TOWARDS A NEW FRAMEWORK
OF MODERN LANGUAGE
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT.

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Ph. D. THESIS
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
MAY 1991
DECLARATION.

I declare that this thesis consists entirely of my own work and that it has been composed by myself.

MAGI CASANAS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

In the years that I have dedicated to this project I have become indebted to many people without whose help and encouragement it would never have been completed. To all of them I would like to convey my sincere gratitude.

A few special acknowledgements are needed.

First, I am greatly indebted to the late Peter Strevens for his encouragement in the initial stages of the project.

I would also like to thank the Departament d' Ensenyament de la Generalitat de Catalunya and the C.I.R.I.T. for believing in the project and giving me the chance to work on it for three years at the University of Edinburgh.

Special thanks are due to Anthony Howatt and Keith Mitchell for their incisive comments and criticism. The steady guidance provided by Mr. Howatt during these three years has been invaluable.

I owe many thanks to Lilias Adam and Stephen Bax for their collaboration in evaluating learner output and for their many suggestions.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my family for their unflagging understanding and support; to the students who took part in the experiment for their bravery and trust; to the teachers who filled in the questionnaires or contributed materials for their kindness; to all my friends and colleagues in Catalunya and Scotland for their friendship and encouragement.
ABSTRACT.

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to our understanding of instructed language learning among adolescents. It addresses the educational question of how adolescent classroom learners can best develop the ability to use a foreign language (in this case English) for their individual purposes.

The empirical data for the study derive from the record of a pedagogical experiment carried out with two groups of 38 secondary school learners in Catalunya. The purpose of the experiment was not only to improve their proficiency in the target language but also their attitudes towards language learning.

In line with contemporary curriculum theory, and on the basis of the set of procedures followed during the experiment and the views and attitudes expressed by the participants, the author proposes an alternative to the traditional framework of modern language curriculum development. The new framework, which is centred on the notion of learner autonomy, is devised to achieve a more successful learning outcome as a result of a more suitable learning environment.

In this study two major hypotheses are explored:

1. Instructed language learning is the result of multiple interaction between individual learners and the constraints imposed by the learning/teaching environment.
2. As far as adolescents are concerned, successful language learning is closely related to personal involvement in the process of the negotiation of meaning; and this, in turn, is directly linked to their perception of learning activity as personally meaningful and relevant to their perceived needs and interests.

The description, evaluation and interpretation of the experiment provide evidence of the positive effects of the alternative framework proposed in a specific classroom context, and the two hypotheses are supported. Nevertheless, language learning is a complex phenomenon and the author is aware of the need to replicate the experiment and contrast it with further research before any wider claims can be made about adolescent modern language learning.
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INTRODUCTION.

This thesis is a retrospective account of a pedagogical project carried out in a secondary school in Catalunya, in 1987-88 - the Sabadell project. It addresses the essentially educational question:

how can adolescent classroom learners best develop the ability to use a foreign language for their own individual purposes?

And it proposes an alternative framework for modern language curriculum development constructed on the basis of the set of procedures followed during the project and the views and attitudes expressed by the participants. (I take "modern language learning/teaching" to mean the acquisition of a foreign language in the classroom as part of school education).

The thesis is divided into three parts.

Part 1 consists of a critical analysis of the common features of the "traditional language class", based on the principles and assumptions of the "Ends-Means" design structure (chapters 1 & 2). The point is made that it is the shortcomings of this learning environment and the discouraging effect they have on adolescent learners that account for widespread failure in modern language learning.

Part 2 explores the implications of a model of instructed language learning as a basis for a framework of modern language curriculum development and hypothesises that instructed language learning is the result of multiple
interactions between learner characteristics (learner differences) and the constraints imposed by the learning environment (chapter 3). Language learning is envisaged as a process of negotiation in which individual learner characteristics play a determinant role and where personal involvement becomes essential. As far as adolescent learners are concerned, personal involvement is seen to be closely related to their perception of learning activity being personally meaningful and relevant to their present needs and interests.

In accordance with the model of instructed language learning and on the basis of the procedures followed in the Sabadell project, an alternative framework of modern language curriculum development is outlined and discussed (chapter 4). This framework distinguishes two different levels:

- the Curriculum Guidelines, a set of illuminative principles based on current knowledge of the subject matter and on educational theory, and
- the Learning Process, a set of procedures for the organisation and management of learning activity.

Finally, part 2 provides a detailed account of the different stages of the Sabadell project, accompanied by samples of output produced by learners (chapter 5).

Part 3 offers an evaluation of the project focussing on both language proficiency and the views and attitudes of the participants (chapters 6, 7 & 8). The positive results of
the evaluation - a high level of proficiency and a positive attitude towards the learning process - are claimed to support the alternative framework, as far as adolescent learners are concerned.

The nature of this thesis was largely determined by the combined effect of the following two factors:

1. the fact that it is a retrospective account of the Sabadell project.
2. the fact that the Sabadell project was a pedagogic classroom experiment.

As regards the former, (a more detailed explanation is provided later on), the Sabadell project started as an attempt to overcome the high degree of failure and dissatisfaction experienced by students of English as a foreign language in the I. B. (Institut de Batxillerat) Ferran Casablancas. Its double purpose was

. to improve the level of proficiency in using the target language (T.L.) for their own purposes, and
. to develop a positive attitude towards learning a foreign language.

It was the success of the project and the enthusiasm of the participants that encouraged me to undertake the writing of the thesis. By then the project was finished. As with so many pedagogical experiments, it had been shaped by a combination of the past experience of the participants, assumptions based on current theory and a great deal of
intuition. Classroom activity had been the result of a process of trial and error in which different procedures were put to the test and accepted or discarded on the basis of perceived success in relation to the project purposes. The project had not taken place in experimental conditions, as required by orthodox quantitative research, but provided a great deal of valuable information for a thesis focusing on - the description and analysis of the set of procedures followed in the different stages of the project, and - the evaluation of learner output and learner attitudes.

In relation to the second factor, pedagogical experiments taking place in the classroom setting are extremely complex and their outcome is affected by the intentions, feelings, needs and interests of the participants. Consequently, orthodox experimental methodology is hardly the best way of capturing the complexity of classroom activity and the role of the different factors involved. Such a methodology can easily distort reality, either by ignoring some of the contributing factors or by emphasising the role of others. Besides, the classroom as a setting must be respected and the relevance of any research findings to the constraints of the classroom context should be a crucial consideration in learning/teaching research.

These two factors support the adoption of the methodological approach and procedures followed. My main purpose in writing the thesis was to contribute to a better understanding of adolescent language learners in the
specific context of the classroom by means of describing and explaining what went on in the classroom during the project and the issues that were considered essential. This is a legitimate and necessary task - understanding and theory construction are inseparable companions - which I believe has been achieved.

As regards the evaluation of the project results, the method followed was dictated both by the data available and by the assumption that, in the classroom setting, understanding is best obtained by combining quantitative and qualitative procedures, and that the evaluation of a project must be tailored to its context and purpose.

The description, evaluation and interpretation of the Sabadell project provide some evidence of the positive effects of a specific approach to language learning in a specific, non-idealised context. No claims about language learning in the abstract are made. The analysis of a set of procedures followed in a well-defined setting and the evaluation of the learner output obtained are submitted in support of a hypothesis about adolescent language learning in the classroom setting and the proposal for a more suitable framework of modern language curriculum development. I am well aware that the corroboration of further research and a better understanding of adolescent modern language learners are necessary before the widespread use of the framework proposed can be seriously considered. This thesis is meant to be the first step.
0.

THE

BACKGROUND.
In Catalunya, like in the rest of Spain, modern languages are first introduced in the sixth year of primary schooling (age 11) and students are obliged to take a modern language for the remaining years of primary education, as well as for the whole of secondary (14 to 17 years). Subject to the availability of teachers, primary school students can choose between French and English and in secondary school they can either continue with the same language or change it. (A wider choice, including German and Italian, is available only in a few schools in Barcelona).

Traditionally, French was the main foreign language learnt in Catalunya, but this has changed in the past 10 years, with English largely taking over. However, primary school students are not always free to choose between English and French, first, because of the lack of qualified teachers - in the past primary school teachers did not specialise in any particular subject - but also as a consequence of the fact that in primary education the choice of subject and level to be taught does not depend on the abilities of teachers, but on their years of service. As a result, the quality of classes is often low and students are offered the possibility of choosing again at the beginning of secondary education, when language courses are supposed to start at a beginner's level.

In secondary schools groups consist of between 35 and 40
students and streaming is a rare occurrence. Modern languages are assigned three contact hours per week and the teachers in charge are usually specialists in the language they teach and have passed a set of specific examinations —("Oposiciones") — to prove their knowledge of the subject matter. As Rees (1989) found out, when in 1985 he was invited to do part of the classroom observation research for his Ph.D. in Catalan secondary schools, (he observed 40 English classes), teachers are usually knowledgeable and have a good command of the language. The official syllabus, which was issued by the Ministry of Education in 1977, is essentially a structural syllabus with some reference to the semantic and sociocultural levels of the language. However, the effect of the official syllabus on secondary school classes has been slight and the majority of language departments have traditionally followed or adapted the syllabus implicit in textbooks published in the U.K. At present Catalunya -like the rest of Spain - is involved in a process of reform of secondary education, according to a project that emphasises active learning and the global development of the learner as a human being (Coll 1986).

Modern language teachers in Catalunya are well acquainted with recent developments in the field of second language acquisition (SLA) and applied linguistics in general. Every year several teachers' conferences take place in Barcelona, Girona, Lleida and Sabadell. The annual teachers' conference in Barcelona ("Les Jornades") has an attendance of over 900
teachers registered and a panel of more than 30 speakers which includes local experts together with leading specialists from abroad. There are also a variety of seminars and workshops sponsored by the Modern Language Teachers' Association, the British Council, the American Institute, etc. Since 1987 the Mediterranean Summer Institute has offered a selection of high-standard courses on different aspects of language learning and teaching, classroom observation, etc. which have been open and easily accessible to Catalan teachers.

As regards language teaching characteristics and conditions, my job as a teacher trainer and my responsibility for drawing the guidelines for learning/teaching English as a foreign language (as part of the current movement to reform secondary school education) and for guiding and facilitating several experimental courses based on those guidelines, gave me the opportunity of visiting many language departments throughout Catalunya and of observing many classes. My impressions were later confirmed by the results of Rees' interesting survey of Catalan classes (1989). The tables below are based on his findings.

In Catalunya English is largely taught according to the principles of the Functional-Notional (or Communicative) approach, and following the corresponding textbooks, tapes and supplementary materials. English predominates over Catalan and Spanish as the medium of instruction in language
classes and students often make the effort to address the teacher in English, but use the mother tongue among themselves. The central aim of teaching, as recognised by the majority of teachers is the development of the four basic skills. (The percentages in the following tables indicate the proportion of teachers who identify certain aims and skills as central to their teaching).

Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHING AIMS (as expressed by Catalan teachers).</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>development of the 4 skills</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communication</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive attitude towards lang. study</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive attitude towards E</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>awareness of language</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cultural elements</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(adapted from Rees, 1989).

Few teachers seem to view the different skills as part of a global, indivisible whole, or to attach the same value to all of them.

Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKILL PRIORITIES</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(from Rees, 1989).
On the contrary, the majority give priority to the oral skills - listening and speaking - although the reality of classroom practice does not confirm this theoretical priority.

As regards the development of oral skills, fluency is considered the main objective (74%), followed by adequate pronunciation (46%), grammar (46%), and vocabulary (33%). Half the teaching population follows the textbook closely, while a small minority does not use a textbook at all. In between we find a variety of situations, with teachers choosing lessons or activities from the book to suit their plans, and supplementing them with texts, recorded dialogues, games and situations, etc. Table 3 shows the most popular textbook series among secondary school teachers.

Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIN TEXTBOOKS. (cf. p. 27)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategies ............ 48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Course English ... 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streamline ............. 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quartet ............... 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No textbook ........... 2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(from Rees, 1989).

The typical classroom layout consists of the traditional serried ranks, with the teacher at the front, which accounts for 80 to 90% of classrooms. The rest show different distributions, with variations of the horseshoe as the most
popular. Classrooms and departments vary as regards resources available and the use made of them. But the most widely used teaching aid is the tape-recorder which in many cases is an everyday source of oral input, and supplementary materials are also popular. There are also considerable differences as far as the overt teaching of grammar and the use of grammatical metalanguage are concerned. Table 4 shows the proportion of classroom time taken by different teaching elements.

Table 4.

USE OF TEACHING ELEMENTS.

- supplementary materials ...... 69%
- tape-recorder .................. 67%
- grammatical metalanguage ..... 54%
- teaching of grammar .......... 28%
- choral repetition ............. 26%

(from Rees, 1989).

The typical lesson plan is still that of presentation, practice, and use, initiated and led by the teacher. The planning and management of learning activities are left to the teacher, who acts as a model and a constant reference. Rees found out that, on average, teachers spent 25% of class time lecturing and 42.9% guiding their students through some kind of language practice (1989). Linguistic explanations are common and plenty of feedback and correction are provided at the different stages. Choral practice is still used in some
classes as are different kinds of oral and written drills, but the popularity of such activities is clearly decreasing.

The most common topics dealt with in the classroom are:

a) situations from the textbook, recorded materials...
b) language points—explanations, grammar games and exercises...
c) routine procedures: setting up activities, giving homework, maintaining order, etc.

Learner grouping follows two main patterns: whole class, and small groups, (usually pairs), doing the same task. Although the former is the usual type of grouping, groupwork occupies a fair amount of time at the free stage. As Rees points out, the predominance of the whole class grouping together with a clear emphasis on the spoken language are traits that Catalan modern language classes have in common with those observed during the Stirling Project. "The most striking similarities between the segmental findings of the Stirling 1, Stirling 2 and ROT (the Rees Observation Template) instruments appears in whole class (90.7%, 76%, 84.2%), individual (9%, 7.9%, 3.8%) and pair/group work (6%, 9.3%, 8.7%) groupings, reinforced by the fact that little of the individualized work was differentiated in either region. Furthermore, the markedly similar pupil listening category frequencies of 89.2%, 89.6%, 89.6% respectively, reveal the pronounced bias towards oral activities" (Rees 1989:343).

In this context the I.B. FERRAN CASABLANCAS can be considered an average school, both in the type of students
it receives, and as an instance of the characteristics and conditions mentioned as representative of modern language teaching in Catalunya. It is a fairly large school with approximately 1,550 students, and its distributional pyramid shows a disproportionately large base (cf. Table 5 Day Courses) a clear indication that many students are lost along the way before reaching the top course. For instance, of the 488 students who matriculated in the first year in 1986-87 only 113 managed to reach the end of third year without failing any subjects. The school catchment area includes intake from both the traditional centre of Sabadell and from one of its largest immigration areas on the outskirts. Consequently, the students are an even mixture of working class, often with Spanish as their mother tongue, and middle class Catalan speakers. It is a popular school, with a considerable surplus of applications every year, (often twice as many as can be accepted), and slightly above average in available resources such as science laboratories, audiovisual equipment, sports facilities, etc. The English department consists of 5 teachers, 4 of whom have been in the school for more than 3 years, and have shared the responsibility for planning and evaluating the outline of courses and activities. Although the experimental project was carried out by myself alone, I had the support of my colleagues who showed an increasing interest in its process and outcomes.
Table 5.
STUDENTS MATRICULATED IN THE I.B. F. CASABLANCAS.
YEAR 1987-88

DAY:

FIRST: 12 groups ...... 427 students
SECOND: 9 " ...... 339 "
THIRD: 7 " ...... 223 "
FOURTH: 6 " ...... 198 "

EVENING:

FIRST: 1 " ...... 34 "
SECOND: 2 " ...... 74 "
THIRD: 2 " ...... 119 "
FOURTH: 4 " ...... 135 "

(figures obtained from the school matriculation records).

0.2. FAILURE IN MODERN LANGUAGE LEARNING.

The history of modern language teaching as an integral part of school education is relatively short, barely 100 years, and cannot be considered a success in view of the dissatisfaction felt by students and teachers alike. Although failure is often accepted as an unfortunate characteristic of adult language learning (Bley-Vroman 1988), many foreign language learners achieve a high level of competence in natural settings and, in that context, teenagers seem to be able to reach native or near-native competence and advance more rapidly than younger learners in
the early stages of language learning (Snow 1983). But, in
the classroom environment, adolescents show comparatively
little progress and tend to fossilise at very low levels.
Lack of success in the early stages of learning can be an
extremely negative factor that can jeopardise any future
learning. Burstall's views about this point (1974) have been
confirmed by later findings. In O'Malley's own words
"Students who have experienced success in learning have
developed confidence in their own ability to learn. They are
therefore likely to approach new learning tasks with a
higher degree of motivation than students who, because they
have not been successful in the past, may have developed a
negative attitude toward their ability to learn". And
"motivation is probably the most important characteristic
that students bring to a learning task" (1990:160-61). The
degree of failure of school language learning attracted the
concern of the Council of Europe, whose officials, at a
conference in Sevres in 1959, launched a programme with four
central points: - the modernisation of teaching programmes,
- the extension of modern language teaching to all pupils
aged 10 years or over,
- the expansion of language exchanges, and
- the improvement of teacher training programmes.
It is interesting to notice how the aforementioned points
coincide with the recommendations made by a group of experts
from different countries who met in Maastricht under the
auspices of FIPLV from 6 to 10 April 1987, to discuss the
main problems affecting modern language learning. The same concern brought the western European Ministers of Education to pass a resolution in 1969, aiming at "a modern language for everybody by 1980". A contemporary witness, Halls, expressed the opinion that attaining bilingualism by 1980 was largely dependent on the availability of properly qualified teachers. He also mentioned some of the ingredients which in his opinion had to be included in programmes for retraining teachers: "... courses on recent methodological findings, linguistics, and the use of educational technology" (Halls 1970:20).

In Britain the sense of failure attached to school modern language learning is shared by many people, within and outside the world of education. In 1981 The Guardian stated that "After six or seven years of being taught a foreign language, 99% of pupils are incapable of forming an original sentence, of reading a newspaper article or of conversing with a foreign child of their own age in his language... If parents imagine that their children learn a foreign language at school in order to be able to use it later in life they are totally mistaken". (9th June 1981:11). In 1977 a report by the HM Inspectorate affirms that "the place of mathematics, science and modern languages in the curriculum, and the achievements of pupils studying them, have been identified as needing special attention", (HM Inspectorate, 1977:Introduction). They express concern about low academic standards, and falling entry figures: "... for during a
period when the total number of subject entries at A level has increased, those for modern languages have failed to hold their own with other subjects" (HMI 1977:3). Two types of problems are especially mentioned. First, the organisational constraints derived from comprehensivisation, and the new type of difficulties it posed for teachers of mixed-ability groups. Second, the inadequacy of the courses provided, and the lack of suitably trained teachers. "Finally, thought needs to be given to the provision of the appropriate shorter courses for the less able linguists in the secondary school... it will be necessary to restrict the scope of such courses with a view to offering pupils a terminal objective that they can perceive for themselves". This, they believe, "might lessen the hostility towards language learning and the sense of failure experienced by many young people" (HMI 1977:5). Tables 6 and 7 give an indication of how young learners view different school subjects, and of their attitudes towards them. The figures correspond to a national sample of pupils leaving school at 15 in 1966. We can see that almost half the boys who gave an opinion thought foreign languages were useless, and slightly under 2/3 of them found foreign languages boring. As for girls, the picture is not all that different. Over 1/3 found foreign languages useless, and near 2/3 considered them boring. (These figures might be even higher if we considered that many of those who did not express definite opinions would not hold a very positive view of the subject).
Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Useful and interesting</th>
<th>Useful but boring</th>
<th>Useless but interesting</th>
<th>Useless and boring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>metal work</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maths</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woodwork</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>fgn. lang</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>51</td>
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<td>science</td>
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<td>PE &amp; games</td>
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<td>geography</td>
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<tr>
<td>current affairs</td>
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<td>art and</td>
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<td>history</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proportions are of those taking the subject who held definite opinions. Subjects with proportions smaller than 10% are omitted. (Source: Schools Council Enquiry I, 1968, Young School Leavers, HMSO:60).

How can this level of dissatisfaction be explained? Apart from other reasons which would apply to the educational system as a whole, the report by HMI offers important clues:

- The nature of the courses and the amount of ground to be covered were beyond many of the pupils, who had to struggle towards goals they could not perceive as relevant to their needs and interests.

- The needs of these pupils required a kind of teaching for which contemporary teachers were poorly equipped. The complexity of the courses, combined with the lack of personal relevance, in a context in which the teacher could
Table 7.

GIRLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Useful and Interesting</th>
<th>Useful but Boring</th>
<th>Useless but Interesting</th>
<th>Useless and Boring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>housecraft</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maths</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>art and English</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comm subj.</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>geography</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>handicraft</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rel instr.</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>art and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fgn. lang.</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>science</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>geography</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>current aff.</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE &amp; games</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fgn. lang.</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>art and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>handicraft</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>science</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>geography</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>current aff.</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Proportions are of those taking the subject who held definite opinions. Subjects with proportions smaller than 10% are omitted. (Source: Schools Council Enquiry I 1968, Young School Leavers, HMSO:60).

afford little attention to individuals, generated a growing sense of frustration and rejection. Thus, dissatisfaction and failure would appear to be the consequence of a poor and inadequate learning environment, rather than the result of learners'incapacity to learn. This is the view expressed by Lightbown when, commenting on the title of one of her papers - "Can language acquisition be altered by instruction?" - she writes "I intended it to reflect the conclusion, drawn from my own research, that much language teaching is ineffective or even counter-productive, actually frustrating the process of language acquisition rather than
serving it", (Lightbown 1984:102). In 1981, Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone pointed in the same direction in the conclusions of their research on "The Foreign Language Classroom". They observed that, although an effort had been made to bring modern languages nearer to the world of learners, by relating them to matters of daily life, etc., the classes they visited showed little use of the foreign language being learned for purposes of interaction and communication. "Those segments of the discourse in which the topic appeared to carry most weight as a focus for participants' attention typically had English as their expected language; this was the case for segments concerning aspects of 'civilisation', as well as for those dealing with linguistic topics. The 'communicative' use of French, to transmit substantive messages between participants in the classroom talk, sufficiently sustained to be picked up by our system, was thus almost completely absent", (Mitchell et al. 1981:66). Little attention was paid to the individual needs and characteristics of learners: "Missing also was any effective individualisation of the language learning process. The pupils in the classes we studied received virtually identical language experiences, which moreover centred almost always on the teacher. Group and individual work were rare, and differentiation in the tasks set even rarer; even reading was overwhelmingly a whole-class activity", (Mitchell et al.1981:66). Classes consisted basically of a succession of oral, language-practice
exercises: "Most of the observed FL activities involved the intensive, repetitive manipulation of very restricted sets of language elements; extensive exposure to any richer FL diet was very rare. Additionally, what might be called a 'content vacuum' was apparent in many lessons", (Mitchell et al. 1981:66). A second research project - Communicative Interaction Project - was carried out by Mitchell between October 1980 and September 1983. It involved 13 French classes whose teachers were fully committed to the communicative approach to foreign language teaching. As Mitchell (1988) points out, the results showed a certain degree of improvement. Structure drillings were less common and the use of the T. L. had largely extended. Nevertheless, language practice activity was still predominant. In her conclusions she states that "For all teachers, English medium activities were the rarest type. Communicative F.L. activities were commonest for two teachers only... for the rest, practice F.L. activities were commonest" (Mitchell, 1988:59).

