conference in Washington, D.C., one of

three selected from Los Angeles. Her overall grade point average in school is A+ (4.3), her grade in summary writing in English class is "A" and her grade in analytic writing is "B". K is a "C" student in English and her grade in writing is "C".

Discussion

Our results can be interpreted in several ways. They are fully consistent with the "Reading Hypothesis", the hypothesis that free reading is responsible for our competence in writing style as well as other aspects of literacy. There are other possible explanations, however:

1. The Writing Hypothesis:

In addition to reading more than K, J also wrote more, both in Korea and in the United States. While in Korea, J wrote regularly, about two to three times per week and attempted to write several short stories. K reported that she wrote some letters and occasionally made entries in a diary, but most of her writing was required school writing. In the US, J continues to write voluntarily in English about three to four times per week, while K writes in English (letters or notes) only two or three times per month. It could thus be argued that differences between J and K are consistent with the Writing Hypothesis, the hypothesis that writing practice promotes growth in literacy. There is, however, good reason to doubt the correctness of the Writing Hypothesis: those who write more do not necessarily write better (Krashen, 1993).

2. The Instruction Hypothesis:

While J and K had similar amounts of formal instruction in English, perhaps one of them took it more seriously. Interviews with both subjects revealed, however, that both of them valued grammar study (but both also felt that reading was more valuable). Both also valued the use of the dictionary in early stages.

Of course, we can never be sure that J and K did not differ in other ways. While they both said they valued grammar, it is possible that J studied much harder. Nevertheless, we can eliminate many social, environmental, and school factors in trying to explain why J did so much better, and the difference in free reading is quite clear.

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Appendix

Comparison of Two ESL Students' Writing

Subject: K

Writing Sample #1:

Autobiography

I was born in the Korea, and I live in los angeles gramercy place. my family is very kind

I have a dad, mom, and my brother I go to John Burrough Junior high school

I like a food my best favorite food is Korean foo. Korean foos is a hat, I lke food. But I'm not fat I was thin My best friensa is Jua Yean and Jou Young. Tpp many people I have best friend my hobby is doctor and madel I was playing the free time and listen the radio Korean sang. I have pepal dag it's stupid dag.

I was go to beach at sunday. Very fun eating, the hamburger. We are playing the game. and than I am bruring a swim very hat at sunday.

Yesterday is my birthday, But my family and my causin going to a restaurant a lot of eating a rice and beef and my father and my cousin gave to me a presents. and I go to the disey land

—- King is very fun and we are eating a hamburger yesterday was a very fun day.

Writing Sample #2

Title: My favorite season.

My favorite season was a summer. Because. At summer. we are can swim. And Go to camp. Wating the watermelon. I like a watermelon. But a farmmer. was a trouble. earth was a drought. Many people wear a short T-shirt. The winter was very cold. The cloth buy the at season was very disgusting. Because spend a lot of money for on cloths But I like it. buying the cloth very cold I don't like a winter. At summer is the temperature is high. and winter is the Temperature is low. Many people like a warm day. I like a too but warm day. Fall is cool. Spring is a little cold Summer came on and we are goes. to the beach. Summer was very hot every Day. I like a winter. Because very cold.

This season many people go to beach I am go to beach too. Very hot there.

So, Season was very beautiful.

Subject: J

Writing Sample #1:

My Autobiography

I was born on March 5th 1979. I have lived in Korea. On September 22nd 1990, I came to the United States if America. I was eleven years old. I'm living in the United States of America almost two years but still, I don't speak English a lot.

When I was coming in the United Staes of America, I was very afraid to speak to the forin people from other countries. Because, I couldn't speak English a lot. I worried a lot about when I speak English, I will speak wrong way. But, now I ddon't worry about that I don't speak English very much. Because my father told me to don't worry about that, and I will speak English well someday.

My favorite T.V. show is Beverly Hills, 90210 and I Love Lucy. I don't really speak English, but i enjoy it.

I like all kinds of music, Especially, I like pop and soul best.

My best friend is Jung Hwa Kim who sits in front of me in the summer school in period 1st and 2nd. She's very nice and she take cares of everything that she likes.

I want to be a doctor.

Writing Sample #2

What is My Favorite Season?

My Favorite Season—-I like all the seasons, because i like all kind of weather.

First, in spring, the weather is warm. The children and adults feel like small plants are growing and they fall sleep often

The place where I wan to spend my time is country, because I want to see the plants' growing.

In summer the weather is very hot, children and adults go the the beach.

I want to go to the mountain to get cool and drink a clean water from the mountain

In fall, the weather is cool, the people are wearing shorts and T-shirts.

I want to go to everywhere that I can spend time with my friends.