As far as Catalunya is concerned, the views expressed by The Guardian (1981) apply as well, as do the conclusions drawn by Mitchell et al. The points they make reflect the main characteristics of the standard language class in Catalunya, and are highly congruent with Rees' findings (1989):

. classes are mostly teacher centred,
. the usual lesson plan is that of presentation,
practice and free stage,

. the four skills, taken independently, are the main teaching objective,

. the (functional-notional) textbook and the tape-recorder are the main teaching aids, and provide the main source of input, topics, and activity types.

Such characteristics reflect the type of classroom practice which became popular with the audiolingual methodology, and was later adopted and adapted by the notional-functional approach.

In other parts of Spain, especially in inland areas, foreign language teaching conditions still reflect the predominance of the grammar translation principles. This can be seen in the report submitted to the Bayerische Staatsministerium fur Unterricht und Kultus by Hubertus Plenk in 1989. After three weeks spent at the I.B. Lucia de Medrano, (Secondary School), in Salamanca visiting classes and talking to teachers and students, Plenk observes that school standards are lower than in Bavaria, and that teacher-student relationships are marked by the distance and respect demanded by teachers. (He also notes how teachers complain that students are losing their respect for teachers). As regards the teaching of foreign languages, he states that "Die klassen zahlen bei relativ kleinen Raumen über 40 Schüler, die dem stark lehrerzentrierten Unterricht diszipliniert, aber mit manchmal ermüdendem Interesse folgen."
Der lehrerzentrierte Unterricht ist bei so groben Klassen verständlich, er scheint mir aber Überhaupt in der Tradition der spanischen Schule zu liegen, so daß in den wenigen Kleingruppen (Französisch, Deutsch, Portugiesisch), deren Unterricht ich miterlebte, kaum eine andere Arbeitshaltung geübt wird. Das wirkt sich vor allem bei den Fremdsprachen negativ aus. Hier überwiegt eine stark grammatikalische Erläuterung der Fremdsprache auch bei der Muttersprache so verfahren - gegenüber der bei uns stärkeren praktischen Anwendung. Dieser stil ist aber nicht auf mangelnde fachliche Kenntnis der Kollegen zurückzuführen, denn die Portugiesischlehrerin war eine Portugiesin und die Lehrerin hatte die ersten zwanzig Jahre ihres Lebens als "Gastarbeiterkind' in Frankreich verbracht" (1989:6).

(Style of Instruction. There are over 40 pupils per class in fairly small rooms and these pupils follow the lessons, which are largely teacher centred, in a disciplined way, but sometimes with flagging interest. Teacher centred instruction is understandable in such large classes, but it seems to be traditional in Spanish schools, so that in the few small groups - French, German, Portuguese - where I attended the lessons, the attitude scarcely differed. This has a very negative effect, especially on language teaching. A strongly grammatical explanation of the foreign language predominates - this is also the method used in dealing with the mother tongue - in contrast with the more
practical approach which we favour. This style of teaching is not caused by any lack of specialised knowledge on the part of the teachers, for the Portuguese teacher was Portuguese and the French teacher had spent twenty years in France as daughter of an immigrant worker.)

Another important aspect of the poor success of modern language learning/teaching, at the same time cause and consequence of learner dissatisfaction, is the high percentage of school students who fail this subject. This has been a cause of great concern and discussion among modern language teachers in Catalunya, in the past decade. Table 8 shows the results achieved by students of English at the I.B. Ferran Casablancas, at the end of the years 1987-88, and 1988-89. The high level of success achieved by third year students in 1987-88 was due to the positive results of the Sabadell Project, in which the majority of them (76 out of 99) participated. The same reason might explain the considerable improvement in fourth year results, the year after. The degree of failure revealed by those figures, which roughly coincide with the average percentage for the whole of Catalunya, is even more significant when we take into consideration the process of selection applied at the end of primary school.
Table 8.
NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO PASSED AND FAILED ENGLISH.
I.B. FERRAN CASABLANCAS, (SABADELL).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Fail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987-88</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>Fail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FIRST YEAR</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
<td>49.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECOND YEAR</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THIRD YEAR</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOURTH YEAR</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(source: figures were extracted from school records).

Only the children who successfully complete their 8 years of primary education are allowed to sit a special "selectivity" examination, ("Graduado Escolar"). This qualification is a necessary requisite for joining a proper secondary school. In 1987-88 the number of students matriculated in the final year of primary education in Sabadell was 3,592. Of these, only 2,456 passed their examinations and were awarded the "Graduado Escolar". This indicates an initial 32% of failure at the end of primary education. (These figures have been obtained from the local Educational Council, in Sabadell).

As a conclusion to this section, I would like to suggest that the high level of dissatisfaction and failure among secondary school language students - failure to develop the ability to use the language for purposes of communication
outside the classroom, and failure to meet the minimum requirements set up by the teacher - are essentially due to the inadequacy of the learning environment. And this, in turn, is a consequence of the historical circumstances in which modern languages were incorporated into the educational system.

NOTES

    For "Main Course English" see Garton-Sprenger et al. 1980.
    For "Streamline" see Hartley B. et al. 1982.
    For "Quartet" see Grellet, F. et al. 1982.
PART I.

THE TRADITIONAL MODERN LANGUAGE CURRICULUM.
1. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT.

The inclusion of modern languages in the school curriculum took place between 1850 and 1900 and followed a parallel development in Europe and the USA, with some differences concerning rhythm and intensity. The Spanish experience reflects the general European pattern with some considerable delay, especially in the changes of approach and methodology that took place after the second world war (Howatt 1984, Grittner 1969, Parker 1961, Halls 1970). The slow but steady infiltration of modern languages into the educational system was strongly opposed by supporters of the traditional - classical - view of education, and especially the universities. Modern languages, as compared to Latin and Greek, were both too easy and too utilitarian in everyday life to be accepted as a source of mental discipline, which was one of the primary goals of classical education, based on the study of the classical heritage. This opposition, classical versus modern, forced modern languages to adopt the scholarly ways characteristic of the classical approach in order to become respectable. As a result, the study of modern languages as part of school education was to be associated with the grammar-translation methodology - an adaptation of scholastic "self-study" to school conditions - until the second half of the 20th. century (Howatt 1984).

Until 1970, the study of modern languages in Spain was restricted to the privileged minority who had access to an academic (as opposed to a more practical - vocational -)
secondary education. The main language taught was French, followed at considerable distance by English and German. In the 1970s, the new education bill made modern languages accessible to all students for a minimum period of three years in primary education, followed by another two-to-four years, depending on the kind of secondary education chosen. English took over from French as the main foreign language learnt at school. The dominance of the grammar-translation methodology lasted well until the early 1960s when, as a result of the influence of American writers - especially Lado - it was substituted by Audiolingualism.

The audiolingual method was quickly adopted by teachers dissatisfied with grammar-translation results, and dominated modern language learning until the 1980s, when the effects of the communicative approach on a well established practice caused a kind of synthesis of audiolingual and communicative procedures which is characteristic of the average modern-language class at present.

Meanwhile, the need of an expanding industrial economy to find new markets for its products, and to secure the necessary raw materials, created a suitable context for the development of an international, commercial language. The origins of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and of Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) in general, can be situated in the 1880s, a period when the consolidation of an international market prompted the establishment of a network of steady relations which required the use of a common
language.

The educational system and the type of curriculum adopted by a society are the reflection of its social system, in the sense that they mirror and reinforce the social order. One of the strongest determiners of the educational system is the ideology, or ideologies prevailing within the community (Shipman et al. 1972). The dominant views on what constitutes knowledge, and "worthwhile" knowledge, the attitudes towards education and its role in society, the prevailing value system will influence and shape education as a means of perpetuating the established social system. This will affect the pattern of curriculum adopted and its main goals, the choice and organisation of subjects/tasks included, the roles and relationship of the participants in the educational activity, the kind of evaluation, and the value attached to successful completion of the educational cycle, etc. (Bernstein 1975).

The western educational system from the 1850s to the 1950s was the result of a compromise between two ideologies: the receding but still influential Aristocratic ideology, and the up-and-coming Bourgeois ideology.

The pre-industrial aristocracy looked upon education as a means of preparing youngsters for their natural, social role. Education was highly elitist, restricted to a small minority, and represented a confirmation of social status acquired by birth. The process of learning, based on the study of the classical languages and literature (Classical
Humanism, Skilbeck 1982), was envisaged as a hard, unpleasant experience aimed at developing mental discipline, and bearing no relation to the needs of daily life and work. The bourgeoisie which had risen to high economic status through industrial and commercial activities, held a more pragmatic - utilitarian - view of education and its role. On the one hand, they saw education as a means of reaching social and political status; as a way of mixing with the aristocracy and competing with them for the ruling posts of society. Their view was essentially meritocratic, based on what has been called "the Industrial Ethic": "It lays stress on individualism - the belief that individual freedom produces the better society; on rationality and planning - an economic calculus by which one minimises losses; on postponing one's gratifications in order that one can reap greater returns later; and on celebrating ambition, drive and success as the greatest of virtues. It is this ethic which has helped produce and sustain an industrial society by the internalisation of these values in the young, through the agency of the middle-class family and a middle-class orientated educational system" (Raynor 1969:86).

The bourgeois ideology called for the opening of the curriculum to include disciplines more according to the needs of the day; the need for specialisation, and selection on the grounds of academic success.

The two ideologies have important common traits. They are both highly elitist, although on different grounds, as we
mentioned before. And both see education as, essentially, the transmission of worthwhile knowledge in a subject-centered curriculum.

In the final decades of the XIXth century, with the consolidation of a fairly efficient international market, the industrial middle classes felt strong enough to make important claims on the established social and educational systems, though not sufficiently to try to impose their views on the still powerful aristocracy. The result was a compromise, an alliance between the two social groups and their ideologies. In education it meant, among other things, the acceptance of modern languages into the curriculum, treated according to the classical canons. Many grammars were written for English, French, German, Spanish... following the Latin model, and the grammar-translation method was applied to modern languages (Grittner 1969).

After the Second World War, the industrial middle classes had consolidated their position in power and felt free to pursue their interests, without the need to compromise with the past. The classical heritage was replaced by a more utilitarian approach, related to the progressively growing needs of the market, and a more openly specialised and meritocratic education, controlled by leaving and entry examinations. This coincided with a wide movement towards change in education in general, and in modern languages in particular, which swept through Europe in the 1950s. The reasons for change were many and interrelated. Some
reflected the rapid social and economic change which required new skills, or the effects of scientific discoveries on accepted knowledge. Others expressed dissatisfaction with an inflexible system that caused the waste of many talents. With respect to modern languages there was also a lot of concern about school ways and results. However, change in modern languages was greatly influenced by developments in the USA.

Modern language learning in America had started more or less at the same time and in the same way as in Europe, with books imported from there. As Handschin puts it, "American practices were for long only an application of European habits and Institutions to a different locale" (1940:4). For many years the predominant foreign language was German, which was introduced as an optional subject in public elementary schools in 1840, and expanded rapidly. The incorporation of French into the school system came as a result of French help during the American revolution, while the learning of Spanish is, essentially, a 20th century development.

The First World War produced a drastic fall of enrolment in German, but it also affected all the other languages. Figures in table 9 show the general decline from 1915, with the only exception of Spanish. Suddenly, the Americans were reacting against anything that was "foreign". This attitude was summed up by a preacher in Arizona in 1926 who, in his
Table 9.
FOREIGN LANGUAGE ENROLMENT TRENDS BEFORE AND AFTER WORLD WAR I (IN THE USA).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total enrolment</th>
<th>Latin %</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>French %</th>
<th>German %</th>
<th>Spanish %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>519.251</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>915.061</td>
<td>49.0%</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>1,328.984</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>3,354.473</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>5,399.452</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

( Figures extracted from Parker 1961:85-86 ).

The sermon said "if I had my way there would be no language taught in the United States except English, and any foreigner coming here would be immediately sent back if he could not speak our language. I am 100% American" (Grittner 1969:14).

In this atmosphere, the voices complaining about the low standards achieved in American schools, above all in subjects such as modern languages, Mathematics and Science, and demanding that modern languages should respond to America's interests and responsibilities, had a particularly strong effect, especially after the launching of the Russian Sputnik in 1957. American language teachers compromised, and modern languages were included in the "National Defense Education Act" of 1958. Now, the aims were different; modern languages had an important strategic, military and
diplomatic value, and the main requirements were a good comprehension of native speech at normal speed, skilful oral performance, and an appropriate behaviour, avoiding social and cultural blunders. This helps to explain the success among the military of Fries' monograph "Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language" (1945), which provided a "detailed course of speech-habit training before moving to an equally sparse programme of structure drills and pattern exercises. Vocabulary was kept to a minimum... and the emphasis was on the intensive habitualization of the essentials of English structure" (Howatt 1984:268). Fries' structural approach was used as a model for courses on many strategic languages, and became the basis for a large scheme to re-train language teachers.

Modern languages would also cater for the needs of the business world. Huebner's "Opportunities in Foreign Language Careers", published in 1964, mentions hundreds of favourable possibilities for people with language skills. Among the many job areas for which foreign languages are useful he includes airlines, advertising, hotel service, scientific research, travel and tourism, etc. (Huebner 1964). After 1957 modern language learning drew abundantly on the adult, utilitarian tradition, and brought into school views and procedures which were characteristic of EFL teaching.

In Europe this utilitarian position chimed in well with the mood of the times, and with the general dissatisfaction about the stagnant state of school language learning.
However, modern language teachers were poorly equipped to cope with the new goals and the new demands placed on them. The type of courses and the methodology most of them were used to were totally inadequate - the influence of developments in Applied Linguistics was small before 1960. Consequently, the profession turned their eyes to EFL, whose teachers had been involved with teaching languages for utilitarian purposes from the beginning. But EFL had gone a long way, and by then was more and more concerned with training learners with specific aims to operate within the context of concrete tasks and professions, (ESP). ("ESP in the modern sense could be said to have begun in 1969 with the publication of a conference report called 'Languages for Special Purposes', but the groundwork had been laid at both the theoretical and practical levels during the previous decade" Howatt 1984:222).

Borrowing from EFL gave modern language teachers a wider perspective, but it also brought to the classroom a constant source of tension, derived from the application of their approach and methodology to an unsuitable context. In the educational setting utilitarian values are unacceptable and utilitarian needs have little face validity since they are perceived as irrelevant to present individual needs and interests. The filtration into school language classrooms of courses and techniques devised for young EFL adult learners contributed to the consolidation of a poor and demotivating learning environment. It was against this background and as
an attempt to match the instructional learning environment to adolescent learner needs and characteristics that the Sabadell project was undertaken.

The historical context in which modern languages became part of the educational system determined the type of curriculum adopted and the framework within which modern language learning has operated to the present day. And, as we shall discuss in the following chapter, it is the shortcomings of this framework and the constraints it imposes on the learning environment that are responsible for modern language learning failure.
2. THE TRADITIONAL PATTERN OF CURRICULUM DESIGN.

In this chapter I intend to review the traditional pattern of curriculum design, its main components, its aims, and the rationale behind it. Then, I will analyse the various syllabus types that have derived from it, and, from the point of view of modern language learning, point out their shortcomings and limitations.

In modern language teaching the terms "curriculum" and "syllabus" have been used to express very different notions. For this reason it is virtually impossible to find a definition that satisfies all scholars, nor one that encompasses the different meanings attributed to these terms. Nevertheless, a few common elements can be identified in the definitions and explanations provided by the current literature.

- Traditionally, it is mainly the syllabus that has attracted the attention of modern language professionals.
- "Curriculum" is usually viewed as a broader concept which includes "syllabus" as one of its parts, (except in the USA where both terms are used as synonyms).
- "Syllabus" accounts essentially for the selection and organisation of the content of a subject.
- The "syllabus" requires some grading and sequencing of the content selected. Thus it becomes a developmental sequence, a "planned route" towards the achievement of pre-specified objectives.
Specifications of content, grading and sequencing are justified on the grounds of efficiency, learner security, and public accountability.

"Syllabus" concerns teaching more than learning.

The points above reflect the standard view on the matter, and can be found in the following typical definitions.

Shaw proposes the following as the most satisfactory definition of curriculum: "... the curriculum includes the goals, objectives, content, processes, resources and means of evaluation of all the learning experiences planned for pupils both in and out of the school and community through classroom instruction and related programs...". A syllabus is "a statement of the plan of any part of the curriculum, excluding the element of curriculum evaluation itself" (Shaw 1977:217).

Yalden states that "A syllabus should, in the first instance, be a specification of content, and only in a later stage of development, a statement about methodology and materials to be used in a specific instance" (1984:16). She argues that "the primary preoccupation of the syllabus designer must be to decide what components will be included in a given syllabus, and in what proportion, or with what emphasis" (Yalden 1983:44).

Allen proposes the following distinctions between curriculum and syllabus: "Curriculum is a very general concept which involves consideration of the whole complex of philosophical, social and administrative factors which
contribute to the planning of an educational programme. Syllabus, on the other hand, refers to that subpart of curriculum which is concerned with a specification of what units will be taught (as distinct from how they will be taught, which is a matter for methodology)" (Allen 1984:61).

For Widdowson "... a syllabus is not only an educational construct; it is also a pedagogic one. That is to say it not only defines what the ends of education through a particular subject ought to be, but it also provides a framework within which the actual process of learning must take place and so represents a device by means of which teachers have to achieve these ends" (1984:23).

Finally, Brumfit provides the most detailed of the definitions of syllabus. According to him,

"I. A syllabus is a specification of the work of a particular department in a school or college...

II. In practice, it is often linked to time – semesters, terms, weeks, or courses which are tied to these... This link is not essential... But a syllabus must specify a starting point, which should be related to a realistic assessment of the level of beginning students, and ultimate goals...

III. A syllabus must specify some kind of sequence of events...

IV. A syllabus is a document of administrative convenience... and will only be partly justified on theoretical grounds."
V. A syllabus can only specify what is taught...

VI. Not to have a syllabus is to refuse to allow one's assumptions to be scrutinized or to enable different teachers to relate their work to each other's".

(Brumfit 1984:75-76).

My position, as will become clear later on, is slightly different from the standard view that can be inferred from the definitions quoted, and comes closer to the approach usually associated with the "Lancaster School" (Stern 1984). I believe it is useful to maintain the distinction between curriculum and syllabus, and to keep in mind the close relationship between one and the other. I view the curriculum as an educational project, outlining principles and procedures, whose aim is to guide and facilitate all the learning activity resulting from classroom interaction. Such a comprehensive definition accounts for learning activity that takes place inside or outside the classroom or school, whether consciously planned or unplanned. It puts the emphasis on learning rather than teaching, and stresses the crucial role of negotiation and interaction. It also focusses on the classroom, as the natural meeting point between theory and practice, between intentions - ideals - and reality.

An essential constituent of the curriculum is the syllabus, envisaged as an operational framework for the promotion and organisation of learning activity. It belongs in the classroom, and it is the result of negotiation among
those directly involved in the learning process: learners and teacher.

This view will be developed in the following chapters, and "curriculum development" will be envisaged as a dynamic process of continuous renewal of the curriculum to cater for the changing needs and characteristics of learners. It concerns the syllabus, but also current educational policy and in-service teacher education. Essentially, curriculum development must originate from the classroom as the result of the intentions and commitment of learners and teachers, since, as I mentioned before, the classroom is the only place where theory and practice can go hand in hand, where ideals come directly into contact with the constraints of the learning environment.

2.1. The "Ends-Means model".

The different types of syllabus used in mainstream language learning/teaching up to the present day originated from the design structure devised by Tyler in 1949, and developed by Taba, 1962. The structure is usually known as the "Ends-Means", "Objectives", or even "Rational Planning" model, "on the grounds that it is rational to specify the ends of an activity before engaging in it" (Taylor & Richards 1979:64). The Tyler-Taba pattern is essentially a four-stage cycle, (see fig.1), in which each step is determined by the previous ones, starting with the specification of aims and
objectives. It corresponds to a view of education which emphasises the transmission of "worthwhile" knowledge, understood, mainly, as a set of facts; the value of rationality and efficiency; and the need for effort and discipline; and stresses the value of academic success as a springboard to high social status. Consequently, the main concern of the syllabus designer is to plan the course as efficiently as possible, selecting and organising the items to be taught according to pre-established objectives, and to decide upon suitable activities to teach those items.

Syllabuses produced following this structure show a hierarchical pattern, and imply a certain type of relationship among the different participants in the learning process. The scale of "expertise" reflects the pattern of social distribution of knowledge, which, at the same time, is an expression of the social distribution of power. The hierarchy is explicitly outlined by Fries in his paper "As we see it" (1948): "The descriptive linguist at the
'top' has the responsibility of producing the basic, scientific, descriptions of the source and target languages. The applied linguist, then, takes over in a dual role. He has to select and grade the structures taken from the original description to suit the relevant pedagogical purposes, and prepare a contrastive description of source and target languages, in order to pinpoint areas of potential difficulty. Secondly, he has to write teaching materials which will illustrate the patterns of the new language, and provide special practice on difficult points. The materials are then passed on to the teacher for use in class" (Howatt 1984:267). The amount of interaction among the different levels is often small, and many teachers find themselves in the position of using techniques and materials without being acquainted with, or understanding the rationale behind them.

The learner is considered a "tabula rasa", a receptacle to be filled by the teacher. As Freire says, "Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the 'banking' concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing and storing the deposits" (In Golby, Greenwald & West 1975:139). The whole process is organised top-down, taking as a starting point a theory of language
description which will determine the items to be included in
the syllabus, and their grading.

This pattern implies a certain number of assumptions with
respect to the nature of language and language learning:
1. that language can be broken down into a set of
discrete items, and that a finite number of these items
can be chosen to express the complexity of language, and
the infinite knowledge that language competence involves;
2. that a complex network of interrelated systems and
subsystems can be effectively captured and represented in
a linear sequence;
3. that there is a close correlation between language
teaching and language learning, in the sense that
learning is the natural result of teaching, and that
learners learn precisely what they are taught (Carroll
1965).

Language difficulties are carefully graded and spread out
along the syllabus sequence, and the basic patterns of the
language are presented to learners, through teacher-
textbook modelling, for them to practise. It is assumed that
if the selection and grading of items is correct, and
provided there is sufficient practice, learning will take
place, and we can predict and pre-specify a standard
proficiency to be achieved once tuition is completed. This
belief justifies Fries' hierarchy. The main thing is a
scientific description of the language, and a careful
selection of contents.
The role accorded to the learner in the acquisition of language is minimal, and this was specially so during the time when Behaviourism was a dominant theory of learning. Language learning was simply a question of the right stimuli producing the right responses in a process of habit formation. (We will come back to this issue when we discuss the roles of the learner and the linguistic environment).