In winter, the weather is very cold and the people wear the heavy clothes.

I want to visit Korea. Because, Korea have all four seasons and we can see the snow in winter.

I love all the seasons and

How good the seasons are!

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Learner Responses to a Communicative Language Program

Merle Richards

Adult learners develop strategies to suit their own learning styles.

Communicative language programs can take many forms, but Brown (1994) views them as sharing certain basic characteristics. The overriding goal is communicative competence, not just linguistic correctness; that is, learners are expected to acquire pragmatic, functional language by using it in meaningful and unrehearsed ways. Fluency and accuracy are both essential goals, but at times, the focus on accuracy may be deferred in order to encourage active participation by the learners. Both receptive and productive language are developed in a context of natural language use. Brown comments that the challenge to the language teacher is to

> move significantly beyond the teaching of rules, patterns, definitions, and other knowledge "about" language to the point that we are teaching our students to communicate genuinely, spontaneously, and meaningfully in the second language (p.15).

Communicative language methods are designed to develop oral fluency and comprehension (Doggett, 1997). Cook states, "Language learning in this style is the same as language using" (1996:187). However, within the classroom setting, it is more usual to employ a combination of traditional pedagogy, including drills, grammar and translation, and more open, communicative methods, such as small-group discussion, language experience, and content-based learning (Mitchell, 1988). Programs with a strong communicative component are most often intended for English as a Second Language (ESL) or French as a Second Language (FSL) learners acquiring the language of the mainstream community in which they live or work.

An exception to this was an adult second-language program designed to teach a Native language (NL) to English speakers. Based on communicative language teaching principles, the six-month program illustrated different ways that adult learners respond to a communicative approach as well as the spontaneous strategies they develop to support their own learning. Although strategies were not deliberately taught or discussed in class, all the students were conscious of their own ways of learning, and strove to develop tactics to expand their knowledge and skills. The techniques they described include many that are familiar, but also some that are peculiar to the adult context. The following are some examples in the students' own words of learning strategies they found useful.

Repetition

This was the most frequent strategy, with several variations:

- "Repeating out loud, hearing and writing out the sounds and words";
- "much repetition, saying and writing, reinforced by writing and memorizing";
- "write, rewrite";
- "combine memorizing and writing out";
- "memorizing text, like the prayer at opening exercises – now I can say the whole thing."

Practicing out loud was essential for most students: "Initially I talk English in the accent, gradually I begin to think in the logic of the language and forget the English thinking." Oral practice also

included trying deliberately to use words that had been learned, "memorizing key words, looking at the structure, using phonics as an aid to understanding", "using [a word], saying it, connecting it to the meaning and making it my own." Several students used tape recording for pronunciation checks, or checked with a teacher or community member.

Tapes were also used for listening practice:

- "I read passages aloud, make up a tape, and listen in bed."
- "Listen, train your ear... hearing the words will help with the reading."

One student enthused:

- "A CD-Rom is a terrific aid because you can hear and say it; it's a terrific aid which I use."

Singing was one way to provide practice and memorization:

- "sing the words and sounds in your mind."

One student

- "learns the songs first – this helps bring out the words";

another prefers to

- "sing it slowly and then build up the tempo till I know the word or sentence."

Another "sings each sentence, gives each a special tune, then memorizes it, reads it, and sees how it fits the tune.

Visualization and Visual Aids

Imaging was used mainly to help develop word sense, spellings, and understanding of morphological patterns:

- "I visualize the meaning directly with the roots";
- "the sounds and forms correlate with the meaning."

Devices such as flash cards were popular.

- "I stick words on the wall"; "put my homework on the fridge, surround myself with my vocabulary";
- "labelled everything at work and make a point of observing or using the labelled things – it works";
- "I colour-code the different word classes";
- "put construction paper on my walls with useful words and stare at them in the morning."

One student went farther, labelling things around her, making drawings and illustrations, and producing entire notebooks: "The grandchildren help."

Focus on Vocabulary and Meaning

Students named a variety of tactics for learning words and phrases, including manipulation, word lists, and mnemonics. Along with all those described above, several personal approaches were named:

- "Sometimes I rhyme the words or use visuals; sometimes I connect meaning with a word that my parents used, and that helps";
- "I classify it as verb, noun, adjective, and I subdivide them into categories, like animals. I know the root word and break it down."
- "I consider it a gift from my grandma" [and study every night].

Some students preferred to work from sound to meaning: "It's important to understand and know the syllable chart, saying the syllables and emphasizing the phonics, saying the syllables slowly, then speeding them up."

For some students, attending to meaning meant trying to avoid English:

- "Forget translation – don't make it comprehensible in English – this eliminates the step, saves some energy";
- "Just go to the goal – think in the language."

Sharing with the family

Like many adult learners, the students found that family life made it difficult to study. However, most also wanted to share their new language with their families, and they used that as an opportunity for practice. Many were quite creative in providing occasions to use NL:

- "I share the learning with my nieces and nephews through storytelling."
- "My husband's a speaker, he checks my pronunciation, and I teach him to read."
- "I speak with the family, pass along what is learned so the family is learning too."
- "I get my children to challenge me."
- "I study and practice with my Dad."

One mentioned "conversating", i.e., listening to his father and uncles speak NL, trying to join in, using what language he could.

All of these strategies are familiar to language teachers, but the fact that they were generated spontaneously by the learners is a feature of communicative programs. The communicative classroom requires student initiative in figuring out how to learn, what to learn, and what is needed at a particular stage of development. The instructor encourages, guides, and interprets, but the learners construct their own competence through their efforts to understand and produce meaningful exchanges, approaching fluency – i.e., native-like competence – through successive approximations or levels of interlanguage (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1997).

Teacher contributions

The students had strong views about what aspects of instruction contributed to their learning, but disagreed on the value of particular strategies. However, all agreed on the benefit of having co-instructors for the program. The daily presence of two fluent speakers who could answer their questions, model usage, listen, correct and re-model, and simply use NL naturally in front of them was seen as a great advantage.

Most wanted even more input, as one put it:

- "great chunks of language to know how the language should sound."
- "We need to hear the language in context, long conversations with native speakers", said another.
- "Speak, speak, how do you expect us to speak when we don't hear it" [enough]

  ... we need
- "conversation in NL, in context, explanation comes later";
- "...the Opening [prayer] in the morning, the repetition alone, hearing it, is important, we can say it" ...
- "we need to use the words in different ways, time it, scramble it up, play with the vocabulary."

The students also appreciated clear explanations given about usage or forms in NL.

- "She helps us to get the pronunciation right."

said one student, and all agreed that this was an important teacher function. Most felt they wanted more correction and repetition of correct forms, as well as taped models for practice at home.

Group work was cited as a way to provide practice without the tedium of waiting for a turn in the whole class. Several students also named role-playing as a way to motivate practice that encouraged language manipulation as students took different roles and imagined different situations.

Again, these responses are characteristic of communicative programs. They show the learners' awareness of the need to encounter real language used in natural ways, even in the artificial classroom setting, and the sense that participation in discourse, both as listeners and as speakers, is essential to language growth.

Hindrances to learning

Some learners, however motivated to attain fluency, cannot feel secure in a communicative program. Because classwork is situation-based, there is little deliberate sequencing of grammar; the rich language context is viewed as providing the data from which learners can build their competence, just as first-language learners do. "The stages are not taught to classroom learners, but they nevertheless emerge in the course of acquisition" (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1997: 20). But for learners with a low tolerance of ambiguity (Brown, 1994) such a context can appear formless and unplanned: "We bypassed the basics." "It appears to be mainly off the cuff; there's no rule, no method."

The NL learners found the communicative approach extremely stressful, because the natural language input always included elements beyond their level of comprehension and production. They understood that they were not expected to comprehend or perform perfectly, but were frustrated and impatient for success. This was especially true for those who had been most successful academically; the teacher's assurances that they should "be patient; we'll come to that in a few weeks" annoyed rather than soothing them. Those who had previously studied NL in more traditional classrooms felt that they "just needed more practice" to become fluent; they had not expected that in a communicative setting where acquisition is emphasized over teaching, the unrehearsed language would make them feel like incompetent beginners.

Cankar advises, "Don't worry about understanding everything that is said" (1997: 18). The students who were able to follow this counsel waited out the uncertainty and frustrations until the last weeks of the program, when "things finally started to come together and make sense." For these students, "bits and pieces suddenly seemed to have a place", comprehension increased rapidly, and speech became more comfortable. They had reached the threshold of fluency, and were beginning to use the language conversationally.

Several others, however, felt that they were unable to profit from the communicative approach. They were uncomfortable with its openness, wanting the guideposts of sequenced lessons that would give them an opportunity to show that they had learned what was taught. "We need focused dialogue with proper correction."..." give us structured drill; say it, tell me how it's supposed to sound."

This group wanted weekly tests based on lesson goals and incorporating grammar and vocabulary. But they mistrusted the evaluation methods used by the instructor, whose "tests" were natural language samples intended to indicate to the instructor how the students were understanding, and the stage at which they were able to manipulate the language. For these students, however, the lack of "right answers" appeared as a lack of feedback and evidence of progress.