The two main components in Tyler-Taba's design structure are the objectives and the content.

The objectives became a central issue as a consequence of XXth century technological progress, and the attempts to apply to education the same scientific methods used in industry. The demands of the "age of science", and a parallel interest in testing, resulted in the association of measuring performance to well-specified objectives, a link which was already clear in Tyler (1949). This approach was to be very popular in the 1960s.

Different types of objectives have been used in curriculum design, but educationalists have usually preferred learner objectives. Learner objectives vary depending on

- the degree of specification of educational intentions,
- the component chosen as the central one, out of the following three: input (content), output (product), and activity (process), (see fig. 2).

Tyler argues that product objectives, which specify clear
patterns of behaviour, are the most useful for selecting

Fig. 2

learning experiences and guiding learning (Tyler 1949). They must specify a) behaviour, to be mastered by the learner, and b) content, to which the behaviour relates. This is also the position taken by Mager (1962), and Bloom (1971), who provided an influential taxonomy of educational objectives. Mager identifies three components of a good objective:

1. behaviour, as evidence of achievement,
2. conditions under which we expect the behaviour to take place, and
3. standards, criteria to consider learner performance acceptable (Mager 1962).

These kinds of objectives are highly congruent with a strong attitude in favour of rational planning and accountability, and facilitate the task of measuring results. Consequently, they were quickly adopted and became standard practice.

The use of objectives in curriculum design, and the priority accorded to them in Tyler's design structure, have been advocated on different grounds. First of all is the
belief that the application to the field of education of the efficiency and accuracy of industry would contribute to its greater respectability. A different type of argument was put forth by Hirst (1969), stating that all rational activities are directed to clear goals. If education is a rational activity it must clearly specify the objectives it wants to achieve. Taba contributed a pedagogical argument. In her view, pre-specified objectives are a requisite for evaluation, and evaluation is essential for effective teaching: "...those things that are most clearly evaluated are also most effectively taught"(Taba 1962:199). Finally, supporters of the objectives approach have stressed the need to make curricula accountable to the taxpayer, and the value of clearly specified objectives in this respect. However, behavioural objectives have been severely criticised and, even though the aura of scientificity they give the curriculum, together with the fact that they make accurate measuring simple, have contributed to their survival until the present day, some of their most fervent advocates have moderated their views over the years. An example of this is Rowntree's rejection of objectives as the determinant factor in the choice of content. "... objectives must be considered at some stage of course planning. If they are not themselves used as the means of arriving at course content, they can provide a powerful tool for analysing and elaborating content arrived at by other means"(Rowntree 1981:35).

From the many objections that can be raised against the
objectives approach, I would like to underline its unacceptable passive view of man. Human behaviour is not envisaged here as the result of personal - internal - choices and decisions, the consequence of freely selected purposes, but rather as a response to external causes. This behaviourist view maintains that that human actions can be explained in the same way as the behaviour of animals and objects, and encourages the manipulation of human beings to make them fit the patterns of pre-specified behaviour.

Another problem with such an approach is their "industrial" view of education as a purely technical activity. The selection of content is based on and justified by the goals it seeks to achieve, rather than by the intrinsic value of the items and activities chosen, and the whole learning process becomes an instrumental, training process towards the achievement of pre-specified objectives, external to the process.

Finally, I would like to mention the assumption underlying the objectives approach, that knowledge can be broken up into discrete items, and learnt following step-by-step procedures. This way of proceeding may be suitable for some skills which adapt well to "training" patterns, but this is not the case with knowledge in general. The development of understanding does not follow after the mastery of single items of knowledge - facts - as a later stage; both processes take place simultaneously.

The other essential component of the "Aims-Means" type of
syllabus is the content, viewed as a highly controlled, step-by-step route towards the achievement of the objectives in question. It usually consists of an inventory of items - structures, functions... carefully selected and graded, in accordance with a theory of language which is part of the syllabus rationale, but independently of methodology. Consequently, the inventory of items becomes a checklist, empty of any meaning, which can be interpreted and used in many different ways. Normally, it is the textbook that determines the way the content is taught. Corder (1973) expressed it clearly when he said that most of the teaching is done in the "back room". About the need to relate content to methodology, he wrote "The problem of how to teach does not receive a single answer but depends on how you answer the question: what is it we are teaching? This means that solutions to the problem of method are logically dependent on the solutions to the problem of content... Any particular solution to the problem of what to teach, if it is embodied in a set of teaching materials, carries with it an implicit or explicit solution to the question of how to teach"(Corder 1973:141).

Syllabus content is pre-determined and cannot take into consideration the changing needs and interests of the learners. It imposes a certain route and pace to the group. It is also essentially arbitrary, since it is quite impossible to predict what and when learners will be ready for.
A central issue with this type of syllabus is the grading and sequencing of the content items. The importance of these concepts, (which owe a great deal to Mackey 1965), can still be seen in Brumfit's definition of syllabus (1984a). The main questions are whether grading and sequencing are prerequisites for language learning, and whether there are intrinsic criteria on which to organise content. Supporters of the structural approach believed that there was a clear basis for sequencing in the syntactic system of a language. Among them was Fries who wrote that "... it is possible to have a series of practice exercises which begin with the fundamental structural patterns of the language... which are arranged in such a sequence as to lead the student systematically through the whole range of devices which form the complicated structural machinery of a language"(Fries 1945:35).

A similar point is made by Brumfit: "... Intrinsic cohesion will be dependent on the extent to which items in the syllabus are elements of a system. If they are, then it will be possible to present the syllabus in a structural way, so that the overall system is reflected in the organization and sequencing of the elements. A justification for such organization will rest on the fact that we learn by systematizing..."(Brumfit 1981:90-91). The same reasons are advocated by Paulston (1981) to justify her preference for structure over function as the organising principle.

This position, however, has been criticised (Wilkins
1981a, Gibbons 1984, Das 1984) on two main accounts. First, intrinsic criteria are inapplicable; the language system is too complex to become the basis of a linear sequence. Furthermore, it is impossible to organise the multiple strands and subsystems of language; organising one necessarily implies the disorganisation of others. The second objection is to the confusion between linguistic and psychological facts. Language description and language learning are not the same—linguistic complexity does not necessarily mean psychological difficulty—and the purpose of a syllabus is to promote learning. Can we be sure that the learner is aware of the linguistic system as described by the linguist? Is the system she progressively builds up, especially in the early stages, the same as the linguist's? Presenting the learner with a systematic description of a language is not a guarantee of systematic learning.

In recent years, Pienemann has looked at the question of grading and sequencing in the light of research conducted by himself (Pienemann 1984), the results of which are summarised in the "Teachability Hypothesis". This hypothesis predicts that instruction can only promote language acquisition if "the interlanguage is close to the point when the structure to be taught is acquired in the natural setting (so that sufficient processing prerequisites are developed)" (Pienemann 1985:37). Pienemann believes that it is possible to use L2 research as a psychological basis for grading teaching materials. The basic problem, he says, "is
to define which items of the L2 are learnable in which order (or in other words: what is simple and what is complex)" (Pienemann 1985:54).

According to Pienemann, "natural grading" is essentially grammatical, and could be easily incorporated into a structural syllabus, but also into a communicative syllabus. In the latter case, the structural component, derived from the developing interlanguage, would determine the exponents for expressing functions and notions. This procedure would have the following advantages:

"1. L2 forms are focussed on in the order they are learnable,
2. L2 forms are introduced which have proved to be communicatively effective in natural L2 development.
3. The focus on meaning can be maintained in the introduction, while the required L2 items are selected and graded according to the above principles". (Pienemann 1985:68).

Pienemann's natural sequence of acquisition does not solve the grading and sequencing problem. Research evidence refers only to a very small number of morphemes. How do we handle the rest? And how do we organise the rest of language levels? Besides, there are still more serious objections. The first one is that it has not yet been proved that grading and presenting language materials according to the natural sequence observed in L2 acquisition of learners who receive no formal instruction would benefit classroom
learning. Natural settings offer a rich context in which the learner is in contact with many forms which are not acquired for a long time. Besides, in naturalistic contexts different learners receive different input, but they all seem to follow the same developmental pattern.

Research on the acquisition of linguistic markedness (Gass 1982, Zobl 1983, 1985), has produced conclusions that seem to differ from Pienemann's, and that could be taken as evidence against his principle that learners cannot be taught structures that are not in the next stage in their developmental sequence. (Acquisition and use of marked forms imply the previous acquisition of unmarked ones, according to the natural developmental sequence. In any case, it is worth noticing the different interpretations of these findings made by Lightbown 1986 and Long 1986).

On the other hand, the natural order could equally give support to a notional as to a structural type of grading, since the stages of the acquisition of morphemes could be taken as the reflection of developing notional complexity. White mentions the fact that Pienemann does not consider "the role of such unanalysed chunks in language acquisition as discussed by Peters (1983a and 1983b), who suggests that learners make communicative use of such holistic, grammatically unanalysed phrases or sentences which are 'beyond their competence'" (White 1988:58).

Finally, there is the problem of organising a class of 30-40 students according to their stages of acquisition, in order
to provide each one of them with the right sort of input (Pienemann 1984). If the grouping suggested by Pienemann was possible, how long would the homogeneity of the group last?

As regards the issue of grading and sequencing as requisites for language learning, we should not forget that, even though such principles are firmly ingrained in our very notion of language learning/teaching, and are usually taken for granted as well-established facts, they are only part of a hypothesis. The conception of language learning as a step-by-step progression, following a pre-specified sequence of cummulative steps, is only a hypothesis based on the two following assumptions:

1. that communicative competence can be broken up into a series of discrete skills, and that these skills can constitute the basis for a language syllabus;
2. that the best way to learn a language is to proceed stage by stage, from what is simple to what is complex or difficult; to begin with the mastery of the basic mechanisms of language – structures, functions, vocabulary – through language practice, before moving to free, meaningful expression.

The validity of such assumptions can be questioned on different grounds:

Firstly, language learners in natural settings are exposed to language as a whole, both in first and second language learning, and their development of communicative competence is not guided by any pre-specified sequence.
Secondly, the notions of "simple" and "complex" are difficult to define, and vary according to the approach and the criteria chosen. Besides, the communicative competence required to participate in even simple interactions is governed by a complex set of rules. It is not clear how learners can make the leap from the stage of practising discrete language skills in simulations, etc. to the one of bringing all the skills together as parts of a system, and using this system for meaningful expression.

It is far from clear how restrictive routines can trigger free, creative speech. The rules that govern language interaction can only be acquired in real situations, where the speakers have real communicative needs and intentions. Finally, the application of the principles of sequencing and grading results in monolithic syllabuses that force learners to follow the same route, and to develop the same skills in the same order. This denies the crucial role in learning played by individual learner characteristics, and the important differences among learners.

My view is that grading and sequencing are not pre-requisites for language learning, and that they often represent further constraints for the learner. The notion of external grading and sequencing implies an idealised view of the learner which has been challenged by recent findings in SLA research and, especially, in studies of learner differences (Skehan 1989, O'Malley 1990, Ellis 1985). Furthermore, it presupposes a degree of prediction of what
learners will be able to learn and when they will be able to do so that is impossible.

Language learning should, from the start, involve maximum exposure to the full system of the language, and participation in real communicative interactions. (This point will be developed later on). Learners will provide their own grading and sequencing, according to their learning style, the stage of their interlanguage, and the characteristics and demands of the interaction. Judging from my experience, grading and sequencing should be envisaged as internal operations carried out, often unconsciously, by the learner in the choice of activities, in focussing on certain types of input, and in the demands made on the teacher and/or other available resources.

2.2. The three basic methods.

Mainstream modern language learning/teaching in the past three decades has followed curricula produced according to the prescriptions of the traditional pattern analysed in the previous section. In spite of the many terms used to refer to them, and of the variety of courses and textbooks which have flooded the market, we can easily identify three main types with specific, differential characteristics. In order to look at them, I would like to make use of the framework proposed by Richards and Rogers (1982). In this framework "method" is the central category, and can be defined in
terms of its three components: "approach", the theoretical rationale; "design", the specification of objectives, content, and roles of teacher, learner and materials; and "procedure", the set of techniques, activity types, etc. which constitute classroom practice.

According to this structure, we can distinguish three basic methods:


2. The Audiolingual Method, shaped by Fries in the 1940s and 1950s.

3. Communicative Language Teaching, or the Functional-Notional approach, which developed in the 1970s around the notion of communication, and following very influential papers by Hymes (1966), Wilkins (1976), and the work of the Council of Europe on modern languages.

The Situational approach, (see below), which was very influential in European modern language learning can not be seen as a method, according to the framework devised by Richards & Rogers (1982). It is a development of Palmer and Hornby's Oral Approach.

There are, obviously, many differences among these methods, especially between the Communicative Language Teaching and the other two. (The Oral Approach and the Audiolingual Method represent two versions of the structural approach to language teaching and, consequently, are very
much alike). Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) offer a detailed contrast between the Audiolingual method and Communicative Language Teaching. Richards and Rogers (1986) give an interesting account of the three. In spite of the differences, many of which are only superficial, the three methods have a great deal in common, at the levels of approach, design and procedure and, above all, they all reflect the same view of education as the transmission of worthwhile knowledge. Here are some of the features shared by the three methods.

At the level of approach:
- they are prescriptive, and show a top-down view, based on the authority of the "expert" (linguist);
- their concern is fundamentally with teaching - rather than learning;
- the point of departure is a theory of language description (structuralism, functionalism);
- learning theory takes a secondary place and, in all three methods, reflects the behaviourist theory of habit formation in a more or less explicit way.
- the view of learning is essentially synthetic, as a process of accumulation of discrete items;
- they stress the need for clearly-defined planning steps - objectives, content, method and evaluation;
- they implicitly accept that a group of learners can be treated as multiple copies of the same average (idealised) individual;
- the emphasis is on final achievement - product;
- learning the system of a language requires practice and drilling;
- the spoken language takes priority over the written.

At the level of design:
- objectives precede content. They are essentially defined in behavioural terms, and reflect a practical command of the "four skills";
- content is an inventory of items, selected according to linguistic criteria;
- sequencing and grading reflect the logic of the language as described by the linguist;
- structural complexity is a key element for content organisation, even in Communicative Language Teaching, since it determines the choice of exponents to realise functions and notions;
- presentation of language items through situations and dialogues, and practice of specific elements through drills, etc. are common activities;
- the teacher is an instructor, a model, an organiser, and a constant point of reference;
- the role of the learner is, essentially, to follow the teacher's instructions.

At the level of procedure:
- some contextualisation of language items through situations, dialogues...
- movement from controlled practice to freer expression;
ample use of choral and individual repetition of the
main patterns of the language;
predominance of the oral over the written code;
extensive use of language as language practice, as
opposite from genuine communication.

To be fair, I have to admit that there are different
practices within Communicative Language Teaching, and that
the types of activity used by teachers committed to this
approach are not restricted to those mentioned above.
However, these are specifically mentioned by Finocchiaro and
Brumfit (1983), and Littlewood (1981), as common practice.
In his final chapter, Littlewood outlines a basic framework
of communicative classroom procedure, as shown in the
following diagram:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{structural activities} \\
\text{pre-communicative activities} / \quad \text{quasi-communicative activities} \\
\text{communicative activities} / \quad \text{functional communication activities} \\
\text{communicative activities} \quad \text{social interaction activities}
\end{array}
\]


He summarises the difference between the two types of
activities as follows: "Through pre-communicative activities
the teacher isolates specific elements of knowledge or skill
which compose communicative ability, and provides the
learners with opportunities to practise them separately".
With reference to this first type he adds "This category
includes the majority of the learning activities currently
to be found in textbooks and methodological handbooks..."
(Littlewood 1981:85). In the case of communicative activities, "the learner has to activate and integrate his pre-communicative knowledge and skills, in order to use them for the communication of meanings" (Littlewood 1981:86). Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983) offer an example of a concrete lesson following Communicative Language Teaching procedures. Many of the activity types and the techniques suggested there could just as easily be attached to a structural method, as to the Functional-Notional, and can be found in the textbooks produced by authors theoretically aligned with different methods, like Alexander and Abbs.

2.3. The "Threshold Level".

In the early 1970s, views on language teaching were being revised in relation to important developments in Linguistics and, more specifically in Sociolinguistics and the Semantics of grammar. The turning point was Chomsky's criticism of the behaviourist model, as being inadequate to account for the complexity and creativity of language, and his theory of linguistic competence. Chomsky's distinction between "competence", i.e. "the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language", and "performance", the actual use of language in concrete situations" (1965:4), produced two main reactions. On the one hand, Halliday rejected its usefulness: "such a dichotomy runs the risk of being either unnecessary or misleading: unnecessary if it is just another name for the distinction between what we have been able to describe in
the grammar and what we have not, and misleading in any other interpretation" (1970:145). On the other, Jakobovits (1970), Hymes (1971) and Savignon (1972) accepted the distinction, but argued in favour of expanding the notion of competence to include both knowledge of language and knowledge of how to use it. Hymes' notion of "communicative competence", envisaged as a theory of language use, and Halliday's view that Linguistics is concerned with the description of "speech acts" (Austin 1962, Searle 1969), provided the theoretical basis for a new approach to language teaching, a view that emphasises the social function of language as a form of interaction. Firth expressed this sociological orientation by stating that "...linguistics at all levels of analysis is concerned with meaningful human behaviour in society" (1968:161). And Halliday (1976) defined the social functions of language, and referred to language learning as the building up of a "meaning potential" for each one of the functions.

The adoption of a sociolinguistic perspective by applied linguists gave birth to the notional-functional (communicative) syllabus, the main purpose of which was to identify those elements of the language that learners would most need, according to their social and professional aims. At the centre of the notional-functional syllabus are the three types of meaning conveyed through language, and represented by Wilkins' categories of communicative function, modal categories, and semantico-grammatical
categories (1973). Yalden specifies the following components to be included in a notional-functional syllabus:

"1. as detailed a consideration as possible of the purposes for which the learners wish to acquire the target language;
2. some idea of the setting in which they will want to use the target language...
3. the socially defined role the learners will assume in the target language, as well as the roles of their interlocutors;
4. the communicative events in which the learners will participate...
5. the language functions involved in these events...
6. the notions involved...
7. the skills involved in the 'knitting together' of discourse...
8. the variety or varieties of the target language that will be needed...
9. the grammatical content that will be needed;
10. the lexical content that will be needed".

(Yalden 1983:86-87).

An influential precedent to the Communicative Approach was the situational language teaching introduced by CREDIF in courses like "Voix et Images de France" (1961) and "Bonjour Line" (1963). These were audiovisual courses which combined filmstrip situations with recorded dialogues. The notion of situational events as language predictors was
central to the situational approach and one that influenced many functional-notional courses. For example, the situational component is clearly present in the Strategies series. In many ways, it was the effort to overcome the shortcomings of the situational approach that led to the development of the communicative approach. Progressively, the prediction of language on the basis of situations was substituted by a growing belief in the existence of a core of semantic notions that express the purposes of the speaker in using the language.

The notional-functional syllabus derives from the THRESHOLD LEVEL, a project carried out under the auspices of the Council of Europe and one that has had a great influence on modern language learning. "The Threshold Level in a European Unit/Credit System for Modern Language Learning by Adults" appeared in 1975, after a series of seminal papers by Richterich (1972), Wilkins (1973), and Trim, Richterich, Van Ek and Wilkins (1973). It was an attempt at establishing a basic core of communicative needs shared by European adult learners of modern languages, and the minimum language tokens necessary to satisfy those needs in different languages. It appeared as a long inventory of functions and notions, with the specification of topics and language activities. In 1977 the "Waystage" followed as a first stage of the learning process, aiming at giving the learners "... the ability to fulfil the most essential language functions in a simple way and to cope, linguistically speaking, in a
restricted number of foreign language situations, especially those in which the use of the foreign language is likely to be found essential for the satisfaction of the most urgent communication needs" (Van Ek & Alexander 1977:13). The Waystage and the Threshold Level represented the specification of a basic syllabus for an idealised, adult, European language learner and offered a common basis for testing language achievement. Both documents attracted a great deal of attention; first, because the aims of the project chimed in nicely with the ideas of international understanding and cooperation which were gaining popularity within Europe but, also, as a result of the novelty of the categories used for selection and organisation of content, and the expectations aroused. However, the problems and shortcomings were soon pointed out by different scholars, (among them, Brumfit 1978, 1980, 1984, Hill 1977, Widdowson 1979, and Das 1984).

From the point of view of modern language learning, there are serious objections to be made to the Threshold Level, first, on account of the basic design pattern and the categories and criteria adopted for the organisation of the syllabus and, second, as a consequence of the application of that type of syllabus to the unsuitable context of the school.

As regards the first issue, there are weaknesses concerning "functions" and the way they are presented in the syllabus.

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First, there is the difficulty of defining functions when the context is not clearly specified, since their meaning depends on purpose, participants and their relationship, knowledge of the world, etc.

Second, functions are presented as a list of discrete items without systematisation, and without any indication of how the different items interrelate with one another. As Mitchell points out, communicative syllabuses have been handed out to the teacher "... without first specifying for him, in a systematic, comprehensive and explanatory fashion what overall body of linguistic knowledge we now consider it appropriate for him to teach". The notional-functional syllabus seems to assume that "... the teacher will already possess an understanding of how the various artificially discrete items it contains are interrelated within an overall system, i.e. the grammar of the language" (Mitchell 1981:103-04). This atomistic approach leads to the isolation and prioritisisation of different aspects of language, as well as to the fragmentation of learning activity and materials, with the subsequent neglect of discourse, and the danger of learners making one-to-one associations between form and function.

The Threshold Level places great emphasis on the functions of language but seems to neglect other crucial elements of communication, such as the interactive factors that make possible the interpretation of what is being said, and the negotiation of meaning. Interaction does not follow
a fixed system, but depends on negotiation, and that implies
the awareness of conventions and limitations, and the
ability to handle discourse. Widdowson has pointed out the
weakness of the Threshold Level in this respect, and its
inability to account for the creative aspect of
communicative competence, "... because communicative
competence is not a compilation of items in memory, but a
set of strategies or creative procedures for realizing the
value of linguistic elements in contexts of use, an ability
to make sense as a participant in discourse, whether spoken
or written, by the skilful deployment of shared knowledge of
code resources and rules of language use" (Widdowson
1979:248). Brumfit has referred to the difficulty of coping
with the creative nature of language within any type of
syllabus: "syllabuses can only specify tokens of the
language, whether the tokens are notional, lexical,
syntactic, functional, or whether they are specifications of
rules for appropriacy, or discourse rules. The creative
aspect of language use, and language learning... cannot be
defined within a syllabus" (Brumfit 1984:267). And, "the more
sophisticated the language situation, the less likely that
any prediction of needs will be able to specify exactly the
interaction of the various communicative systems, syntactic,
paralinguistic, semiotic which will be required" (Brumfit

Another problem with the Threshold Level is the fact that
it specifies the objectives and content of the syllabus but
ignores all pedagogical aspects. Consequently, there is a gap between the level of content specification and that of learning/teaching activity (Riley 1985), since no criteria are provided for the selection of teaching tasks and materials. It provides a detailed specification of the final product without any indication of how to achieve it. This lack of connection between content and methodology is especially unacceptable in the case of a syllabus which aims at specifying aspects of language use, since it is precisely methodology that indicates how the target language is used in the classroom (Brumfit 1980).