Cankar suggests, "Listen for mistakes of your classmates" (1997: 19). But the students in this group were worried about hearing poor language models from their classmates, and wanted more frequent correction of both grammar and pronunciation. Being told to wait, that their questions would eventually be answered, left them angry. They wished for a "set curriculum, small but well thought out"; "basics to start off, not [plunge] headlong into complex material"; "a theory which we could then apply." Along with more oral practice, they wanted explanations of grammar, weekly tests based on the lesson content, and more correction of errors so that they could practice correctly.

Concerned that their learning needs were not being met, the dissatisfied students decided to become an independent, self-directed learning group. They agreed to focus on verbs, oral conversation skills, and conversational vocabulary – just those elements they felt would lead to fluency. However, without the guidance and support of a teacher,

they made little progress, while the students who remained in the class all progressed toward conversational abilities.

This case illustrates the complexity of programming for adult learners and the difficulty of finding an approach that suits differing learning styles. In any community, varied educational backgrounds, personal styles and goals create challenges for the teacher attempting to work with a whole class. In this case, the stress caused by the loose structures of the communicative approach actually prevented a group of students from remaining in class long enough to acquire some fluency. It is ironic that this group included those with the strongest background in language study, because several of them were advanced students who had enrolled in the course expecting their prior knowledge to provide the basis for fluency, and that all they needed was oral input and practice. But their need to analyse and explain every utterance kept them from the real usage they sought, and hence from their goal of fluency. They failed to distinguish between linguistic and communicative competence and hence remained at a precommunicative stage of language development (Ramirez, 1995), learning about the language instead of learning to use it.

Discussion

It is likely that these students could succeed in a communicative language program if certain changes were made. First, the nature of the program would have to be clearly explained at the start, rather than simply allowed to unfold through the duration of the course. Students should understand that language acquisition is very slow in the initial stages, but that once the foundation is strong, subsequent learning can be rapid. Therefore, they need not feel that time is being wasted during the initial period of slow progress.

Krashen's (1985) distinction between language learning and language acquisition may be helpful, especially for those who have done extensive language "learning" in sequenced lessons. They may have to suspend their usual expectations and study habits while embarking upon the acquisition process. This justifies the advice to wait and attend, using whatever language they can to communicate, even before full comprehension and correct speech are possible. Learners must also realize that the stages of acquisition are not dependent on sequenced presentation (Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford, 1997) and that any rich language context provides material for acquisition; this may help to allay concerns that items are not being presented in a "proper" order.

On the other hand, the instructors could make adjustments without compromising the program's communicative basis. Scaffolding (Faltis, 1997) was used to bridge the comprehension gap by providing devices to support interpretation, such as Total Physical Response, drawings, and props. This could be extended to meet learner needs for structure by incorporating procedures in which "precommunicative (structural practice of linguistic forms and their meanings) and communicative activities (functional language use and social interaction practice)" (Ramirez, 1995: 5) are both used in the classroom, the former providing lesson input which is then used functionally in discourse. In the NL program, the opening address, conventional forms such as greetings and leave-takings were treated in this way. The students learned them by rote, practiced them, then gradually came to distinguish and use the separate meanings and elements. Broadening the use of this technique might provide more security and evidence of success for anxious students.

Offering or participating in a communicative language program is an exciting and daunting adventure. All the risks of learning are present in the communicative classroom, where there is no familiar syllabus or set of progress tests. Each group charts its own path and its own destination. But for the determined and persistent learner, the reward is fluency – the ultimate goal of any language acquisition program.

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The Editor cordially invites readers of **Mosaic** to submit articles for possible publication in future issues of the journal. Articles my be sent by fax (905) 788-2674 or by e-mail: soleil@iaw.on.ca See p. 2 for further information and details.

Teaching Culture in a North American Context: An Interview with Giovanni Caboto

Gabriella Colussi Arthur

Introduction

The "interview" is an extraordinarily flexible device for language teaching. The language instructor may use it for the purpose of presenting complicated structures and vocabulary, or, by offering it as a model, allow students to create more complex "conversations" on specialized topics. In the following case, students will learn to discuss a historical topic and are given the opportunity learn specialized vocabulary, such as navigational devices, for example. Language instructors should be encouraged to include this device in their teaching.

The following text may be used as is for the purpose of translation into the target language, or, alternatively, instructions for an original composition may be devised for the students using this model interview as a point of departure.

An "Interview" with Giovanni Caboto

During the recent June 24 festivities in Bonavista, Newfoundland commemorating Giovanni Caboto's discovery of Newfoundland, festivities in which Queen Elizabeth II, numerous foreign dignitaries – including Italy's Presidente della Repubblica, Oscar Luigi Scalfaro – Canadians of all provinces, and especially Newfoundlanders gathered to greet the arrival of the replica of the *Matthew* and its crew, it was rumored that a **Mosaic** newscrew spotted the ghost of Giovanni Caboto milling about his statue on Cape Bonavista, just as the *Matthew* was entering the harbour. One of the bold and daring reporters approached the spirit and captured the following interview on tape.

Mosaic: John Cabot, Signor Giovanni Caboto, is that really you?

Caboto: *Ah, signorina* I cannot believe my eyes! Look in the harbour. My beloved three-masted cog, the *Matthew*, it sails before my eyes once again. How could this be?

Mosaic: Today is June 24, 1997, 500 years after your maiden voyage. Canada, England and Italy are celebrating your first landfall in Newfoundland! I am a news reporter from *Mosaic*, a journal for language teachers. Please, Signor Caboto, would you kindly recount the events that led up to your voyage in the North Atlantic. For example, why did you not sail with Christopher Columbus on behalf of Spain?

Caboto: *Ah, il mio amico,* Cristoforo Colombo, my dear boyhood friend. You see, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella had already sponsored

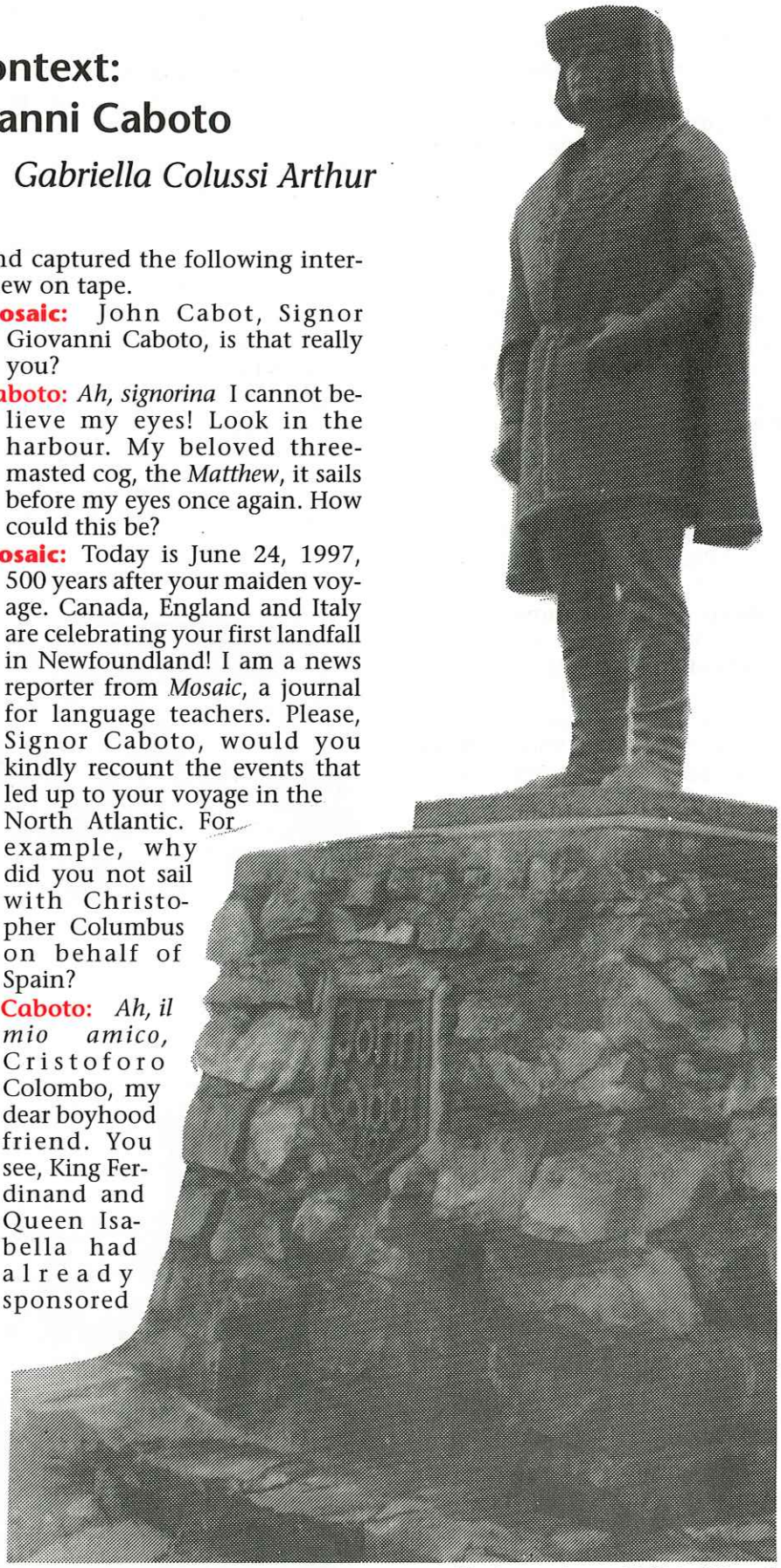


Photo courtesy of Mitchell Smyth, Travel Editor, *Toronto Star*

Colombo on a voyage to the South Atlantic. They were very fond of him, *Regina* Isabella especially, and, given the very famous discovery for which he had earned the title "Admiral of the Ocean Sea"...