A further weakness of the Threshold Level is that it assimilates the items selected at content level to the objectives, specified in terms of terminal behaviour. This implies a product-oriented approach in which learning activity becomes a mere "rehearsal" in a context that artificially tries to recreate the discourse and situations of the outside world. This is a typical pattern of training rather than learning, and one that is likely to produce language-like behaviour as its outcome.

Finally, I would like to mention two presuppositions that the Threshold Level shares with the other syllabus types based on the traditional pattern of syllabus design. First is the assumption that learners with some common social and/or professional characteristics can be taken as a homogeneous group, and put through the same pre-specified sequence of course contents, at the same pace. This view
seems to ignore the fact that learning a language is essentially a creative, subjective process, and it implicitly denies the crucial role of psycholinguistic differences among learners.

The second one is the belief that the categories and the systematic corpus of knowledge produced by linguists in their description of language can be used as the basis for a learning programme, as if learning processes matched the patterns of language description.

In spite of criticism, the Threshold Level and Waystage had a tremendous influence, not only in the field of adult EFL, but also in school modern language learning. This is not surprising if we consider the prestige of the Council of Europe, and the influence of their many workshops and publications but, especially, the attraction of a basic common core of functions which was going to provide the syllabus for learners learning any language for general purposes. However, the Threshold Level has no educational goals and no educational perspective. Its approach to language learning is essentially instrumental, as a means of facilitating business transactions or holiday routines, or as a way of contributing to the integration of immigrants to their host countries. It is very much a view of the classroom and the school as preparation for the real world outside. But school for young learners is an important part of their real lives, and one that must be relevant and
fulfilling, in the sense that it helps learners satisfy their present needs, and acquire capacities which enable them to advance in the process of intellectual, social and emotional development. Young learners undertaking the difficult task of learning a foreign language need to be persuaded of the intrinsic value of the task, and considerations about possible future opportunities, whether professional or touristic, are insufficient.

The analysis of the different elements that contribute to the definition of the Threshold Level shows that the "situations" and their components are highly restrictive, and often irrelevant to the modern language learner. The "social roles" contemplated, for example: "stranger/stranger and friend/friend" are hardly relevant to a classroom environment. The first one is geared towards physical survival in a foreign country, while the second aims at preparing the learner for "the establishment and maintenance of social relationships with foreign-language speakers" (Van Ek 1975:10). With reference to "settings", the only one really relevant on an everyday basis is "learning" and, marginally, we can include "displays", "entertainment" and "surroundings". These facts greatly limit the number of communicative functions that can be dealt with realistically in the classroom. "Language activities" evolve around the central aim of "carrying on a conversation"; consequently, reading and writing are largely neglected. Actually, the whole concept of communication permeating through the
Threshold Level is very restrictive. It reflects a view of communication limited to oral expression, here-and-now, face-to-face exchanges; a view that emphasises verbal aspects and ignores other important ones such as facial expression, intonation, kinetics... But reading and writing are also forms of interaction and communication. Writer and reader also negotiate meaning; the writer trying to predict and cause certain reactions, writing with a certain audience in mind, and deploying "expansion" procedures (Widdowson 1984a), that is surrounding her conceptual content with the necessary arguments to maintain interest, and assure credibility; the reader by making his or her personal interpretation, and applying "reduction" procedures to get from the text the conceptual content that suits his/her expectations, interests, or the level of his/her knowledge. Written communication plays an important part in modern language learning and, unlike oral communication, allows for unlimited contact with the foreign language in contexts that are both authentic and relevant to the learner.

The "communicative functions" have been selected according to certain social criteria, and with a clear model of language user/learner in mind, a model that in Riley's words corresponds to "... a middle-aged, slightly oldfashioned professional man"(Riley 1985:130). For this reason, some of them become rather artificial in the school context, and there are important gaps. For instance, areas like the management of the learning process, or planning and
evaluating techniques, among others, are not contemplated.

Furthermore, the specification of the syllabus content as a list of unrelated functions of the type of the Threshold Level has been the cause of a variety of problems in modern language learning. First of all there is the difficulty of non-native teachers in understanding why language items are categorised in a certain way, finding ways of relating different functions, and providing suitable exponents, according to situation, role and status of participants...

Secondly, the aim of such a syllabus is some sort of oral "bilingualism", which clashes with the possibilities and constraints of the learning context. The behavioural thrust of objectives and content results in the use of simulations as a main pedagogical device. Simulations assign learners roles which are artificial, in artificially created situations. Learners in a secondary-school classroom are not tourists and shop assistants, or policemen in London; they do not know much about the role expectations of the characters they play, and normally have little interest in the final outcome. The result is lack of personal contextualisation of language, and lack of of learners' involvement with meaning. Learners do not participate in language interaction as themselves, with real personalities, needs and purposes, nor do they use the language in order to extract or convey relevant meaning. What simulations produce is only practice of stereotyped dialogue routines.

Another weakness of the Threshold Level has to do with
the concept of "learner needs". Learner needs are envisaged as the speech events in a given situation that will determine the necessary language functions (or speech acts). This is a very restrictive interpretation which ignores psychological needs as well as interests. As Canale and Swain (1980) point out, this approach is a consequence of the assumption that learners are specially concerned with language as social behaviour, and this is not the case with adolescent modern language learners in schools.

Related to the previous point is the question of "needs analysis", as a means of determining the objectives of the learners. Needs analysis was very popular in the 1970s but, recently, it has attracted a great deal of criticism. First, there is the fact that "needs" is an ambiguous term whose meaning varies in relation to different perspectives. The needs of a particular learner will vary as stated by him or herself, the teacher or someone else. Target needs (Mackay 1978, Munby 1978, Richterich & Cancerel 1980) can perhaps be identified with a certain level of accuracy, (Hutchinson & Waters have proposed subdividing them into "necessities", "lacks" and "wants"), but "learning" needs are more elusive and will vary from person to person. Learning needs will depend on the learner's cognitive style, his/her previous experience as a language learner, his/her degree of motivation... and they will vary along the course as well. The fact that learning usually takes place in a group means that there will be a variety of initial needs, which will
increase as learners progress in different ways, at different rhythms.

Another problem with needs analysis is that it does not specify the necessary means to fulfil the specified needs. A clear description of the ends does not tell us very much about how to achieve them. Moreover, the context can pose very powerful constraints and minimise the value of planning. This notwithstanding, Munby (1978) maintains that syllabus specifications must precede any consideration of context constraints.

The sequence target needs analysis - objectives, especially of the utilitarian kind as emphasised in ESP, has been criticised by Brumfit (1979), and Widdowson (1983), for reducing language learning to a technical problem, and restricting it to simple training towards pre-specified behaviour. If we look at it from the point of view of language learning within the educational system, it is rather difficult to predict the future target needs of the learners and, often, their present needs for learning a foreign language are nil. This fact makes any pre-specification of objectives and content particularly difficult. It is important to realise that of the basic components of a notional-functional syllabus listed by Yalden, as mentioned above, the first four, which determine the language content of the syllabus, are irrelevant to the school situation. This casts a shadow over the value of such a syllabus for modern language learning.
Clark (1979) mentions a series of questions that were put to Lothian secondary school learners, and reports how the answers were used to plan a new syllabus. Obviously, asking learners is a necessary and useful source of information; however, answers to questionnaires tend to be superficial, reflect past experience — sometimes slightly distorted by fading memory — and often say what the learner suspects the teacher wants to hear, or what he/she thinks they should answer. It is only through serious work in developing learner awareness, and creating a suitable group dynamic, that learners will be able and willing to manifest their real needs and interests, and these will be personal and individual.

Needs analysis and the subsequent specification of terminal objectives have no role in school language learning, first because they are in contradiction with the very concept of learning and education (as we shall see in the following chapters), but also because, as Rodgers puts it, "if a language syllabus serves a widely diverse learner group, it is difficult to set standards of attainability that can be met by a large number of learners and yet which are not trivial" (Rodgers 1984:35).

The use of the Threshold Level as a basis for school language courses creates a mismatch — between a very specific set of final products and the constraints of an unsuitable context which makes it very difficult to achieve them, and
- between the aims and limitations of a syllabus type and the needs and characteristics of the learners on whom it is imposed.

This tension affects the learner, forced to participate in activities which seem remote, artificial and irrelevant, but also the teacher, torn between the attraction of the programme and the reality of the classroom.

As we mentioned before, the "Strategies" series are the most widely used textbooks for learning English in Catalunya. But as Abbs clearly states "the sequence of materials in 'Opening Strategies' is organized according to the natural development of communicative events which occur when people arrive in a new place or foreign country and conduct the business of their daily lives, e.g. meeting people, making friends, finding their way around" (Abbs et al. 1982:1). The lack of relevance of such activities, and the consequent indifference to the outcomes encourages a halfhearted attitude - "It doesn't really matter what you say, or do... the results are the same". This seriously limits the possibilities of classroom work and prompts a kind of language use which, in McTear's terms (1975), is "meaningful" or "pseudocommunicative", but rarely "real communication".

2.4. The Traditional Language Classroom.

The traditional language classroom, based upon the
traditional pattern of curriculum design, shows the characteristics of the "Transmission" model, as defined by Barnes (1976). The teacher holds a central position and dominates classroom interaction, which follows the typical pattern of initiation-response-feedback (Sinclair & Coulthard 1975). This pattern indicates a one-way flow of information which is quite rare in non-classroom communication. Classroom observation and research have shown that teacher talk takes approximately 2/3 of classroom talking time, (Flanders 1963), and that teachers clearly dominate the "structuring" and "soliciting" moves (Chaudron 1988). This is an indication of the teacher's role as leader and manager of classroom activity. However, as Chaudron points out, "the meaningfulness for learners of classroom events of any kind, whether thought of as interactive or not, will depend on the extent to which communication has been jointly constructed between the teacher and learners" (Chaudron 1988:10). The dominant role of the teacher, together with the fact that courses have pre-specified objectives and contents, leaves the learner with the essentially passive role of following teacher's plans and decisions.

The characteristic lesson pattern is that of "presentation-practice-free stage", with the teacher (or textbook) modelling isolated language items, and providing feedback on learners' performance. Learner participation usually takes the form of the whole group responding to the
teacher, the individual pupil responding to the teacher, or a small group (usually pairs) practising the presented items in simulations... The whole group is normally engaged in the same activity (no choice according to needs and interests), and the target language is rarely used in real communication - to convey personal meaning, but mostly in language practice (Mitchell, Parkinson & Johnstone 1981; Pica & Long 1987). The feedback provided by the teacher is mainly directed at reinforcing correct behaviour and erradicating error (Chaudron 1988). This behaviourist approach neglects important functions of feedback as a motivating element - as a way of releasing anxiety by emphasising achievement rather than failure, and feedback as information: "The information available in feedback allows learners to confirm, disconfirm and possibly modify the hypothetical, 'transitional' rules of their developing grammars..."(Chaudron 1988:134).

In recent years, researchers have analysed the characteristics of classroom discourse. Pica & Long (1987) compared samples of classroom discourse with the kind of language used by native speakers talking to non-native speakers. Basically, their findings were:

- No significant differences in the length and complexity of utterances;
- Higher frequency of statements and imperatives, and fewer questions in classroom language;
- Higher frequency of display (91%) over referential questions;
- Fewer confirmation checks, (teachers 14%, NS-NNS 72%)
  and clarification requests, and higher frequency of
  comprehension checks, (teachers 67%, NS-NNS 10%) (Pica
  & Long 1987, Table 5).

The same results, which confirmed previous findings (Long
& Sato 1983), were obtained when Pica & Long compared the
discourse of experienced and inexperienced teachers. Their
conclusion was "... that the influence of the classroom
context is strong enough to outweigh the effects of teaching
experience" (Pica & Long 1987:15).

All studies seem to indicate that classroom language
learning shows little communicatively rich interaction, and
consists mostly of language practice, in spite of the fact
that more and more research has questioned the direct
relationship between practice and improvement: "The results
of this study ... suggest that there is no direct
relationship between the frequency with which certain forms
appear in the classroom and the frequency and accuracy of
these forms in the learner's language at the same point of
time" (Lightbown 1983b:239). Ellis (1984b) also found
a negative correlation between the quantity of classroom
practice and the progress shown by the learner. Consistency
of feedback did not seem significant either. This kind of
learning context provides the learner with little
opportunity for negotiation of meaning. "Their most obvious
potential bargaining chip - information unknown to the
teacher which he, she or the other students need in order to
do something - is not available to them so long as teachers
structure discourse such that information flows in one
direction only, from teacher to students" (Pica & Long

Finally, the hierarchical pattern of the traditional
curriculum, with its fixed roles and relationships, together
with its tendency towards the itemisation and privilege of
certain elements, have caused a considerable amount of
tension. This tension can be seen between curriculum
components - content versus procedure, training courses
versus classroom reality; and between planners and
educational authorities, and those responsible for the
implementation of curricula. Within the classroom this
tension takes the form of a conflict between different sets
of aims and patterns of behaviour. As shown in fig. 3, the
relationship between teacher and learner is essentially
determined by the experience of the participants and the
effect on them of the environment, educational, social, etc.
The teachers' experience will derive from their personality,
their beliefs and values, their own education and training
as teachers, and the practice acquired while teaching. It is
interesting to note that many teachers feel that their
training was inadequate or insufficient, and few of them are
well informed about current research (Morrison & MCIntyre
1976). Consequently, they will tend to fall back on and
reproduce patterns experienced as a student or trainee.
The social setting, the school policies and organisation system, the relationship between teachers and headmaster, and among teachers themselves, etc. constitute the teacher's environment. Experience and environment will determine the choice of norms used as reference, and the expectations concerning type and level of achievement. They will also define the roles of the participants and their relationship. Expectations and norms of reference will be translated into aims for the learner, and the attitudes towards roles and
relationships will dictate the acceptable patterns of behaviour.

In the case of learners, the process is very much the same. Experience of previous learning, and attitudes and values shared in the playground, at home, etc. will dictate learners' expectations and references, and help shape their view of roles and relationships within the classroom. In the traditional classroom, where the planning and management of the learning process is exclusively the teacher's responsibility, and where the roles of "teacher" and "student" are defined in terms that have clear connotations of social status, it is only normal that conflicting views of school (classroom) aims and patterns of behaviour result in a poor affective climate, and negative attitude and motivation.

2.5. Conclusion.

From the point of view of language learning within the educational system, the traditional pattern of curriculum design and the syllabuses that derive from it show a variety of shortcomings and limitations. In the first place, they are limited in the sense that they try to reduce the "dynamic process of communication" to a static, linear "inventory of items" (Widdowson 1983). A pre-determined itemized syllabus content, and the subsequent step-by-step learning procedure are a misrepresentation of the nature of language and language learning. As Das points out, "To
imagine that the content of language learning can be specified in any precise way, through ready made categories, or represented through any finite, self-consistent system, forming the basis of a 'neat' syllabus, is to harbour an illusion" (Das 1984:324).

On the other hand, the pre-specification of behavioural objectives, and the organisation of learning activity as a means of achieving those fixed and external objectives, represent an inadequate concept of learning and education as merely training or instruction.

Language learning has an essential psycholinguistic dimension which is missing in the "Ends-Means" syllabus. The learning processes through which knowledge is internalised and automatised, and the necessary procedures to facilitate the operation of such processes, the active role of the learner and the individuality of the learning process, are crucial issues in language curricula, yet they are largely neglected by the traditional pattern of curriculum design. Language use and language learning are complex, creative activities which vary from individual to individual. This creative element cannot be controlled or pre-determined: "... production and reception are creative processes, and the establishment of communication between the two interactants is based only partially on rules which exist in the speech community and are available to its members through socialization and language acquisition. As important as such rules are various negotiation processes which are
created ad hoc in each communicative situation. The linguist's description of the linguistic system functioning in such an interactive process cannot catch the creative aspect, the rules that are made by participants..." (Sajavaara 1980, in Brumfit 1984:261-62).

Another source of weakness stems from the limitations of traditional classroom discourse. The basic discourse pattern of the Transmission model, initiation-response-feedback, and the dominant role of teacher and curriculum content, leave little space for negotiation or for adaptation of input to the needs of the learner. This situation is aggravated by a poor attitude and motivation deriving from the hierarchical roles and relationship between teacher and learners.

Finally, the imposition of a pre-planned route and pace on all learners, together with the use of activity types that derive from a view of the classroom as preparation for the real world outside, have diminished the relevance to the learner of classroom activity, and caused a severe lack of learner involvement with meaning.

It is my view that the shortcomings of the traditional pattern of curriculum design mentioned in this chapter bear the main share of the responsibility for failure in modern language learning.
PART II.

TOWARDS A NEW FRAMEWORK

OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT.
3. A MODEL OF INSTRUCTED LANGUAGE LEARNING AS THE BASIS FOR
A FRAMEWORK OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT.

First of all, in this chapter, I will argue the need to
clarify our concept of "learning" and to use a model of
learning as the basis for a framework of curriculum
development. A model of "instructed" language learning,
comprising the characteristics and roles of the learner, the
characteristics and roles of the environment, and the types
of interaction among them will be proposed, and its various
components will be analysed in the light of current field
literature. Especial attention will be paid to "learner
differences" - and their implications for modern language
learning - and to the specific factors that characterise the
"instructed" learning environment.

Secondly, and with adolescent school learners in mind,
language learning will be hypothesised as being the result
of "intensive exposure" and "negotiative interaction", two
closely related processes which imply the notions of
"activity", "involvement" and "relevance".

Finally, "learner autonomy" will be posited as a
necessary requisite for a successful matching between the
learner and the learning environment.

The traditional pattern of curriculum design ignored the
psycholinguistic dimension of language learning,
consequently it provided no theory of learning, on the one
hand, and no set of learning/teaching procedures on the
other. Traditional curricula and syllabuses incorporate very little information about the mental processes through which language is acquired, and about ways of facilitating the operation of such processes.

However, it was precisely progress in psycholinguistic theory that challenged some of the views previously taken for granted, and provided crucial information on the language learning process, the factors involved and their relationship. It also brought about a series of new principles that were to become very influential in the field of Applied Linguistics. Among those, and as examples, we can mention the following:

1. Learning is not a linear process of accumulation of discrete items. Language is a network of interconnected systems which have to be acquired simultaneously. Besides, learning proceeds in a U-shaped curve, and involves periods of apparent regression;

2. Learners show considerable regularity in the developmental sequence of acquisition. Nevertheless, the rate of acquisition and the ultimate level achieved are largely variable, and depend on the individual characteristics of learners;

3. The conscious knowledge of a rule does not presuppose its correct use in free performance;

4. Language practice, and error correction destined to reinforce correct answers seem highly ineffective as regards change in language behaviour.
As the purpose of modern language curricula is that of promoting and facilitating the learning of foreign languages, a framework of language curriculum development should be based upon a model of language learning and, more specifically, a model of instructed language learning, (one that takes into account the characteristics and constraints of formal school learning).

At present, there are two different psycholinguistic approaches to language learning. The mainstream approach envisages language learning as the result of the operation of an integrative faculty responsible for general cognitive development. According to this view, it is a problem-solving device, not specifically geared towards language learning but operating in a number of cognitive tasks, that is responsible for the acquisition of language. This faculty can perform at both a subconscious and a conscious level. In the latter case, it requires focussing on the linguistic system. This approach to language learning has been challenged by those who claim the existence of a language-specific device, a subconscious faculty governed by universal principles which controls the task of acquisition, by reducing the number of hypotheses about the target language that the learner can formulate to those that are "possible", according to universal principles. The operation of this device requires ample exposure to language input (Cook 1985, Zobl 1984).

The "language-specificity" paradigm has prompted a wide
reconsideration of traditional learning theory, and the relationship between the two devices, and between the types of knowledge provided by them, has been at the centre of a long and still inconclusive debate, a debate that has far-reaching consequences for language learning. Although I concur with the mainstream approach in that it is mainly through the application of general cognitive strategies that learners sift the input available in the environment, I believe that the two theories are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and that different aspects of language may be acquired in different ways.

In fact, an interface position, (Sharwood-Smith 1981, Stevick 1980, among others), the view that both types of knowledge are interrelated, and that the learners' interlanguage at different stages is the result of interaction between knowledge acquired through the language-specific faculty and knowledge originated from the operation of the problem-solving device, has gained more general acceptance in recent years. Through use, explicit knowledge can become automatised and turned into implicit knowledge, while unconscious knowledge can facilitate the conscious task of learning. In my view, the crucial issue is not so much whether explicit knowledge should be provided, as WHEN and HOW it should be provided. Language acquisition derives mainly from wide exposure to, and interaction with, rich natural input. However, acquisition can benefit from some attention to certain aspects of language. "Consciousness
raising" activity can aid acquisition (Rutherford 1986).

A model of instructed language learning should comprise the characteristics and roles of the formal (instructed) environment, the characteristics and roles of the learner, and the types of interaction among them. The model proposed, (fig. 4), distinguishes between two components of the instructed learning environment:

INSTRUCTIONAL CONSTRAINTS: a series of constraints imposed on the learning environment in order to structure and control it.

LEARNING CONDITIONS: limitations deriving from the characteristics of the setting, such as learning time and frequency, means and resources, etc.

Both sets of factors will determine the quality and quantity of input, the opportunities for free language use, and the types of interaction available to the learner.

As regards the learner, the model distinguishes between:

LEARNER PROCESSES: the cognitive component of the learner's procedural knowledge. Learners apply a variety of subconscious, mental strategies in order to process target language data and to make use of their resources for language production.
Fig. 4

INSTRUCTED LANGUAGE LEARNING.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

INSTRUCTIONAL CONSTRAINTS

LEARNING CONDITIONS

LEARNER DIFFERENCES

LEARNER PROCESSES

THE LEARNER

LEARNING
LEARNER DIFFERENCES: before the learner's subconscious mental strategies can operate some of the data from the environment have to be internalised - input turned into intake. Learners select and adapt data according to their needs, learning style, stage of interlanguage... It is the individual characteristics of learners which will determine what and how much data are internalised at a given time.

The model hypothesises that instructed language learning will be the result of multiple interaction between learner differences (cf. 3.5.2.), and the various constraints of the learning environment (cf. 3.4.). Learner processes, (cf. 3.5.1.), will be considered as a later stage, beyond the direct reach of classroom activity, and determined by the learner's mental mechanisms. Nevertheless, awareness of subconscious learning strategies will be considered a valuable factor and incorporated into the framework. Consequently, the best kind of instruction will be that which maximises target language data available, and imposes the fewest constraints on the way in which learners deal with the data.