Mosaic: *(interjects):* Of course, the discovery of North America on October 12, 1492...

Caboto: *Sì, sì,* that very voyage. It had been quite expensive, and for some years after that Spain could no longer afford further grandiose voyages of discovery.

Mosaic: And not only that, *signor* Caboto, don't forget the unsettled politics of the time. Was Spain not threatening conflict with France, and weren't Spain and Portugal envious of one another?

Caboto: I see you know your history. Relations in Europe were indeed very complicated in my time, what with ruling kings and ruling popes. Spain closed its doors to me, so I tried Portugal, too, but the king there was not remotely interested in my plans.

Mosaic: And, so, you returned to Venice disappointed?

Caboto: Indeed, *carissima,* but what you must know is that while visiting the royal courts of Lisbon and Spain, I had had occasion to become acquainted with English merchants, particularly those from Bristol. They spoke to me of their great interest in seeking a northern route to Asia across the Atlantic Ocean.

Mosaic: But, of course. Wasn't it true that these merchants were looked upon favourably by Henry VII and were anxious to find expert geographer-mariners, such as yourself, so that they could outfit new expeditions to the west?

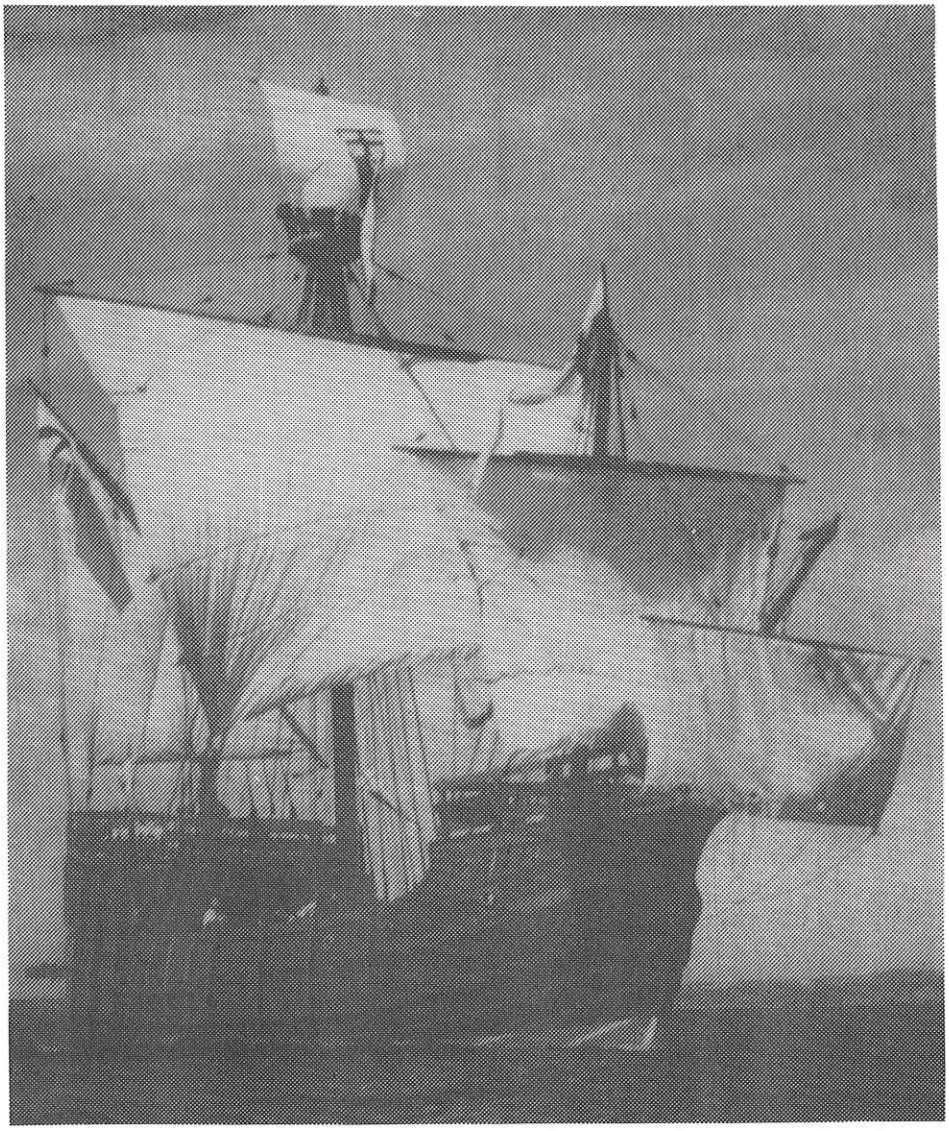
Caboto: Exactly. For this reason, my family and I moved to Bristol. Do you know of my wife, Mattea, and my three sons, Lodovico, Sebastiano and Sancio?