3.1. The Concept of Learning.

The concept of "learning" is open to different interpretations and it has varied considerably over the years, according to the theoretical assumptions or the ideology of the different scholars and groups involved. An
example of this is the different notions of learning deriving from Behaviourist and Mentalist theory, or the divergent views put forth by supporters of the "expository mode" tradition in education, and those aligned with the "hypothetical mode" tradition (Bruner 1966).

In modern language learning, as part of school education, it is the educational rationale that provides the context and sets the parameters within which languages are learnt. For this reason, a minimum level of agreement is necessary between the concept of learning commonly accepted in the field of applied linguistics, and the view of learning that predominates in general education.

At present, learning a second or a foreign language is generally envisaged by applied linguists as a complex, subconscious process of internalisation and automatisation of the rules of the target language. A subconscious process of development of an internal rule system or, in Rutherford's words, a process of "grammaticisation" (1987). Such a process is developmental - learners go through the different stages of a continuum - and involves contributions from both the learner and the learning environment. In direct contact with language data, and as a result of the formation and testing of hypotheses, the learner constructs a kind of language-learner language - or Interlanguage - (Selinker 1972), and progresses along the interlanguage continuum by revising, expanding and modifying previous hypotheses in relation to new data available. The number of
hypotheses tested at a particular time is limited by a process of "simplification" (Widdowson 1975).

As viewed by Selinker, the learner's interlanguage has three main characteristics:
- it is permeable; its system of rules is open to change and to the influence of other linguistic systems;
- it is systematic; the learner's transitional system at a particular time is describable in terms of rules like a fully developed language.
- it is dynamic; as long as the process of acquisition persists, it continuously evolves towards the target language system.

Interlanguage is currently seen as a "recreation continuum" (Corder 1978, 1981, Ellis 1982), a process of progressive "complexification" of the internal system. This concept of interlanguage implies a series of assumptions:

1. the interlanguage system is different from both the L1 and the L2;
2. interlanguages form a continuum of evolving systems;
3. the interlanguages of learners at the same level of proficiency roughly coincide;
4. learner errors are evidence of their testing of false hypotheses.

The interlanguage hypothesis has been strongly supported by two kinds of empirical studies: the "morpheme studies" - cross-sectional research (Dulay & Burt 1973,
1974, Bailey, Madden & Krashen 1974, Larsen-Freeman 1976, Krashen, Butler, Birbaun & Robertson 1978), and the longitudinal studies, (for a review see Ellis 1985:58-63). They provide evidence of a natural route, or natural sequence of development in the acquisition of second languages. Ellis (1984a, 1985) identifies four developmental stages. The first one shows basic syntax, and a standard word order. In the second stage propositions are expanded to include all the necessary constituents, (some of which were omitted in the previous stage), and word order varies according to word order patterns in the L2. The third stage is characterised by morphological development. Stage four marks the acquisition of complex sentence structure. This natural sequence has proved remarkably independent of learning context (Allwright 1984), and can be identified in natural and formal environments, and with different types of learners. There are, however, differences in the order of development within the natural sequence, differences that depend on the characteristics of the learner and his/her L1. And, of course, there are significant differences in the rate and final level of acquisition.

A crucial issue concerning interlanguage theory, and one that has important repercussions on instructional language learning, is the question of interlanguage variability. Variability of learner performance seems to contradict the systematicity of the interlanguage system at any particular time. And this is the case if the concept of "competence" is
viewed as homogeneous, as in Chomsky's theory, or as dual, as in Krashen's. However, Hymes (1971), and Labov (1970), among others, have referred to systematic variability as part of the language user's heterogeneous competence. Labov's styles are a reflection of the variable rules which underlie different types of performance, to suit different social contexts.

Tarone (1983) analyses data from several studies showing variation of syntax, morphology and phonology as a consequence of the influence of elicitation tasks, and concludes: "...the data we have examined thus far indicate that interlanguage does vary systematically with elicitation tasks, and, further, that when a task elicits a relatively more careful style, that style may contain more TL forms or more prestige NL variants than the relatively more casual style elicited by other tasks. The more casual style may contain structures traceable neither to the NL nor to the TL, structures which seem to arise spontaneously in the casual style and resemble structures which occur in pidgins, in early child language acquisition, and early untutored second language acquisition"(Tarone 1983:146). To account for this variability she proposes a Capability Continuum paradigm, which is the application to interlanguage of Labov's styles. Tarone states that "the learner's IL capability as defined in this paradigm is not assumed to be homogeneous (single-style), but rather heterogeneous, made up of a continuum of styles"(1983:152), ranging from the
vernacular (unattended speech), to the careful (the speaker concentrates on form rather than on meaning). This continuum is what underlies IL behaviour. The most consistent of the IL styles is the vernacular. Tarone views "the IL vernacular style as that style which is the least 'permeable' in the sense of being more internally consistent, and evidencing fewer structures of the NL or TL" (Tarone 1983:155). The natural sequence would be a reflection of development of the vernacular style.

Tarone's view of the nature of the interlanguage continuum emphasises the interrelationship between language acquisition and language use, and the role of variability in SLA: forms which initially correspond to the careful style can become more automatised through use and, thus, become available in the vernacular style. It also gives support to the assumption made above of a connection between explicit and implicit knowledge, and of how conscious learning can aid the crucial task of subconscious acquisition.

As regards instructional language learning, the central issue is how to promote the process of development of an internal rule system, how to facilitate the operation of the subconscious processes which are responsible for language learning. From my experience and, especially, in view of the procedures followed and the results achieved in the project which will be described and analysed in the following chapters, I would like to hypothesise that the operation of
the learner's mental processes is triggered by a combination of

- **intensive exposure** to a rich variety of natural samples of language - natural examples of meaning-structure realisations in context - and

- **negotiative interaction**: the process of negotiation of meaning characteristic of language use which arises when learners make the effort to extract, create or convey meaning which will allow them to proceed towards the achievement of their own purposes.

From this, learners abstract some of the rules present in the samples of language they have been exposed to, and develop their own internal system. The differences that can be observed in rate and degree of progress are due to differences among learners.

Intensive exposure and negotiative interaction imply a learning environment centred on the notions of activity, involvement and relevance.

**ACTIVITY**: learning is not a passive process of assimilating predigested knowledge, but requires a variety of active operations - deep processing - (Marton & Saljo 1976), and strategies (O'Malley 1990), such as relating new information to prior knowledge, relating concepts and ideas to personal experience, selecting and criticising information and its sources, self-monitoring, etc. When all this is done as part of a global plan devised to achieve one's own purpose, the target
language becomes the medium for the fulfilment of learners' needs and interests.

IN INVOLVEMENT: Intensity of exposure and degree of negotiation are variables that depend on personal involvement in the tasks that require comprehension and production of target language samples. The deeper learners are internally affected by a task or a topic, and the harder they try to apply personal strategies and resources to the discovery and expression of meaning, the better their chances seem to be of advancing in their development of language competence.

Personal involvement, on the other hand, is closely related to "relevance".

RELEVANCE: It is essential that adolescent learners perceive learning tasks as meaningful and relevant to their present needs and interests. Their capacity for projecting into the future, and for judging the value of activity types in terms of future potential is small. In this sense, and based on my experience, I would suggest that the most favourable conditions for learner involvement would be those in which tasks are meaningful, and meaning is perceived by learners as their own, that is, a consequence of the expression of their feelings and beliefs or the results achieved in the pursuit of personal interests, satisfaction of needs, etc. One's own meaning is more important, more engaging of one's efforts and attention, and more rewarding when successfully
achieved. Consequently, the intensity of exposure is heightened.

Furthermore, the expression of one's own meaning seems to trigger the use of one's own language, while other people's meaning - borrowed meaning - seems to prompt the use of borrowed language as well. This is an important issue, especially as regards adolescent learners who are usually reluctant to accept borrowed meanings from the teacher, the textbook or other similar sources, and who often feel unaffected personally when dealing with such meanings, unconcerned about the outcomes of a piece of discourse which is not their own. When, as a consequence of the methodology chosen by the teacher, adolescent learners are required to express borrowed meanings they tend to use language which is also borrowed, language which is the result of surface processing, of memorisation and repetition of words, expressions and whole chunks. Intensity of exposure and degree of interaction are low in these cases, and this kind of language is not usually acquired, except in the case of a minority of "good" learners who have the capacity to abstract rules and patterns from borrowed language. (Children seem quite happy to borrow meanings as well as language, and adults appear to be willing to do so as part of their learning tactics).

On the basis of the Sabadell project experience, I believe that personal involvement and dealing with one's own meaning through one's own language, as a way of ensuring
deep processing, are essential requirements for language acquisition, as far as adolescents are concerned.

Relevance and learner involvement imply a considerable degree of flexibility of the learning environment to allow for different tasks and different kinds of participation, corresponding to learner differences.

The above hypothesis, based largely on the results and procedures of the "Sabadell project", envisages "learning" and "communication" as, essentially, the same basic process of negotiation of meaning. In both cases, the unique characteristics of individuals play a crucial role, and it is personal involvement and interaction which lead to success in the achievement of the participants' purposes. In this sense, the hypothesis is in complete agreement with the basic principles of an alternative view of education which has gained considerable support in the past two decades.

3.2. Contrasting views of Education.

In education, the approach which has predominated in the past four decades is that of the "Transmission model", related to the behaviourist theory of stimulus-response. Learning is seen as the result of external stimuli - reward, punishment... - exercised on a passive learner whose basic role is simply to be the recipient of predigested knowledge-information. Learning activity is selected, not for its relevance or intrinsic value, but as a means of achieving pre-specified outcomes. Consequently, classroom
activity tends to be very poorly related to the world of learners, their needs and aspirations, their curiosity and imagination. Because of its effect on many learners, this approach has been referred to as the "vaccination theory of education" (Postman & Weingartner 1969), once vaccinated the person is permanently immune.

In the past 20 years, this view of learning and education has been widely criticised. Lange & James acknowledge the presence of strong voices for change, and state that "they have always existed. But recently their whisper has become vocal. In fact, the sound created blows at us in catatonic tones" (1972:377). Bruner pointed out that the view of learning as the result of reinforced responses is too simplistic. "Even if a principle of reinforcement held, there would be a question of competition among reinforcements from different sources. What gets reinforced by whom?" (Bruner 1974:140).

Among recurrent themes in educational theory in the past two decades, there are some which have gained considerable strength. They evolve around the characteristics and roles of learners. First is the need to cater for individual differences mentioned by Lange & James: "The potentiality of individualized and personalized learning to provide for individual personality differences and to make use of learning styles... is promising as an alternative to the traditional teacher-centered classroom" (1972:379). Schulz also states that "while every individual shares numerous
traits with other members of our species and progresses through many common and generally predictable stages of development, each learner remains unique in personality and in ways of acquiring and retrieving information" (1977: Introduction).

Second is the importance attributed in learning to learner involvement. Craik (1973), for instance, refers to research in experimental psychology as support for the view that the greatest learning is the result of processing materials at the greatest cognitive depth, that is, from creatively searching out, discovering, problem solving...

Finally, and related to the previous point, is the question of relevance and the consideration of learning as a process that concerns the whole person. Brown (1971) argues that "feeling" and "thinking" cannot be separated, and that when emotional appeal is added to learning, better learning is achieved. Maslow (1971) points out that learners need to feel successful and enjoy their learning activity. They should be the driving force behind the learning process. Glasser attributes failure in school education to lack of relevance. "What students get from school - from their English class for example - is information. They then ask 'Will this information satisfy my needs, and should I work hard to get more of it?' As a society we are failing to understand that students will not work in classes that do not satisfy their needs" (Glasser 1987:657).

The authors mentioned above represent only a few examples
of those who have contributed to the shaping of an alternative view of learning and education, a view that puts the learner at the centre of an active learning process, and emphasises the role of individual characteristics and differences. Learning becomes, essentially, learning to learn, and knowledge acquires a crucial experiential dimension. Bruner (1974) sees learning as a process of mastering more and more complex sets of pre-requisites - something that allows the learner to continue learning - and states that the different steps in that process must correspond to the learner's learning style. He argues that it is essential that learners develop an attitude to learning that allows them to use the "information" obtained in the classroom in dealing with real personal problems. This requires, among other things, a capacity for recognising that skills and information can be extrapolated and related to other data and situations, and a minimum experience in using skills and information acquired for problem solving. Dewey (1938) considers knowledge as the developing experience of the individual. This implies that the point of departure should be the learner's needs and characteristics, and emphasises the role of learner differences.

Education is envisaged as a continuous, open-ended process, whose purposes are to contribute to satisfying learners' psychological, social and emotional needs, and to give them the necessary means to continue learning, and to
perform in unpredictable circumstances. This view of education implies the notion of learner autonomy in the management of one's learning process, and the selection of learning activities for their relevance and intrinsic value, rather than for the outcome they are expected to lead to. As Peters puts it, in education "what is required is not feverish preparation for something that lies ahead, but to work with precision, passion and taste at worthwhile things that lie at hand" (1965:110). It is crucial, however, that learners have a say in what is considered "worthwhile".

It is this view of learning and education, which is in complete agreement with the predominant approach to language learning within the field of applied linguistics, that underlies the model of learning proposed in fig. 4. Learning is seen as the result of multiple interaction between the learner and the (instructed) learning environment, and a decisive role is attributed to the learner in selecting and processing language data available in the environment.

3.3. The Learning Environment.

In the early stages, research on first and second language acquisition emphasised the role of the environment. Behaviourists focussed on observable phenomena, and viewed language acquisition as the result of learner-external variables, namely stimulus and feedback.

With Mentalism the focus switched onto the capabilities
of the language learner. As Chomsky (1981) puts it, it is the properties of Universal Grammar, inherent in the human mind, and not those of linguistic experience which determine mature language knowledge. The natural sequence of language development, and the fact that all children, except the severely handicapped, managed to reach similar stages of proficiency in the first language, in the same time span, and regardless of linguistic and environmental differences, was seen as evidence of the determinant role of the learner and his/her innate language processing mechanisms.

In recent years, many researchers have adopted an interactionist approach, viewing language acquisition as the result of interaction between the learner's mental faculties and the learning environment. (This is the view I intend to follow as well).

3.3.1. The Role of Input.

Language input is a central element in the learning environment, and has attracted a great deal of attention from researchers. The first studies focussed on the language addressed to young children by their mothers and caretakers - Motherese. These studies showed that Motherese was a well-formed language in which some formal adjustments, like simplification, had been made in order to facilitate comprehension and the exchange of meaning. Some common assumptions about the role of Motherese have been questioned by Gleitman, Newport & Gleitman (1984) who did not find any
indication that the abundance of here-and-now topics in conversations with children aided acquisition; it was more likely that they reflected the way adults perceive the child's cognitive maturity. Besides, they found a significant positive correlation between complex speech and language development. These findings seem to suggest that input provided by caretakers might be deficient, and that simplification might deprive the child of key language features.

In 1971, Ferguson's description of simplified registers started the "Foreigner Talk" studies, and the speculation about its role in second language development. A variety of studies (Long 1981a, 1981b, 1983a, Hatch 1980, among others,) showed the formal and functional characteristics of foreigner talk, and revealed that, as in the case of Motherese, the key features of input are interactional rather than formal, and that the adjustments made by native speakers have the purpose of clarifying what the speaker is trying to communicate.

The most far-reaching account of the role of input in SLA is provided by Krashen's "Input Hypothesis"(1981, 1982, 1985, Krashen & Terrell 1983), according to which SLA is the result of the learner operating on available comprehensible input. Language acquisition is caused by the learner understanding comprehensible input, that is, input one stage above the present level of competence following the natural sequence (i+1). In instructional learning, input must be
roughly tuned to the needs of the learner, but not grammatically sequenced since then the focus would be on form, and learning rather than acquisition would take place. It is unnecessary to focus on the structures the learner is to acquire, first because we do not know what the learner is ready for and, second, because they will be part of the input anyway. The learner's affective filter controls the amount of input the learner comes into contact with, and how much of this input becomes intake. Changes in the level of competence come as a result of the learner comparing "i" with available data indicating that a new rule is needed. This rule will eventually be adopted if it is confirmed by new input; otherwise it will be discarded.

Long (1983b, 1985), as well, has emphasised the role of input in acquisition and has looked into ways in which input is made comprehensible, suggesting that the main devices are the use of context, and conversational adjustments.

Although it is commonly accepted that available input is one of the crucial elements in language acquisition - there is no acquisition without exposure - Krashen's position has been severely criticised (McLaughlin 1978, Rivers 1980, Stevick 1980, Sharwood-Smith 1981, Tarone 1983, Larsen-Freeman 1983, Gregg 1984). The first objection is to the vagueness and lack of systematicity in Krashen's use of terms like "input" and "intake", and the concept of (i+1). Secondly, the input hypothesis offers no explanation of how input becomes acquisition, or of how it interacts with the
learner's acquired knowledge. Krashen only accepts the semantic trigger as the cause of change in the learner's competence. But, how can comprehensible input trigger the move to the next stage? As White (1987) points out, it is the fact that the input is incomprehensible that provides the driving factor for change.

Gleitman, Newport & Gleitman (1984) have questioned the value of "comprehensible" input, understood as simplified teacher or caretaker talk. Their studies on learnability seem to indicate that simplified input would cause learnability problems, since it would deprive the learner of essential features of language that do not appear in simple sentences. In White's words, "Simplified input is also a form of manipulation which can have particularly unsatisfactory consequences for acquisition, since it often deprives the learner of essential information about language" (White 1987:96).

Another problem refers to the assumption underlying Krashen's concept of (i+1) that acquisition is, mainly, the accumulation of discrete items - adding new syntactic rules. This view fails to account for the way in which the learner discards non-target hypotheses, unless there is negative evidence on which he/she can rely. But this is not accepted by the input hypothesis. The following examples illustrate this point: a French learner of English would not come across any positive input to tell him/her that a sentence like (1) was unacceptable. A similar thing would happen to a
Spanish learner of English who omitted subject pronouns, as in (2).

(1) * Mary ate happily her cake.
(2) * Is very nice.

A further objection to the input hypothesis came from Swain (1984), because of its failure to account for the need for comprehensible output in acquisition. In her review of immersion education in Canada she concludes that "... the combination of the increased time in French and the communicative methodology employed in immersion programs vastly improves the second language proficiency of the students... Immersion students develop native-like skills in their ability to understand spoken and written texts; but they don't attain native-like proficiency in their spoken or written French" (Swain 1984:41).

3.3.2. The Role of Interaction.

The notion of input as presented in the input hypothesis is unidirectional, in the sense that it is only envisaged as language addressed to the learner by native speakers, teachers, textbooks... However, input is also determined by the learner herself. Sharwood-Smith (1981) points out that learners' language production becomes input to their mental faculties. And learners' efforts and feedback help shape the subsequent input provided by their interlocutors. Both parties collaborate in the construction of language.
discourse. In written communication, the learner interacts with the text in order to extract his/her own meaning. Input, then, is the product of interaction between language users, with similar or different levels of competence, but with a common purpose, that of keeping communication going. Consequently, interaction becomes a crucial factor of the learning environment, as a process of negotiation of meaning that creates opportunities for learning.

Hatch (1978), and Long (1983a) have analysed conversations involving adult learners, and studied the procedures used by them to overcome obstacles and achieve successful communication. They found that learners use clarification requests, repetitions of part of the native speaker's discourse, and signalling of comprehension or lack of it. Native speakers seem to do a fair amount of modelling of what learners want to say, and use confirmation requests, and a variety of repair tactics, such as moving the topic to the beginning of the sentence, simplifying the lexis, speaking more slowly, using gestures, etc. It is this process of interaction, this negotiation of meaning, that creates the conditions for the processing of input. As Hatch suggested, learning and communicative procedures are directly linked: "One learns how to do conversations, one learns how to interact verbally, and out of this interaction syntactic structures develop" (Hatch 1978:404). Although it is not yet quite clear how this happens, several possibilities have been suggested, possibilities that, far
from being incompatible, could together provide an explanation for the variety of situations. The main ones are:

- provision of language chunks, (formulaic speech), which are memorised and used as chunks and, later on, the learner breaks down and analyses the various items;

- vertical structures, constructed by building on the preceding language provided by the interlocutor. This is the case of the learner making use of the discourse context;

- comprehensible input. Long (1985), Pica & Long (1987), has repeatedly pointed out that it is the interactional adjustments that make input comprehensible. Through them, the learner modifies the structure of the conversation to suit her needs.

Input frequency has also been considered as a way of influencing acquisition, in the sense that learners would acquire first the structures they had been most frequently exposed to. However, doubts about this issue seem justified since it implies a view of language acquisition as the accumulation of discrete structures.

It seems to me that, from a pedagogical point of view, the crucial issue is to approach interaction as a process of collaborative creation of learning opportunities, in which the quality of interaction will be essential. Nevertheless, qualitative (profitable) interaction will vary according to situation and, also, from learner to learner. Long (1981a) tried to measure qualitative interaction by means of
quantity of conversational adjustments. This is probably a sensible measure in pair communication, where the learner can manage her personal adjustments, but situations of group communication are more complex. Besides, learning is a highly idiosyncratic activity, and qualitative interaction might well depend on learning style, personality, etc. Different learners will show different types of behaviour and will take part in, and benefit from, interaction in different ways, some of which might be difficult to observe. After all, as Allwright puts it, "... what learners do covertly may be at least as important as anything they do overtly" (1986:13).

3.4. The "Instructed" Learning Environment.

In formal - instructed - language learning, the quality and quantity of input available, and the types of interaction are determined by a series of factors - constraints - that characterise the instructed learning environment. As we mentioned above, two types of factors can be identified: "Instructional Constraints", and "Learning Conditions".

Instructional constraints comprise a series of restrictions imposed on the learning environment in order to structure and control it. The view of learning and education as a process that requires careful planning, the assumption that learning would benefit from detailed specification and gradation of the content to be learnt at each step, and the
leading role attributed to the teacher, all conspired to determine the kind of learning environment modern language learners were to encounter. In instructed language learning, the freedom of learners to follow paths and rhythms suitable to their learning characteristics, and to proceed according to their needs and interests, choosing tasks, topics and materials and the way of dealing with them, is greatly reduced by the imposition of instructional constraints. These include aims, objectives, materials and activity types, methodology, evaluation, feedback, teaching styles, roles and relationships, type(s) of learner participation, and opportunities for free use of the target language.

The effects of some of these constraints on the learner, (mainly of those usually included in the traditional curriculum pattern, and those related to "roles and relationships"), have already been considered in the previous chapter, (and especially in "The Traditional Language Classroom" section). The main issue is that, the better organised the curriculum is; the more highly specified objectives and content items are; the more carefully materials and activity types are selected, the more of an imposition they become, and the less freedom learners have to pursue their own learning ways and rhythms. The other constraints have often been neglected in the past. Nevertheless, factors like teaching style, and types of learner participation have a strong influence on the learning process and deserve some attention.
"Teaching Style" can be considered as a set of beliefs, attitudes and types of behaviour and relationship displayed by teachers in order to promote learning. Teaching style largely determines the way teachers organise and manage learning activity, the roles and responsibilities attributed to learners, the ways of stimulating learner participation, and the choice and/or application of evaluative criteria. Teaching style is closely related to personality. It depends on the openness of one's beliefs and tolerance towards those of others, on flexibility to adapt to changing situations, and on the degree of interest in learners as human beings.

Barnes (1976) distinguishes two basic types of teacher:

- the "Transmission" teacher: she sees her task as the correction and evaluation of students' performance, according to well-defined subject content, and clearly specified standards of performance;

- the "Interpretation" teacher, who believes that students already know a great deal and possess the ability to expand their knowledge, interpreting facts around them and acting upon them.

The contribution to the learning environment made by these two teacher types will be very different: shared responsibility and flexible participation on the one hand, versus control in content and procedure on the other. And this will, no doubt, affect learning.

"Learner Participation" in the learning process can take place in different ways, according to the patterns of
interaction that predominate in the classroom. In a very stimulating paper, Allwright (1984a) mentions three different modes of learner participation:

- "Compliance": accepting and doing what you are expected to do. That is, handing in all responsibility for the management of the learning process to the teacher, and just following her instructions;

- "Navigation": "It refers to attempts to steer a course between, round, and over the obstacles that the lesson represents for the participants" (Allwright 1984a:160). Against the tide of established classroom patterns, decided by the teacher and textbook, learners force their way into getting some of the data that suit their present needs;

- "Negotiation": planning and deciding on learning activity by general consensus, and on the basis of learners' needs and interests. Negotiation gives learners a central role in the shaping of the learning environment, and the management of their own learning processes.

Due to the importance of interaction in language acquisition, and as a consequence of the necessarily active role of the learner, the types of learner participation in classroom activity will have a considerable influence in the pace and final level of acquisition.

Learning Conditions are the constraints imposed by the characteristics of the setting, mainly, learning time and
frequency, number of students per class, classroom layout, and means and resources available. The usual three to five hours a week, distributed in different ways, allocated to modern language learning, combined with the large number of students per class - in Spain 35 to 40 - represent a serious limitation of the total amount of exposure to the target language, and of the opportunities for free use of the language. More often than not, the classroom is the main - if not the only - context in which learners come into contact with the foreign language, and "homework" outside the classroom is usually restricted to (written) language practice. The classroom layout, sitting arrangements, position of teacher and teaching aids, quantity and quality of resources available... have a strong influence in the group dynamics and the classroom atmosphere. They also contribute to creating the conditions for certain types of activity, certain attitudes and feelings, etc. As an example, we can think of the traditional classroom: desks arranged in serried ranks facing a teacher who stands in front of the blackboard; classroom resources consisting, essentially, of blackboard, tape-recorder, wall charts... This context presupposes and facilitates the kind of activity corresponding to the "transmission" type of teaching, and the "compliance" mode of learner participation.

The combination of "learning conditions" and "instructional constraints" determines the types of learning
environment the learner will encounter in instructed language learning.

The view of instructed language learning, and the interpretation of data about the relationship between instruction and acquisition has varied over the years. Until 1970, the observation of classroom activity was mostly restricted to the evaluative purpose of inspectors and teacher trainers. The mid 60s saw the beginning of systematic observation, in an attempt to establish the comparative worth and effectiveness of different methods. But it was not until the 1970s that SLA provided a rationale for classroom observation and research: "the overall value of instruction" (Allwright 1986). At the same time, researchers, especially in the USA, carried out a number of empirical studies of SLA in naturalistic environments, and compared their findings to results obtained from instructional contexts. The conclusion was that instruction had no effect on acquisition, because it did not alter the route of acquisition. This view was reinforced by findings by Pica (1983), and Lightbown (1983). Both emphasised the role of the learner (versus that of the learning environment) in SLA, and Lightbown claimed that acquisition sequences are immutable, and that the frequency of forms in teacher speech does not seem to affect the frequency or accuracy of the learner's use of such forms. This view was partially challenged by Long's review of 12 previous studies (1983c). His conclusion was that instruction does have an
effect
- on children as well as adults,
- on beginners as well as advanced learners,
- in acquisition-rich as well as in acquisition-poor environments.

Instruction does not alter the acquisition sequence, but it affects the rate. Pienemann (1984) reached the same conclusion, and Zobl (1985) offered an explanation for the positive effect of instruction on the rate of acquisition: "once grammars reach a certain level of complexity such that their rules begin to predict to unmarked structures with some regularity, marked data become necessary if progress on unmarked structures is not to stagnate" (Zobl 1985:343). Instruction tends to focus on marked elements of the target language, while in naturalistic environments there is a dominance of unmarked data.

Underlying the no-effect position, which has been very influential in the field, especially in the USA, there seems to be a view of the instructed language learning process as totally different from the learning process in natural SLA. Krashen and Seliger claim that "the universal and presumably crucial ingredients of formal instruction are (1) the isolation of rules and lexical items of the target language, and (2) the possibility of error detection or correction" (Krashen & Seliger 1975:173).

According to Sinclair & Coulthard (1975), "initiation", "response" and "feedback" are the central elements of
classroom discourse. This is certainly an unusual pattern in non-classroom communication. However, for a considerable number of modern language learners instruction is the main, if not the only, context in which they can learn a foreign language on a regular basis. If, in spite of classroom constraints and limitations, the acquisition sequence is the same, should the acquisition processes not be essentially the same too? If this is the case, then the crucial question is not so much whether instruction makes a difference or not, but how instruction promotes acquisition, and how we can contribute to the maximization of acquisition for each individual learner.

Discourse studies have provided a better insight into classroom learning, and have revealed that, as in a naturalistic environment, interaction is the central feature of instructed language learning. "... everything that happens in the classroom happens through a process of live person-to-person interaction" (Allwright 1984a:156). Even in the case of a highly controlled class, heavily dominated by the teacher, instruction is realized by specific patterns of interaction, and classroom activity is jointly constructed and managed by teacher and learners. "Navigation" is a very common mode of learner participation in classroom interaction. Learners interrupt and ask questions about the meaning of words, ask for repetitions, focus their attention on different aspects of an activity, demand explanations, etc. And, through this, they sort out input and adapt it to
their present, individual needs. A crucial question is whether this is the most efficient type of classroom interaction possible, and whether it offers learners sufficient data for them to advance, at their own pace, in the construction of a mental rule system of the target language.

Ellis offers an interesting framework relating instruction to acquisition: "When instruction is viewed as interaction classroom SLA can be considered in the same light as naturalistic SLA. This explains why the 'natural order' of acquisition is not altered by instruction, for instruction functions in the same way as natural discourse, as the matrix in which learning takes place" (Ellis 1986:26). He summarises the ways in which classroom interaction may contribute to acquisition in the following way:

- by providing the learner with unanalysed chunks that he/she can memorise;
- by helping her build structural patterns which lie outside his/her linguistic competence;
- by modelling specific grammatical forms that are subconsciously acquired;
- by providing comprehensible input.

For classroom discourse to operate in the same way as natural discourse, the requirement is that classroom interaction must be similar to natural interaction. In Allwright's modes of learner participation in classroom activity, "negotiation" provides the same kind of
interaction as that in the free settings, so it should promote the same kind of acquisitional processes but, as Allwright points out, it is rare in instructional learning. "Navigation" represents a second best mode, but one that is limited in time and scope. Interaction is restricted by the teacher's directiveness in the planning and delivery of the lesson. In a traditional class, learners obtain language data and language practice of those items and skills chosen by the teacher (or course planner). Through a process of navigation they achieve a certain amount of individualisation of the input, adapting it to their immediate needs.

3.5. The Language Learner.

The model of learning proposed above (see fig. 4) states that it is through interaction between the learner and the learning environment that input is made available for the learner to internalise and process. And it distinguishes between two crucial aspects of the role of the learner in second language acquisition, "Learner Processes" and "Learner Differences". Although learner processes are envisaged as a subconscious stage, beyond the direct reach of classroom activity, a brief summary is provided, because a certain awareness of subconscious mental strategies is considered valuable, as regards the organisation and management of the learning process.
3.5.1. Learner Processes.

Learner Processes refers to the cognitive component of the learner's procedural knowledge, that is the unconscious mental strategies used to process L2 data and to make use of one's resources for language production. Ellis (1985) distinguishes two main types of learner processes:

- "learning" processes, those responsible for the internalisation and automatisation of knowledge; and
- "L2 using" processes, those that account for comprehension and production of messages.

Learning processes can be divided into

a) strategies to acquire formulaic speech, and
b) strategies to develop creative speech.

Formulaic speech is very common in SLA, and it is linked to the performance of specific functions. It helps increase the learner's communicability in their early stages of acquisition. However, not everyone agrees with this view. Krashen (1982), for example, insists that formulaic speech is the result of the learner's speaking under pressure, before she is ready to do so. Strategies to acquire formulaic speech "are to be seen as minor learning strategies in comparison with those contributing directly to the creative rule system" (Ellis 1985:170).

The term "creative" speech refers to the fact that the nature of the syntactic rules is such as to allow speakers to produce utterances they have never heard before. Faerch & Kasper (1983) classify creative speech strategies in:
a) strategies used to establish interlanguage rules, and
b) strategies used to automatise interlanguage rules.

The former can be further subdivided into hypothesis formation strategies and hypothesis testing strategies.

The basic hypothesis formation strategies are:

1. Simplification. Learners restrict the number of hypotheses they build at any stage, choosing those that are easy and most productive. It is a simplification of process rather than product, based on previously acquired knowledge. Meisel (1983) makes an interesting distinction between "elaborative" simplification - the learner adjusts rules just acquired to previous knowledge - and "restrictive" simplification - language processing problems cause the omission of certain rules. Simplification includes transfer from L1 to L2, and overgeneralisation - the extension of L2 rules to items not covered by them.

2. Inferencing. "Inferencing is the means by which the learner forms hypotheses by attending to input. It involves forming hypotheses about the target language, either by attending to specific features of the input, or by using the context of situation to interpret the input" (Ellis 1985: glossary). There are two kinds of inferencing, intralingual inferencing, where the learner analyses internalised input, and extralingual inferencing - the use of meaning and other non-linguistic features to make input data comprehensible. Making use of the context to formulate hypotheses is a powerful resource in the early stages of SLA, and one the
learner resorts to all along the process.

Learners' hypotheses can be tested in a variety of ways:
- receptively, comparing hypotheses to input data;
- productively, checking correctness against feedback received;
- interactionally, engaging the interlocutor to help;
- metalingually, making use of reference books or the teacher.

Once tested, hypotheses are either confirmed or rejected. The availability of confirmatory evidence makes consolidation of hypotheses possible.

SLA as a process of hypothesis formation, hypothesis testing and automatisation has been criticised, especially from the field of Universal Grammar. The main objection is that a hypothesis testing model requires constant, appropriate feedback, and that includes the availability of negative evidence to prevent the learner from producing ungrammatical sentences (Braine 1971). Without negative evidence the learner could not decide which of the non-occurring forms were actually acceptable. Schachter (1984) summarises the arguments against hypothesis testing in the following two claims: "(1) that there is a deficiency in the primary data learners receive in that on the whole mature speakers do not correct learners when they utter something ungrammatical, and (2) that the learners themselves are generally incapable of incorporating those corrections they do receive" (Schachter 1984:171). She provides powerful
arguments to counteract those claims. According to Schachter at the origin of this criticism is the fact that negative input is usually associated with explicit correction, the least efficacious source of negative data. She argues that negative evidence is provided to learners by means of confirmation checks, clarification requests, and misunderstandings, which are widely available. And well-known phenomena like the learner switching to alternate forms, or imitating correct forms produced by interlocutors are clear indications that she is responding to negative data. Furthermore, there are grounds for believing that negative input might have a stronger effect on learners. Schachter, following findings by Lavine, suggests that "so too in language learning it could be that negative input, as relatively infrequent as it may be in contrast to nonnegative input, has a strong impact on the learner's behavior and furthermore that a conversational partner's failure to correct the learner's output (let us say in those cases in which the message has been understood) is interpreted by the learner as confirming information" (Schachter 1984:178-79).

3.5.2. Learner Differences.

Before the learner's subconscious strategies can operate some of the language data from the environment have to be internalised - input turned into intake. Learners select and
adapt data according to their needs, learning style... It is the individual characteristics of learners — different from one another — and their interaction with the learning environment which will determine what and how much data are internalised at a particular time.

Learner differences stem from a variety of factors, some of which are general in the sense that they are present in, and affect all learners (Ellis 1985), while others are more idiosyncratic characteristics of some learners. In the latter group the main factors are:

1. EXPERIENCE AND PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE. "If I had to reduce all of educational psychology to just one principle, I would say this: the most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows" (Ausubel 1968). The characteristics of learners' mother tongues, the features that shape their identity, their notion of what learning is, and their experience of the way they learn, in general, and with reference to language(s), their knowledge of the world; all these will affect learners' behaviour.

2. LEARNING STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES. Learners will vary in the way they look for, and exploit opportunities to be in contact with the target language. They will also vary in the way they approach the formal study of language.

3. GROUP DYNAMICS. Learning a language in a group, especially in a formal setting, will affect learners in different ways, and to different degrees. The feeling of anxiety and competitiveness, for instance, can seriously
affect learning in some cases. Furthermore, some learners will find it difficult to adapt to a certain teaching style and pace imposed by the teacher/or the materials, and will resent certain patterns of organisation and control of the learning process, as well as the roles assigned to the participants.

4. ATTITUDES TO TEACHER AND MATERIALS. In a classroom situation a positive feeling towards teacher and materials is essential. However, different learners will have a different view of what a teacher should be like, and will make different demands on teacher and materials. In prescriptive models of learning there is often tension between learners' identity and learning techniques, and the type of classroom dynamics set up by the teacher, tension that may result in negative attitudes towards teacher and materials.

The "general factors" that will be considered are: age, learning style, attitude, motivation and personality, needs and interests, and aptitude.

1. AGE.

A lot has been written about the influence of age on the rate and the final level of language acquisition, as well as about the optimal age for language learning. Since most of the discussion is not directly relevant to the group of learners we are concerned with, only certain aspects will be referred to.

The general belief has often been that children are
natural acquirers, while adults have to struggle and only rarely achieve native or near-native levels of proficiency. Research findings, however, are far from conclusive, and show a number of discrepancies. (For a critical review see Harley 1986). The assumptions that children are better language acquirers, and that the innate ability to learn languages is lost when the child reaches puberty, as stated by supporters of the "critical period" hypothesis, (Felix 1981, Krashen 1978, 1981b, Lenneberg 1967, Penfield & Roberts 1959), has lost credibility in the past decade, as a result of research findings that seem to question the higher success and efficiency of younger learners. McLauglin (1978) maintains that language acquisition processes are fundamentally the same for children and for adults. Even further, Ausubel and Zobl, among others, have considered maturity as something positive. According to Ausubel (1968), children may be more able to acquire a native-like accent, and more willing to undertake new learning tasks. However, these advantages are outweighed by the adults' ability to make and use grammatical generalisations, and their greater L1 vocabulary, which means that they do not need to acquire as many new concepts as a child, but only the new terms for those concepts. In his turn, Zobl (1983) has argued that the child is less flexible in language production than the adult. Until about the age of 9 the child might suffer from "negative transfer" of L1 production strategies. Macnamara (1973) stresses the importance of children's involvement in
real communication in their language acquisition success, and suggests that if we manage to bring real communication into the classroom, learning will be successful regardless of the learners' age. Finally, Hatch (1978) argues that the differences between adult learners and children can be accounted for in terms of the different nature of the input they receive. Adult learners have a much more difficult task, as a result of the fact that adult-adult discourse is less comprehensible, since it relies less on the here-and-now.

2. LEARNING STYLE.

Another source of learner differences is their learning style, understood as the way in which individuals gather, process and recall information. Nunney defines a learner's cognitive style as "a description of the way he or she seeks meaning from the formalized structure of a foreign language" (1977:2). Reinert (1977) views it as analogous to talent or aptitude - some kind of neurological programming, with certain nerve pathways being more readily available in some persons than in others. Learning styles are multidimensional, but only one dimension has been studied in some detail, the continuum field independence-field dependence, and the differences between"serialists" and "holists" (Pask 1976).

"Field independence refers to a consistent mode of approaching the environment in analytical, as opposed to global, terms. It denotes a tendency to articulate figures
as discrete from their backgrounds and a facility in differentiating objects from embedding contexts, as opposed to a counter tendency to experience events globally in an undifferentiated fashion" (Messick 1976, cited in Abraham 1985:689). Field independence has been proved to be positively related to language aptitude, to "learning" and using the monitor in Krashen's terms, and to success in cloze and imitations tests (Abraham 1985). For this reason, it is usually associated with deductive learning, characteristic of the traditional language classroom.

In the study reported by Abraham (1985), she investigated the effects on field dependent learners of a method that does not focus on rules. She compared the effectiveness of two ESL lessons on participle formation on 61 subjects from high-intermediate levels of the Intensive English Program at Iowa University. The two lessons were computer-assisted, and one followed a traditional deductive approach, while the other centred on the presentation of contextualised examples. The results are summarised in the following paragraph: "while examination of the patterns of scores for individual items raises questions beyond the scope of this study, these patterns are consistent with two familiar models of second language acquisition/learning, those of Bialystok (1978), and Krashen (1981). Both models provide for two means of internalizing knowledge of the forms of a language: one explicit, or conscious, and the other implicit or unconscious. It is likely that subjects who were assigned
to the deductive lesson and who demonstrated control of the rule being presented had internalized it consciously and explicitly, while subjects in both lessons who produced answers without obvious guidance from any rule had internalized some kind of knowledge about participle formation implicitly and unconsciously"(Abraham 1985:698-99). These findings confirm the results of previous research on field independent learners, and seem to suggest a more beneficial alternative to the traditional class for field dependent learners. In relation to this, Nunney reminds us that "experience has shown that within a group of 30 students the differences in educational cognitive style are such that very rarely would one single process of prescription lead to a 90% success level. We might anticipate a need for five or six methods, each focussing on a different set of cognitive style elements"(1977:13).

Reinert (1977) tries to make teachers aware of differences in learners' learning styles by focussing their attention on the different patterns of relationship among the following categories, or modes of presenting information: "visualisation", "written word", "listening", and "activity". He explains that a high score in one category means that the learner will convert data into that mode before effective learning takes place. A low score, on the contrary, indicates that she will have great difficulty in learning things presented to her in that mode. Low scorers in written word, for instance, will have difficulty
in learning from reading. Reinert argues that success implies the need to compensate for one's weaknesses by utilising one's strengths. "Normal" individuals, in the sense that they score in the middle of all four categories are very rare, and can be either very good learners - they can assimilate data in whatever mode it is presented to them - or poor students, since they find it difficult to concentrate on any one mode.

3. ATTITUDE, MOTIVATION AND PERSONALITY.

The relationship between attitude, motivation, personality and SLA is not an easy one to investigate. However, it is generally accepted that these factors have a strong effect on the rate of acquisition, and the ultimate level of achievement. Savignon (1976) stated that attitude was the single most important factor in second language learning. Motivation was mentioned by successful learners as one of the most influential factors (Naiman, Frohlich & Stern 1975), and this has been recently confirmed by O'Malley: "In all interviews, students' motivation for learning and studying the language emerged as a primary influence. Ineffective students generally displayed low motivation to learn the language. Effective students tended to be highly motivated..."(1990:140).

Gardner & Lambert (1972) define motivation in terms of general aims, and attitude in terms of the tenacity shown in working towards those aims. Krashen (1981b), on the other hand, views attitudinal factors as those performing one or
both of the following functions: a) to encourage intake, stimulate learners to communicate with native speakers and, thus, obtain maximum input; b) to use available language for acquisition, lower the affective filter, and maximise openness to input. Motivation, according to Krashen, is an attitudinal factor.

Gardner & Lambert analyse motivation as the learner's general inclination along a continuum between the integrative and the instrumental poles. Integrative motivation is seen as a desire to identify with the culture of the target language, while instrumental motivation indicates the learner's orientation towards functional aims. Krashen relates integrative motivation to the two functions mentioned above, and predicts high acquisition as a result of a genuine interest in interacting with native speakers, and a high level of receptivity (low affective filter). With instrumental motivation, acquisition might stop once enough has been acquired to fulfil the learner's practical needs. Besides, the learner might be inclined to acquire only certain aspects of the language, and to ignore elements which are not indispensable for communication, but that are socially important (Krashen 1981b).

The attitudes investigated by Gardner & Lambert have been classified into three types:

- attitudes towards people who speak the TL;
- attitudes towards learning the TL; and
- attitudes towards languages and language learning in
general (Stern 1983).

Gardner & Lambert's extensive research has revealed the importance of attitudes and motivation as predictors of the level of achievement. Krashen (1981b) examines some of the predictions and the evidence to support them. First, he considers the prediction that since attitude and aptitude are related to different kinds of language development - attitude related to subconscious acquisition, and aptitude to conscious learning - they should be statistically independent. The prediction is confirmed by Gardner & Lambert's findings (1972). Another prediction he analyses is that the relationship between attitude and L2 proficiency will be strongest when a) the learner has had sufficient intake, and b) in monitor-free situations. As evidence Krashen mentions findings by Gardner (1960), and Bialystok & Frohlich (1977), among others, and emphasises Gardner's conclusion that integrative motivation was especially important for the development of communicative skills. A consequence of this prediction is that the effect of intrinsic motivation will be weak in contexts where there is little opportunity for contact with the L2 outside the classroom.

The effect of personality on SLA has been investigated, basically, through the relationship between the dichotomy extrovert/introvert and acquisition. Krashen, for instance, suggests that extroverts might be better acquirers (1981). However, the assumption that an outgoing personality is
significantly related to acquisition has been questioned by Pica's findings (1986, 1987). She found that quiet learners seemed to benefit from the verbal exchanges initiated by their more extroverted colleagues, and could do as well as them. Strong (1983) considered the ability to exploit input and adapt it to the learner's individual needs as the main factor.