Mosaic: Certainly. You named the *Matthew* in your wife's honour, didn't you? And to your sons you used to recount stories of Cathay and Marco Polo, in the hope of finding a previously uncharted route to Cathay. As for Cathay, *signor* Caboto, our world refers to it as China now. But, please... continue.

Caboto: As I was saying... we moved to Bristol because many ships, sailors, merchants and traders lived there. Making a living for my family would have been easy and there was the hope that I would find a ship to search for Cathay...

Mosaic: And so it came to be, *signor* Caboto. By 1496 you were well known as a sailor and merchant, the sea captains of Bristol knew you very well, and so did the merchants especially, Robert Thorne and Hugh Elyot, two of Bristol's most eminent merchants, is that not so?

Caboto: Ah, *i signori* Thorne and Elyot. They were most interested in voyages of discovery which would chart new routes, not only for trading purposes, but also for finding access to new fishing grounds. The English, you see, had had very bad encounters with the people of Iceland over fish; they had found fishing grounds on occasion, but did not know how to reach them consistently. After hearing my plans, the English were more than pleased to sponsor me financially, but in order to undertake the voyage, I required permission from the



king. What do you know of King Henry VII?

Mosaic: Well, we know that King Henry VII had become interested in voyages of adventure as early as 1480 and 1481, thanks to successful Bristol merchants. Apparently, he had missed the opportunity to sponsor your friend, Christopher Columbus, in 1492, because he simply could not afford to sponsor him. England had impoverished itself during the Hundred Years War with France. But, following Columbus' successful first voyage, and his visit to Bristol once again in 1494, in which he met with English merchants and recounted tales of his discovery, King Henry was moved to enter the race for the East via the West.

Caboto: And so it was. The King granted me permission for the voyage, on condition that I would negotiate trade treaties with Denmark-Norway concerning commerce with Iceland. In the meantime, Bristol merchants petitioned the King for permission to explore, claim and establish trade in lands still unclaimed by other countries. I was granted the charter on March 5, 1496, allowing me to pursue my lifelong dream: to search for Cathay via the West.

Mosaic: Tell me, *signor* Caboto, is it true you had a first, failed attempt at the voyage?

Caboto: It was a foolish miscalculation of human strength on my part, rather than an unsuccessful attempt really. With the King's charter in hand, I had rushed back to Bristol, located a vessel, assembled a crew and hurriedly began to prepare for the trip. Everyone worked tirelessly for two weeks. When the time arrived to set sail, I had before me an already exhausted crew, not to mention a single, worn ship. As we started north up along the east coast of England, and continued around the southern tip of Ireland, we faced terribly bad weather as well as rapidly declining provisions of food and water. The crew began complaining, arguing among themselves, requesting almost immediately to return to Bristol. I did not want to give in, but realized that I could not undertake the crossing under those conditions. And so we returned.

Mosaic: But it was a blessing in disguise, wasn't it?

Caboto: Yes, indeed. Rather than meeting me with disappointment and disapproval, Thorne and Elyot agreed that the departure had been prepared in haste. They agreed that I should have a brand new vessel and equip it with the very best crew possible. So we hired the finest shipbuilders in town, designing and building as you can see from the current *Matthew,* a seventy-foot ship with a three-masted cog. The design was fashioned after the trading ships of the Mediterranean, and made the *Matthew* the fastest vessel of its time.

Mosaic: Speed would be her strength, but over-buoyancy in storms her weakness, isn't that so?

Caboto: Precisely. Hence we searched for the finest sailors in Bristol and eventually found French, Italian and English officers and crewmen. Our secret plan lay not only in hiring a crew that would be able to manoeuvre such a sleek ship in difficult seas, but also in selecting the best provisions for the long voyage. We not only stocked the usual salt pork, beef and fish, but also hard bread, dried beans and peas, foods that would not easily rot! In the end, Thorne and Elyot not only agreed that we had finally planned properly, they also came along on the voyage themselves in order to ensure that there would be no further misadventures!

Mosaic: Tell us of the crossing itself!