Another aspect of the relationship between personality and language acquisition to be analysed by Krashen is the effect of anxiety and self-confidence (1981b). Anxiety is directly related to the affective filter, and in this way it affects acquisition. A positive "self-image" usually accompanies high achievement. This seems to be confirmed by Naiman, Frohlich & Stern (1975) who report that teachers they interviewed saw poor learners as lacking in self-confidence. When communicative competence is a central aim for language learning, it is necessary to remember that not all learners are equally competent in communicating in their mother tongue, and that competence depends (among other things) on one's capacity to take the perspective of the other person. Effective communication requires temporary suspension of the "evaluative reflex" (Horwitz 1977). Horwitz argues that effective communication can be achieved by increasing learners' empathy, through reducing cultural stereotypes and increasing their ability to monitor interlocutors' reactions, and to obtain feedback on whether the message is understood the way we had intended.
MacNamara (1973) suggests that in motivation a great deal depends on the act of communication itself, rather than in pre-conceived general aims. This has certainly been my experience, as regards adolescent modern language learners. In this context, Gardner & Lambert's distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation, and the types of attitudes they investigated seem hardly relevant. In general, school learners do not seem to function as a result of feelings of identification with the community where the foreign language is spoken, and they certainly do not perceive future utilitarian goals as present stimuli. Similarly, few learners at this stage will have any more than a superficial positive/negative attitude towards language learning, originating from the general feeling within the community. The students who participated in the Sabadell project were asked to provide reasons why, in their view, learning English at school was important. The answers given have been summarised in Table 40. As the figures show, only 18% of the students mentioned future goals, while the great majority stated present needs and interests. This fact would have been even clearer if the question had been asked towards the end of the course, rather than at the beginning, with learners providing a wider diversity of more specific and more personalised answers. In modern language learning, attitudes and motivation are very much related to the present, and derive from the intrinsic interest and relevance of the learning process itself. Learners will
develop a positive attitude, and be willing to make the necessary effort, if they perceive the learning process to be relevant to their present needs and interests, helpful to their self-development as human beings, and conducive to the successful promotion of their personal skills and abilities. The incentive to take part in such a process will be supported by a positive attitude, if the group dynamics are stimulating, but flexible and non-threatening, based on collaboration rather than competition; if the roles and relationships are open to experimentation, and if the patterns of organisation are such that everyone can easily find a place, and a way to contribute to the agreed purposes of the group.

Table 10.

REASONS FOR LEARNING ENGLISH

- to meet and understand people from other countries, their ways of life, their customs... because English is an international language ........................................ 52%
- to understand songs by favourite groups ........ 18%
- for future jobs and careers ...................... 17%
- to widen one's cultural perspective ............. 8%
- to understand one's computer better ............. 3%
- to pass exams ........................................ 1%

4. NEEDS AND INTERESTS.

Needs and interests are slippery concepts that can be, and have been, interpreted in different ways. For our purposes, and with reference to adolescent learners, I would
like to make a distinction between "objective" needs, those that are attributed to learners as a result of their age, social situation, level of proficiency... and "subjective" needs, those that are felt or perceived by learners themselves. Only the latter concern us here. Subjective needs can be further subdivided into:

a) "personal" needs: innate, human needs shared by all individuals, the satisfaction of which provides a powerful internal stimulus for human behaviour. Maslow (1968) viewed human needs as hierarchically ordained, from bottom to top: physical needs, security, social acceptance, self-esteem, and self-realisation; and believed that the higher levels of development could not be achieved before the needs in the lower steps of the pyramid had been satisfied. More recently Glasser (1986) has classified personal needs in two main categories: "survival" needs, corresponding to Maslow's physical needs, and "psychological" needs. The majority of adolescent learners do not seem immediately concerned with survival needs (except perhaps in the poorest areas), and do not seem to relate them directly to school education. It is the psychological needs that are important, and that contribute to trigger their behaviour.

Psychological needs, according to Glasser, include:

- the need for "love"; for belonging in the (community, class) group and being involved in it, for sharing and cooperating with others towards a common purpose;
- the need for "power"; to feel that what one says or
does is perceived as important by others, that people listen and that one has real opportunities of contributing to the decision-making process. The fulfilment of this need is particularly difficult in the context of traditional school education;

- the need for "freedom", to be able to choose, to find one's own way and follow it;

- the need for "fun", to derive some enjoyment from the tasks one is involved in.

b) Learning needs. Learning needs refer to the ways in which learners can most beneficially proceed in their language learning process, and include suitable learning strategies and techniques, according to their learning style, personality and motivation. They define the quantity and type of language data the learner will focus on at a particular time, the way to process and adapt the data, the type of resources she can benefit from, etc. Learning needs are not always self-evident to learners, and help from the teacher might be needed in order to become aware of one's needs.

c) Language needs. Language needs derive from the learner's shortcomings in her target language competence, and refer to her linguistic needs as a result of the tasks chosen, or the obstacles encountered while carrying out those tasks. Examples of language needs can be a set of vocabulary items related to a certain topic, the basic characteristics of the language of description, or the
appropriate register to express a particular function in a given situation.

The notion of learner interests is used to mean activities and tasks that are seen by the learner as having intrinsic value. As such, interests are likely to promote a positive attitude and high motivation and, consequently, enhance the intensity of exposure to the language and the quality of interaction. Besides, and following the distinction made above between education – learning – and training, as regards the fact that the former is based on activities that have intrinsic value, rather than on those that are purely instrumental to the achievement of external aims, since intrinsic value is not a quality inherent to certain activities or activity types, learner interests provide an invaluable source of help in the choice of learning activities.

Learner interests are directly linked to Glasser’s psychological needs for power, freedom and fun and, thus, contribute a great deal to the relevance of classroom activity. With adolescent learners, needs and interests play a crucial role in determining the intensity of negotiation between the learner and the learning environment.

5. APTITUDE.

There is still wide disagreement about the nature and role of aptitude in SLA, and in language learning in general. However, current research seems to suggest, first,
that aptitude for language exists (and can be measured), and that it affects first as well as second language learning. Wells (1985) found considerable differences in the rate of language development of the children he studied. Second, that aptitude has proved to be one of the most consistent predictors of success and failure in language learning and, thus, it must be taken into consideration (Skehan 1989).

Krashen (1981, 1981b) has argued that aptitude is only related to conscious learning (as opposed to unconscious acquisition), and he provides some evidence to support the prediction that aptitude will be strongly related to second language proficiency in monitored test situations, and when conscious learning has been stressed in the classroom. Commenting on Carroll's view of aptitude as rate of learning he writes that "... conscious learning may provide a short-cut to performance in a second language. As mentioned above learners can use an acquisition-free mode of performance consisting on first language surface structure plus the Monitor. High aptitude students should be more likely to be able to utilize this mode and thus may show more rapid initial progress. Over the long term, however, subconscious language acquisition is far superior, as the user of LI surface structure plus Monitor is severely limited in terms of the range of structures that can be produced as well as in fluency of performance" (Krashen 1981b:162).

In his review of 25 years of research on Foreign Language Aptitude (1981), Carroll refers to the concept of aptitude
as "the notion that in approaching a particular learning task or program, the individual may be thought of as possessing some current state of capability of learning that task - if the individual is motivated, and has the opportunity of doing so. The capability is presumed to depend on some combination of more or less enduring characteristics of the individual" (Carroll 1981:84).

Aptitude appears to be fixed over long periods of time, and is difficult to modify. Following evidence available, Carroll views aptitude as a composite of four basic abilities:

1. "phonetic coding ability"; "an ability to identify distinct sounds, to form associations between those sounds and symbols representing them and to retain these associations";
2. "grammatical sensitivity"; "the ability to recognize the grammatical functions of words (or other linguistic entities) in sentence structures";
3. "rote learning ability for foreign language materials"; "the ability to learn associations between sound and meanings rapidly and efficiently, and to retain these associations";
4. "inductive language learning ability"; "the ability to infer or induce the rules governing a set of language materials, given samples of language materials that permit such inferences" (Carroll 1981:105).

With Sapon, in 1959, Carroll devised the Modern Language
Aptitude Test to measure foreign language aptitude, and predict success in oral-aural courses. In his review (1981) he offers abundant evidence to support its validity in predicting rate of success and final level of achievement, in formal settings.

Nevertheless, this notion of aptitude and aptitude tests has been criticised as too restrictive, since it centres on the ability to learn the grammatical and phonological systems, and ignores important communicative aspects of language acquisition. An interesting alternative view has gained considerable support in recent years, a view that links aptitude to learning strategies. As O'Malley puts it, "individuals with a special aptitude for learning foreign languages may simply be learners who have found on their own the strategies that are particularly effective for efficient language learning" (1990:162). This approach, still in its early days, offers considerable hope as regards the possibility of making less effective learners aware of strategies that can assist their learning, and incorporating instruction in the use of learning strategies into the instructed learning process.

Frohlich & Paribakht (1984) report on an experiment they carried out, interviewing a selection of "successful" language learners - individuals who had achieved a high level of proficiency in a foreign language. They asked them about their experience as language learners, the strategies they used... and what they attributed their success to.
Their informers mentioned feelings of impatience, embarrassment and frustration that affect learning and have to be overcome. (One of them admitted "I am not particularly extraverted; but when it comes to learning a language I think you've got to have a sense of humour, you've got to be able to laugh at your own mistakes, you cannot take yourself seriously" (Frohlich & Paribakht 1984:67). But some learners might not find this particularly easy to do. There was general agreement on the factors considered responsible for their success: "ranked first was motivation, followed by 'immersion' into the target language community and a positive attitude towards languages per se or towards the specific language being studied. Among the personality characteristics mentioned by the informants, sociability was regarded as an important factor in learning another language. Lack of self-confidence and inhibition, on the other hand, were named as characteristics having a negative effect on the learning process" (Frohlich & Paribakht 1984:67). These views entirely agree with those reported by Naiman, Frohlich & Stern (1975). The relative importance of factors like sociability or self-confidence will vary according to the characteristics of the learning environment. Nevertheless, practical experience seems to confirm, at least in my case, that insecurity and shyness, and an introverted personality represent considerable drawbacks in an inflexible, teacher-centred context, in which the learner has to adapt input data from the
environment to her needs and characteristics, through a process of "navigation".

With reference to learning strategies, Frohlich & Paribakht's informants all stated that they had developed strategies and techniques to suit their own personalities and needs. Five strategies appeared to be common, though they had been applied in different ways:

a) active task approach. Learners involved themselves in the learning tasks, and accepted responsibility for their progress, changing and adapting the learning situation to suit their needs;

b) awareness of language as a system. They analysed the TL, made inferences, guesses...

c) awareness of language as a means of communication, using the TL to convey and receive messages. Informants emphasised the preponderance of fluency over accuracy in the early stages;

d) management of affective demands, overcoming anxiety, inhibitions... caused by the learning of another language;

e) monitoring of L2 performance; asking for correction, looking for necessary adjustments...

O'Malley (1990), too, found that some learning strategies such as "self-monitoring" - a metacognitive strategy - and "elaboration", (relating new information to prior knowledge, making judgements and reacting personally to information) - a cognitive strategy - seem very common among learners.
3.6. Implications of the Model. "Learner Autonomy".

According to the model proposed, language learning has been hypothesised to be the result of negotiation between the learner and the learning environment. A complex process of multiple interaction between the individual, (unique) characteristics of learners and the various constraints of the learning environment, through which learners shape and adapt input to their needs. Because of the differences among learners, negotiation will follow different paths, and produce different outcomes. Learners will focus on different aspects of data available at a particular time, and apply different strategies and techniques. Consequently, the best instructional learning environment will be that which maximises the richness and variety of TL data available, and imposes the fewest constraints to the ways learners deal with language data.

Since "learning conditions" are relatively fixed and, once established, are the same for all learners (in a group), the crucial issue seems to be the matching between "instructional constraints" and "learner differences". In theory, there seem to be three possible ways of doing this:

- make instruction as varied as possible so that every learner finds something suitable in every class;
- make learners adapt to a kind of instruction which is considered generally effective and beneficial;
- base instruction on the characteristics and differences among learners.
The second way is not really possible, because learner characteristics constitute a primary influence in determining the way we learn, and are very difficult to change. Besides, I am not very sure we should attempt to change them. The traditional pattern of syllabus design, and the teaching approach associated with it were based on this option.

As regards the first one, it seems very hard on the teacher and rather inefficient, in the sense that a great deal of materials, activities... will have to be selected and organised, but only a small part of them might be suitable to particular learners at given times. Still more important than this is the question of the criteria for selecting materials and activities, and deciding upon learners' future needs. This approach implies the beliefs (criticised above) that a pre-specified syllabus can match learners' internal syllabi, and that the complexity of language and language use can be efficiently encapsulated in a syllabus. Finally, there is the problem of relevance, of finding activities and materials that are relevant to learners' needs and interests.

For the above reasons, the third way has been chosen: to match the learning environment to learner characteristics, and to base instruction on learner differences. This means that the learning process will necessarily be the result of negotiation among learners, and between learners and teacher, and that learners will have a crucial role in the
managing of their own individual learning processes. The type of tasks chosen, the ways of approaching them, the time and pace, the degree of external help required, etc. will depend on learners' needs and characteristics. In this context, "learner autonomy" becomes a central issue.

3.6.1. Learner Autonomy.

"Autonomy" and "autonomous learning" are part of a set of terms - self-directed learning, learner self-determination, and individualised instruction - which have been widely used in the past 15 years to refer to a kind of learning which differs from traditional learning in that the nature, the needs and characteristics of individual learners are seriously considered. However, these terms have often been used to express different notions or to focus on different aspects and, although their meanings overlap to a certain extent, it is necessary to clarify their definition.

"Individualised Instruction" is a rather vague term with a variety of meanings (Gibbons 1971). Perhaps the most generally accepted one is that of a set of materials and activities devised to suit the needs of a particular learner. This programme is then followed by the learner at his/her own pace, and his/her progress is assessed by the teacher. Taken like this, individualised learning differs from the rest in the crucial fact that it is the teacher who is responsible for the planning and evaluation of learning.
activity. While in the other cases, learners assume the responsibility for their own learning.

The term "learner self-determination" was introduced by Crookhall (1979) as an alternative to autonomy and self-directed learning, terms which he considered as vague as individualised instruction. It refers to the degree in which learners manage their own learning and education.

"Self-directed learning" is defined by Dickinson (1982) as the type of learning in which the learner retains responsibility for his/her own learning, and learning tasks are not externally selected, but self-imposed. He argues that taking responsibility for one's learning is essentially an attitude of mind, more than showing any particular kind of behaviour, set of skills... Consequently, a learner can be considered as self-directed even in a traditional teacher-centred class, provided

- she is aware of, and accepts the aims and objectives of the course;
- she makes the effort to relate course activity to her own aims and objectives; and
- she assesses her own achievement along the course.

(Dickinson 1982).

"Autonomy" is envisaged by Dickinson as "the upper limit of self-directed learning" (1982:117), a stage in which learners are totally on their own, as in the case of "autodidaxy". Autonomous learners are those "who are learning independently of a teacher and outside an
institution" (Dickinson 1982:79). A similar view has been developed by the C.R.A.P.E.L. with the difference that Dickinson accepts stages of semi-autonomy, while at the C.R.A.P.E.L. the emphasis seems to be on total independence, and if a learner does not achieve that stage it is considered a failure.

This view of autonomy and self-direction seems best suited for dealing with the circumstances and problems of adult education, but it is not very useful in school modern language learning. Adolescent learners are not in a position of choosing whether to learn independently of a teacher and outside an institution. And, as we mentioned before, they do not usually have specific aims and objectives for learning a foreign language. On top of that, they find it extremely difficult to individualise their needs. But, precisely because they are learning within an institution, and because they are subjected to a series of environmental constraints, their active efforts to minimise the effects of those constraints, and to discover their learning style, suitable learning strategies and resources, and relevant tasks, become crucial.

In my view, the notion of learner autonomy implies both the capacity to take responsibility for the management of one's learning process, and definite action destined to organise the learning environment, and to adapt it to one's needs and characteristics. In this way, it presupposes:

- a positive attitude on the part of the learner, but
also on the part of the teacher (and/or institution);
- the learner controlling the decision-making process,
  and being in charge of planning and evaluating learning
  activity;
- the learner learning how to take responsibility for her
  own learning - "learning to learn".
Learning, totally or partly, within an institution, and
the presence of the teacher are not primary issues. What is
essential is that learners are effectively responsible for
learning WHAT and HOW, and have the ability and the means to
follow the path and pace that best suit them. Individual
choice is combined with negotiated group decisions; and both
planning and evaluation have a dual level:
- collective, with reference to general matters
  concerning the group, and
- personal, as regards individual choice and
  participation in learning activities, and personal
  contributions to the group.

The teacher has an important role (among others) as an
interactive resource, helping learners to learn, and
creating a positive affective atmosphere and group dynamics.
In this way, learners benefit from interaction with other
learners with whom they share and discuss ideas, tasks and
resources, and from contributions made by the teacher as a
resource, a facilitator of group management...

The value of learner autonomy in modern language learning
can be considered on different grounds.
First, learner autonomy constitutes a central element of "education" based on an active model of man, and envisaged as an open-ended process resulting from the interaction of the learner with other learners, the teacher, and the resources. In this respect, Rogers (1969), Bruner (1974), and Glasser (1986), among others, offer valuable support to the view that teachers who focus on the learning process and facilitate autonomous learning produce learners who are keen, creative and self-initiating.

Second, learner autonomy is an effective way of avoiding or counteracting affective problems in school language learning, and, especially, the lack of motivation, boredom and frustration which result, either from not being able to pursue one's interests, or from being forced to follow the wrong path at the wrong pace. Unsuitable teaching styles can upset and discourage learners, but a main source of frustration seems to derive from learning activities and materials which are regarded as trivial and irrelevant. Learner autonomy also helps to reduce the fear of error considered as learner failure.

Third, and most important, learner autonomy contributes to greater efficiency in learning, in a variety of ways:

1. by making learners ware of themselves as learners, of the constraints and possibilities of the learning environment, of the strategies, resources and activity types best suited to their own characteristics, and by giving them the opportunity of following their own path and pace;
2. by promoting a positive attitude towards learning and higher motivation, as a result of greater relevance of the learning activity, and a higher rate of success in the tasks undertaken;

3. by increasing exposure to the target language, both extensively and intensively. Extensively, because a positive attitude towards learning, and interesting and relevant tasks, cause learning activity to transcend the limits of classroom time. Intensively, as a result of the learner using the target language to create and express his/her own meaning, rather than borrowing language formulae to express meanings which have been given to her.

3.7. Summary and Conclusion.

In this chapter I have argued that language learning is affected by a complex interplay of factors which derive from the characteristics of the learner, and the peculiarities of the learning environment. A model of instructed language learning was proposed which envisages multiple interaction between the learner and the environment as a necessary process which makes input data available for the operation of the learner's subconscious learning processes.

As regards the learner, it is his/her individual characteristics - different from learner to learner - that determine the quality of the interaction. As for the environment, this is characterised by a series of factors - constraints - which derive from the traits and conditions of
formal - instructed - learning.

Learner characteristics ("learner differences") were considered determining features of the process of learning, and the need to minimise environmental constraints, to match instruction to learner characteristics and differences, and to facilitate learner autonomy was postulated. As a result of the different characteristics of learners, and of the different ways in which they interact with the different features of the learning environment, each language learning career will be unique, with learners developing individual strategies and techniques in order to make the best of the environment, and to choose and adapt available input data.

From a pedagogical point of view, and with adolescent school learners in mind, language acquisition was hypothesised to be the result of a process of intensive exposure to the target language, and negotiative interaction among learners, learners and teacher, and learners and resources. Finally, Intensive exposure and negotiative interaction were envisaged as variables dependent on:

- the possibility of learners following a path and pace which is suitable to their learning style;
- the degree of learner involvement in learning activity. This was seen as closely related to a positive attitude and high motivation, two features that, as far as adolescents are concerned, are inextricably linked to the notion of relevance to one's present needs and interests;
- awareness of suitable and effective learning strategies;
- a rich and flexible learning environment, in order to allow for different approaches and rhythms.
4. AN ALTERNATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT.

CHARACTERISTICS AND COMPONENTS.

A framework for curriculum development based on the model of learning described in the previous chapter, and constructed around learner autonomy as a central issue, will necessarily differ from the traditional pattern of curriculum design in a fundamental way. Instead of a pre-specified, systematic, propositional representation of the knowledge (structures, functions) to be achieved by learners, it will consist of a set of principles and procedures leading to a variety of possible routes that learners can explore in the pursuit of their purposes, and according to their needs and characteristics. As we discussed before, establishing a desirable set of outcomes and designing an ideal route, characterised by the detailed selection of items of knowledge derived from linguistic descriptions, is not necessarily the best way of promoting learning (Breen 1987). On the contrary, it represents a serious constraint on the different learning paths followed by different learners in their language acquisition process.

The unavoidable need for pre-specified, systematic, foreign language syllabuses has been justified on the following grounds:

a) They provide for learner security. "I have said that the general purpose of education is to initiate people into a secondary culture and this means that they are drawn away from sole reliance on the patterns of familiar experience."
They find themselves in a potentially bewildering world, one in which their confidence and self-esteem are likely to come under threat. In such a situation, they are likely to need some directions which will indicate the paths they are to follow, some certainties in which they can feel secure. The syllabus can serve as a convenient map" (Widdowson 1984:25).

b) They are an essential feature of a democratic education. "Not to have a syllabus is to refuse to allow one's assumptions to be scrutinized or to enable different teachers to relate their work to each other's. It is consequently an essential feature of work in a democratic profession or as part of a democratic education" (Brumfit 1984a:76).

c) They are a source of efficiency. "A syllabus is required in order to produce efficiency of two kinds. The first of these is 'pragmatic efficiency', or economy of time and money (...) The second kind of efficiency is 'pedagogical': economy in the management of the learning process" (Yalden 1984:14).

These are powerful arguments. But, although I entirely agree with the purposes they try to achieve, I can see no reason why learner security, democratic procedures and efficiency cannot be achieved in other ways with other curriculum patterns.

As regards learner security, this derives from a variety of sources among which (and as far as adolescents are concerned) I would like to emphasise the following:
- a non-threatening classroom atmosphere based on collaboration rather than competition;
- an open, flexible, teacher-learner relationship;
- being aware of what one is doing, why and how and knowing that one can change, try other ways... (In my experience with secondary school learners, this is much more important than an often incomprehensible sequence of functions and/or structures);
- being aware of one's learning strengths and weaknesses;
- being successful in one's learning efforts.

With reference to Brumfit's argument, there are two related but separate points to consider. The first one concerns the need for accountability. The evaluation of what goes on in a particular classroom can be undertaken on the basis of their initial plans and intentions, or as a result of the analysis, a posteriori, of the kind of learning process orchestrated and of the learners' achievement at different stages and at the end of the course. In my view it is the second option that offers a more realistic and accurate picture, especially when we take into consideration the number of necessary changes made by teachers while teaching a course, the fact that the syllabus is rarely completed, and the many educational aspects which usually escape the syllabus. The second point refers to the possibility of teachers collaborating and learning from each other's work and experience. This is an important issue in curriculum development, but one that depends more on the
teachers feeling that it is worth their while to make the effort in a system which is open and encourages innovation, facilitates regular encounters...(Pennington & Brown 1987), than on detailed syllabi. Besides, it is usually the HOW rather than the WHAT that worries teachers most; how to make learners interested, how to cater for their needs, how to deal with the problems encountered...

Concerning efficiency, economy of time and resources and economy of management cannot be assessed independently from the degree of achievement of one's purposes - learning efficiency. In modern language learning the level of failure and dissatisfaction demand alternative options which might suppose more time and resources, as well as important changes in the management of the learning process.