Caboto: We set sail from Bristol during the second week of May, 1497. Now, as the *Matthew* was not a large ship – this you can see for yourself by looking at her – we had to live entirely on the deck: work, eat, and sleep! We carried fresh water in large barrels on the deck, manned pumps to empty out seawater from the hull, and appointed a sailor as a constant lookout, whose duty was to spot from the crowsnest rocks, ice, and other possible dangers.

Mosaic: *Signor* Caboto, how did you manage the navigation once you reached the end of the route well known by other Bristol traders, travelling from England and Ireland northwest to the coast of Iceland?

Caboto: There were well known methods to follow those: relying on the North Star, the sun, the wind direction and sea currents. But, as you will know, I was a great believer in the theory known as "the circle of navigation." I was equipped with a quadrant, traverse tables and traverse board, a compass and dividers, sounding lead, a glass, a notebook of mathematical tables, a cross-staff and even an astrolabe for taking altitudes of stars. The whole point of the voyage was reconnaissance, a scouting mission to find the Eastern Coast of Cathay and to chart the course along the route.

Mosaic: In total, how many days did the voyage take?

Caboto: Thirty-five days in all. Finally, at 5:00 a.m., the lookout spotted land, this *prima terra*

vista, what your country calls Cape Bonavista, Newfoundland.

Mosaic: Tell us, *signor* Caboto, why have you returned today?

Caboto: As you know, I, my son, Sancio and the *Matthew,* all perished during the second voyage begun in May 1498. We had secured a fleet of five ships and were to live in this land for an entire year. But so much went wrong! Storms, icebergs, growlers, sickness, all conspired against us.

Mosaic: And, there is still so much left unresolved about your fate. Won't you tell us today?

Caboto: I'm afraid I cannot. Let us simply rely on one of the many accounts your people tell of me in which my son and I perished at Grates Cove, north of Cape Spear.

Mosaic: Are you aware that your second son, Sebastian, may be responsible for much of the controversy concerning your discoveries? During his lifetime, he promoted only himself, played down your discoveries, and, unlike Columbus' son, Fernando, did not bother to write a biography of your life. Signor Caboto, why you did not leave a diary or any account whatsoever of your journey?

Caboto: Perhaps I had hoped my sons would write of me. However, I cannot comment on the actions of a son I failed to see become a man. And as for today, I have returned simply to set eyes on my beloved *Matthew,* which, of course, is a much more intelligent ship in 1997 than it ever could have been in 1497. How I would have loved to make the voyage once again!

Mosaic: *Signor* Caboto, do you realize that you never did reach Cathay?

Caboto: Yes, it is true. The people I met did not resemble those described by Marco Polo. But I believe I did change the course of history and the development of humankind by discovering an entirely "new world", did I not?

Mosaic: Of this you can certainlybe rest assured, *signor* Caboto. Both Canada and Italy hold your discovery in such high regard that they each have even minted a similar commemorative stamp in your honour.

Caboto: Canada and Italy have forged a special relationship?

Mosaic: Oh, indeed, they have! That is why I am familiar with the Italian language. I will be pleased to tell you some of that story the next time when we meet. For now, *signor* Caboto, *arrivederci e... grazie!*

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Photo: V. Elia

President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro extends an invitation to Anthony Mollica and the members of the AATI to be received at the Quirinale in Rome on the occasion of 1998 convention in Italy. Dr. Leonardo Sampoli, Consul General of Italy in Toronto, looks on.

In the news:

An Invitation from President Scalfaro

On the occasion of the Canadian celebrations of Giovanni Caboto's 500 anniversary of his landing in Newfoundland, Mr. Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, President of the Republic of Italy, came to join in the festivities.

Following the celebrations in Newfoundland, Mr. Scalfaro came to Toronto where he met the Italian community. Among the several events organized for him was an exhibition of Venetian Glass which he attended. The event was organized by the Director of the Italian Cultural Institute, Dr. Francesca Valente in co-operation with the Royal Ontario Museum. A handful of people from the Italian community was invited to meet with the President on the occasion. Among these, was Anthony Mollica, President of the American Association of Teachers of Italian (AATI).

Through the Ambassador of Italy in Ottawa, S.E. Andrea Negrotto Cambiaso, Prof. Mollica extended the President an invitation to attend the 1998 convention of the AATI to be held in Italy and at the same time asked if it were possible to hold the annual meeting under his *Alto Patronato.*

President Scalfaro was genuinely interested in the activities of the Association and expressed his desire to receive the members of the AATI at the Quirinale, in Rome.

Professor Mollica has recently been informed that President Scalfaro has granted his High Patronage to the AATI Convention to be held in December 1998 in Crotone.

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