In accordance with the definition of curriculum provided in chapter 2, and in order to facilitate learner autonomy, the alternative pattern of curriculum development proposed has two different (but interrelated) levels (see fig.5). The first level - "The Curriculum Guidelines" - is essentially informative. The second - "The Learning Process" - reflects the kind of activity that goes on at classroom level and is the result of negotiative interaction among learners and between these and the teacher.


The curriculum guidelines are essentially addressed to
Fig. 5
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

learners' needs \(\rightarrow\) learning teaching theory \(\rightarrow\) learning context

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

LEARNING PROCEDURES \(\rightarrow\) ATTITUDES AND VALUES

PLANNING

task design \(\rightarrow\) resources \(\rightarrow\) action plans \(\rightarrow\) assessment

type of task \(\rightarrow\) sources of info \(\rightarrow\) actions \(\rightarrow\) outcome

steps \(\rightarrow\) referents \(\rightarrow\) routes \(\rightarrow\) design

features \(\rightarrow\) ces \(\rightarrow\) timeta \(\rightarrow\) outcome

timing \(\rightarrow\) models \(\rightarrow\) bling \(\rightarrow\) purpose

setting \(\rightarrow\) skills \(\rightarrow\) ... \(\rightarrow\) alternative

EVALUATING

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teachers and their main functions are:

1. to establish a certain degree of homogeneity of intention and approach among teachers through the specification of a set of guiding principles. These principles will be based on current knowledge of the subject matter as well as on learning theory, and will reflect the educational intentions which inspire the whole of the school curriculum. They will also outline the theoretical issues that illuminate the operational framework corresponding to level two ("the learning process"), and the attitudes and values that can be promoted through it.

2. to assist and stimulate teachers by providing them with a substantial corpus of up-to-date information on a variety of areas related to their job. It is essential that teachers have access to this information from the very beginning of their teaching careers.

3. to make teachers aware of the characteristics and possibilities of "the learning process" framework.

The information provided to teachers should be extensive and critical and should cover the following aspects:

a) "learning needs and interests". Both needs - objective and subjective - and interests should be taken into consideration, advising teachers of their importance in adolescent learning behaviour. The notions of relevance, involvement and activity, and their implications for learning (cf. section 3.1), should also be clarified;

b) "learning/teaching theory". This section should include
a summary of general learning theory together with recent developments in SLA research and in other areas of applied linguistics that can help teachers understand the learning process better. The complexity of language and of the acquisition processes, the roles of learner and learning environment, learner differences and their implications for the path and pace of acquisition, are only some of the aspects to be covered. Furthermore, teachers should be advised on tactics and techniques available to them, and on ways of helping learners to maximise learning;

c) "the learning context". As regards the learning context curriculum guidelines should outline the types of constraints that instructional environments impose on learners (cf. section 3.4), as well as possible ways of minimising their effect. They should also inform teachers of the general characteristics of their future pupils as a result of age, social and geographical circumstances, previous learning experience and of any other peculiarities which might require special consideration. They should provide a detailed specification of the means and resources available together with some exemplification of how to use techniques and equipment to their best advantage. Finally, this section of the curriculum guidelines should offer teachers a thorough description of the operational framework corresponding to "the learning process", accompanied by examples and suggestions concerning the development of learner autonomy and negotiation, group dynamics and
management of group learning.

4.1.1. The General Principles.

I take "general principles" to mean statements of theoretical perceptions concerning language learning, based on our knowledge of language and language learning and reflecting the social role assigned to education. Principles are preferred to aims and objectives because (as was suggested before) the latter are extrinsic to the learning process - outside goals - and promote an instrumental process which corresponds to "training" rather than education.

The function of the general principles is to act as a collection of signposts and make teachers aware of concrete theoretical issues that have an important bearing on the learning process. They illuminate action at classroom level and generate a set of procedures without imposing any learning path or pace and without presupposing any specific learning outcomes. They offer a flexible operational framework within which learning activity can be negotiated and organised according to the specific needs and interests of learners and the available resources.

The following set of general principles is the result of analysing the main characteristics of the learning process during the Sabadell project. Those "concerning language learning procedures" derive from, and reflect, the psycholinguistic and SLA assumptions reviewed in the
previous chapter. Those "concerning attitudes and values" are a representation of my own view of the role of modern languages in general education. Although it is probably incomplete and requires further elaboration, the set is offered as an illustration of the type of guidance for teachers that I have in mind.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

A) CONCERNING LANGUAGE LEARNING PROCEDURES.

1. Learning a foreign language is a complex process some of whose features are common to all learners while others are individual and unique.

2. Learning a foreign language requires intensive and purposeful exposure to the target language.

3. Learning a foreign language requires the learner's interaction with other learners, the teacher, target language materials, etc.

4. Learning a foreign language requires the active involvement of the learner and his/her taking responsibility for the management of his/her own learning.

5. As far as adolescents are concerned, learning a foreign language requires a context that is meaningful and relevant.

6. As far as adolescents are concerned, learning a foreign language requires that learners are able to create, explore and structure their own meanings and,
consequently, to choose topics, tactics and techniques.

7. Learning a foreign language requires some awareness of language as a system.

8. Learning a foreign language requires a certain degree of monitoring of one's performance.

These principles imply learning procedures such as:

- being aware of one's learning style and following a suitable path and pace;
- gathering and critically selecting information and sources of information;
- identifying and interpreting essential/specific information; organising ideas, facts according to a logical/chronological order;
- developing one's own learning/communicative strategies;
- identifying problems and looking for solutions;
- activating acquired knowledge, transferring skills from one context to another and experimenting with language;
- using the target language for purposes of further study, pleasure, etc.
- identifying the basic elements of the language as a code for communication;
- recognising the elementary rules of the language and the basic relationships among the different language levels;
- recognising differences between codes and registers;
- formulating hypotheses, making inferences,
deductions, etc.

. obtaining feedback and analysing it;
. assessing one's own achievement and the suitability of the strategies and techniques followed.

B) CONCERNING ATTITUDES AND VALUES.

B.1. IN RELATION TO LEARNING THE LANGUAGE.

1. Learning a foreign language offers the opportunity of reflecting upon and getting a better understanding of one's mother tongue and of language in general.

2. Learning a foreign language offers the opportunity of developing basic language learning skills ("learning to learn") that can be applied beyond the classroom-school setting.

3. Learning a foreign language offers the opportunity of advancing in the fulfilment of one's personal needs of identity, self-esteem, etc.

4. Learning a foreign language in a group offers the opportunity of learning to share, collaborate with and respect other colleagues.

B.2. IN RELATION TO USING THE LANGUAGE.

As perceived by adolescent learners,

1. English is an international language and, as such, a suitable means of communication with people from different countries and cultures.
2. English is a vehicle for the expression of a great variety of artistic forms: pop music, cinema, literature.

3. English is a "lingua franca" in the worlds of science, industry, technology, etc.

Consequently, learning English as a foreign language can be a way of

DEVELOPING

. an open attitude towards other languages and cultures;
. a more critical view of one's values, customs...
. an attitude of tolerance and respect towards the views and opinions of others;
. skills which can be applied in future studies and work;
. a better understanding of one's favourite music, literature, films;
. a higher degree of information on scientific, economic, political matters.

EXPLORING

. a new vehicle for the expression of one's creative and imaginative skills and interests.

PROMOTING

. better international understanding.
4.2. The Learning Process.

If the "curriculum guidelines" are essentially a source of information and guidance for teachers, the "learning process" is an operational framework for the organisation and management of learning activity. It is a flexible scheme, a set of procedures based on the "general principles" and geared towards the promotion of learner autonomy and negotiation among course participants. From the start, learners take responsibility for their own learning and all activity is the result of conscious decisions taken by them, according to their needs and learning purposes. The "learning process" framework offers learners an efficient but flexible support structure to facilitate the organisation of their own learning.

Being responsible for their own learning does not mean that learners are on their own. A crucial part of their responsibility is precisely to decide how they want to proceed (Holec 1981, Carver & Dickinson 1982), what type of learning activity they want to undertake, and how much they want to rely on the teacher and other kinds of resources. Besides, as will be shown in the following chapter, the teacher helps learners become autonomous by providing the necessary training and developing suitable classroom conditions. Learners' plans and procedures can be modified whenever necessary and new ways can be explored. The only limits to learners' free choice are those imposed by the
needs of their peers and the availability of means and resources.

As shown in Fig. 5, the "learning process" is a dynamic framework characterised by the constant interaction of "planning" and "evaluating", viewed as two complementary and inseparable processes, with five areas of work:

a) "Learner Purposes".

Learner purposes are specifications of present needs or interests felt by the learner which lead him/her to undertake a particular task. Learner purposes could be, for example, the discovery of a country unknown to the learner, a greater understanding of the songs of a favourite group or singer, or to master basic English narrative skills. Learner purposes can be individual or shared by a group of learners; they can be language specific, as when obstacles encountered lead learners to pay attention to specific aspects of the target language, or be related to other areas of knowledge and interest. In any case, they justify the type of activity chosen. Sometimes, especially at the beginning, learner purposes reflect vague areas of interest and it is not until the learner has spent a certain amount of time planning and dealing with resources that his/her intentions become clear. Besides, as work goes on, new needs and interests related to the topic/task appear. Consequently, learners modify their initial purposes and add on new ones.

b) "Task Design".

Once learner purposes have been established (often both
things are done at the same time) learners choose the type of activity - task - they want to undertake and decide both the final outcome and the process towards it. They design the task considering its main features, its parts and possible stages and subtasks, the setting, the kind of audience the final product is addressed to, the time required, etc. They also consider the type of language - register, vocabulary and expressions - that will be best suited to it. For instance, if the learners' purposes are the discovery of New Zealand and experimenting with English as a means for the expression of imaginative writing, (this is based on a real case during the Sabadell project), some possible tasks are the production of a brochure or tourist guide, a journey around the country, etc. Let us suppose that the task chosen is the diary of a young girl who leaves home and becomes a stowaway in a ship bound for New Zealand. Such a task may well lead learners to create the character and her background, give her a reason for escaping, decide what will happen when she is discovered, what places she will visit once in New Zealand and how, etc. Besides, they will probably want to look for models of diaries and travel books in order to become familiar with vocabulary, style, etc. and become acquainted with the geographical features, the customs and lifestyle of New Zealand. Furthermore, they will have to plan the characteristics of the diary: format and length, inclusion or not of pictures and drawings, decide on the covers, type of binding, etc.
A careful task design, even if it is going to be modified during the process, is quite important as a way of making sure that the various members of a group are aware of, and agree on, the choices made and their implications and to predict the necessary resources, their availability or not and the amount of work and time involved.

c) "Resources".

Resources are the different types of data to be collected and processed as well as the skills and means necessary to complete the task. They offer learners ample opportunity of exposure to extensive and varied samples of the target language in use, information on specific areas of the language system and on the basic skills required.

Different types of resources can be considered:

1. Sources of information: books, newspapers, magazines, films, radio programmes, leaflets, brochures. They offer learners essential background knowledge and information on the topics chosen.

2. Models. Models are specific instances of the kind of product learners are trying to achieve (diaries, accounts of adventures and life at the sea, descriptions of people and objects), and offer guidance on salient design characteristics as well as on language features (colloquial language, combining dialogues with reported dreams, how to express certain feelings or narrate events, etc.).

3. References: grammar books, dictionaries, etc.

4. Skills. Skills are specific abilities concerning the
use of the target language as well as the operation of tools and equipment which are especially important for a particular kind of task. For example, basic narrative skills, starting a conversation, creating a feeling of suspense... or operating a video camera, a computer, etc.

5. Tools, equipment, facilities.

Not all the necessary resources have to be permanently available in the classroom. It is part of the "action plans" to obtain those that are not.

d) "Action Plans".

Action plans refer to the way a group (or individual) organise and distribute their work: the routes they explore, the sequence of actions they carry out and their timing, the roles and responsibilities they take in order to achieve the best possible results. Action plans should map out an efficient course of action, a plan of campaign stretching from the initial stages of locating and sorting out general information to the final details concerning the layout of their output. This will include decisions on how to process, summarise, adapt and share relevant information among the group as well as on how to proceed as regards the final product - who does what, how is the monitoring of output being organised, how are obstacles encountered dealt with, how are discrepancies sorted out, etc. In this sense action plans coordinate the activity of different individuals within the group, the relationship between the group and the
teacher and/or other groups, and the kind and quantity of work done during classroom time and outside the classroom setting.

e) "Assessment".

Assessment concerns the critical analysis of the task outcome and of the achievement or not of initial learner purposes. It takes place at the end of the task and it is essentially an attempt to establish the strengths and weaknesses of the group (or individual) as regards the skills required by the task, the aspects of the language which might require further attention, and the changes in the different stages which could be beneficial. It is also an opportunity for deciding how realistic their purposes were and how feasible and suitable the selected task was as a way of achieving those purposes.

The framework described is essentially dynamic since there is constant interaction of "planning" and "evaluating" with the five areas of work outlined. The continuous evaluation of actions, resources, procedures and of the results achieved against criteria such as suitability, feasibility, the balance between effort and achievement, etc. results in the expansion and improvement of previous plans and intentions and facilitates the investigation of new tactics and new ways of organising, sharing and distributing work. In this sense "evaluation", understood as evaluation of the whole learning process, is a central feature of the framework and one that cannot be separated
from planning. It is precisely the dialectical relationship between planning and evaluating that originates the dynamic nature of the framework and the constant reappraisal of task outlines and outcomes.

The framework facilitates learner autonomy. Learners choose and organise their work according to their needs and interests and have the opportunity of following the path and pace that best suit their learning styles. In this respect, individuals within a group will be able to approach a common task in different ways and concentrate on different aspects, take different roles and make different types of contributions, while benefiting from interaction with the other members of the group and from their contributions. The conscious study of concrete points of the linguistic system and the explanations demanded from the teacher will be related to specific needs arising in the context of a global, purposeful task in which they will find immediate application. It is under these conditions that adolescent learners seem to benefit from focusing on language form and from relating conscious to subconscious language data processing.

On the other hand, this framework facilitates intensive (and extensive) exposure to the target language. Learners are in contact and interact with a large variety of natural samples of the target language which are relevant to their interests and/or useful to their needs. Relevance and usefulness are guarantees of an intensive engagement.
It provides ample opportunity for creative experimentation with the target language in the production of different types of task outcome.

Finally, it facilitates purposeful interaction with peers (and with the teacher whenever learners feel the need). A very high proportion of classroom contact time is usually dedicated to exchanging views and opinions, discussing the design of task outcomes, suitable procedures, the results achieved and the problems encountered...

Planning and evaluating in a group with a common purpose and a firm desire to succeed offer learners the right conditions for unlimited negotiation of meaning.

Related to the point above is the question of the language of the classroom. Obviously, the aim is to ensure maximum use of the target language without pushing learners into an extreme situation in which language becomes artificial - borrowed language -(cf. section 3.1) and meaningless. Progressively, the target language becomes the language of classroom communication, between learners and between these and the teacher. This is achieved as a result of a combination of factors, among which it is worth mentioning:

- an awareness of the importance of interaction and experimentation;
- a positive attitude towards error;
- a collaborative rather than competitive atmosphere;
- the fact that all the resources used are in the target
language;
- the initial provision of a "survival kit" for classroom interaction (more specific information will be provided in the following chapter).

As regards errors, they are envisaged not as a proof of failure but as a natural occurrence, a normal and useful part of the process of learning. Errors are taken as a source of awareness of one's stages of development and as indications of areas or aspects of the target language which might be useful to include in the "learning purposes" of future tasks and dedicate some attention to them.

Furthermore, errors are envisaged as a source of interaction and negotiation of meaning among peers (Long & Porter 1985). Consequently, there is no error correction by the teacher. It is up to the learners to check and discuss their output and to make the necessary improvements. Teacher intervention is limited to those occasions when help is requested, and restricted to the points raised by learners. This is consistent with the view expressed above (cf. 3.1) that, as regards adolescent learners, the operation of the mental processes which result in language acquisition - including both the development of communicative ability and grammatical accuracy - are triggered by intensive exposure to natural samples of the target language and the process of negotiative interaction which is characteristic of language use. From this, learners abstract some of the rules present in the available input and construct their own mental rule
system.

In the context outlined above learning is the natural result of constant and willing interaction with fellow learners, the teacher and the resources; of being aware of one's main strengths and weaknesses and using one's strengths while looking for ways of overcoming one's weaknesses; and of an intensive exposure to natural samples of the target language in purposeful and relevant situations. These are all necessary ingredients for the achievement of the tasks and the purposes selected by learners according to their interests and needs. The choice of task, the action plans, the type and quantity of resources, the degree of reliance on the teacher, the roles to take and the pace of work will vary according to the different characteristics of learners. Every individual should be able to retain the responsibility for the management of her own learning and find comfortable and beneficial ways of collaborating with the group.

I would like to conclude this brief description of an alternative pattern of curriculum development by drawing attention to two important issues. The first one concerns the need to include "teacher education" as a basic element of a process of curriculum development, directly related to the general principles stated in "the curriculum guidelines" and the "learning process" framework (see fig. 6). Teacher education is envisaged as an ongoing process of observation,
reflection upon and evaluation of classroom processes, learners' needs and problems and the sharing of ideas and experiences. Consequently, it should be the teachers' responsibility to plan, manage and evaluate their own meetings and to seek external assistance if needed.

The second one refers to the essentially cooperative nature of the framework at all levels. Fig. 6 shows an overall view of curriculum development as a process in which all decisions are the joint responsibility of participants: administrators, teachers and learners. At different stages one or other group might hold a more predominant position but it is essential that all groups participate and that each one is aware of the views and feelings of the others and that, whenever possible, consensus is achieved. Participation and responsibility in the decision-making process contribute a great deal to a feeling of self-respect and self-confidence and to a positive and collaborative attitude, two elements that are essential for a successful curriculum development. In their conclusion to a stimulating paper, Pennington & Brown argue that "all too often in the field of language education, the interests of teachers and administrators, like those of workers and management, have been thought of as diametrically opposed. At the same time, it is ironic that the concerns of administrators and teachers have often been directly addressed in language programs, while the specific priorities of the students have been ignored or neglected. It has been argued here, however,
that this need not be the case and that a spirit of partnership can be established which is in the best
interests of administrators and teachers, as well as the students for whose benefit the language program exists". And they conclude: "The unification of interests which results from the curriculum process creates an orientation progress which, as we have maintained, fosters characteristics intrinsic to excellence in language education" (Pennington & Brown 1987:100-01).
5. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT CARRIED OUT IN CATALUNA: THE "SABADELL PROJECT".

The purpose of this chapter is to present a detailed description of the learning/teaching project carried out in Sabadell the process and outcomes of which constitute the basis of this thesis. I have made my main concern to render as accurate an account as possible, not only of the easily observable facts such as activity types, resources, etc. but also of the classroom atmosphere, the attitudes and relationships developed among learners and, above all, of the crucial role played by learners in the organisation and management of the project. It is essential, I believe, to demonstrate how learner autonomy and a continuous process of negotiation among learners underlay all learning activity, and how learners developed the necessary capacity to take responsibility for their own learning process.

As regards the mode of presentation, a variety of ways have been considered. Finally, and in view of the complexity of the process to be described and of the fact that the description was to be based on my own notes and memories of the project, I have opted for a chronological account of the actions undertaken. At the same time and in an attempt to recreate the attitudes and feelings experienced at the time, I have chosen to adopt a direct, reporting style and to let the materials speak for themselves whenever possible.

The chapter has been divided into four parts. Part 1 deals with the basic characteristics of the project and the
reasons for undertaking it. Part 2 offers a summary of the types of activity learners engaged in during the first two months of the project with the purpose of "creating suitable conditions" for autonomous learning. Part 3 is essentially an example of a long-term task and shows how learners planned and managed their own work and the main actions undertaken. Finally, part 4 deals with the role of the teacher in autonomous learning, on the basis of the project experience.

5.1. Characteristics of the "Sabadell project".

This project was carried out in the I.B. FERRAN CASABLANCAS during the academic course 1967-88. The learners involved were two groups of third-year students - 38 per group - aged 16-17 years. The groups were assigned to me by the school's director of studies and had no special characteristics. They were formed, like all other groups, according to the school criteria of careful mixing sexes, speakers of Catalan and Spanish as their first language, times of matriculation - June for those who passed all their subjects, September for those who needed a second opportunity - etc. All students had done two years of English - 3 hours per week - following a typical functional-notional approach based on Abbs & Freebairn's popular textbook "Opening Strategies" (1982). Consequently, they were acquainted with a variety of basic functions, structures and
vocabulary areas and could adequately construct or reproduce set dialogues for situations such as buying a souvenir, introducing a third person, etc. However, many of them had difficulty in following the teacher's comments and explanations and felt unable to express themselves in English. (This is corroborated by the first entries of the available classroom diaries). Contact time for English was three hours per week and we had a classroom used exclusively for modern language learning. The means and resources at our disposal comprised 2 tape-recorders, 1 record-player, 1 video and TV set, 1 OHP, 1 slide projector, 1 blackboard and a few reference books and tapes. The classroom was furnished with chairs instead of desks, a large table and two bookcases.

The decision to explore an alternative way of organising learning/teaching activity came as a result of a discussion I had at the end of the previous course with a group of students who had caused a great many problems and had achieved very poor results. My conclusions were that for many students, including some of those who seemingly do well,

- school work and the information provided are irrelevant and useless, since they bear no apparent relation to learners' interests and needs,
- the school atmosphere is cold and inhibiting,
- school and school activity are an imposition,
- classroom work is boring, competitive and, often,
threatening,
- teachers do not trust learners; they are distant, superior and, usually, unconcerned with learners' real problems,
- many students do not work because they do not value the "information" they get as a result of their work,
- students who disrupt classroom life do so mainly as a way of attracting attention and asking for help.

School life in general - the teaching/learning style, the relationship among learners and between those and the teacher, the content of the subjects... - does not seem to satisfy learners' needs and does not cater for their interests. As a result, many learners reject it and refuse to collaborate.

As regards English as a foreign language presented as an asset for future achievement - better jobs, foreign holidays - it seemed hardly a worthwhile subject, since it had no present value for them. Consequently, their attitude towards it was negative and motivation to make the necessary effort was rather low. As it is my view that motivation is essentially an internal factor (Glasser 1986, 1987; Kelly 1982) arising from one's purposes and beliefs, I was convinced that the answer to the problem was not to push harder and punish the rebel students, but to change the learning environment making it more relevant and to give learners the initiative and the responsibility for the management of the learning process.
I was unaware at the time of any existing experiment carried out in similar circumstances that could be used as a source of guidance. For this reason we had to start from scratch devising and discussing every single step of the path we were to follow. As a result, mistakes were made and time was wasted but learners felt really free to choose and explore different tasks and procedures, and responsible for every choice and decision. This feeling helps explain their attitude during the whole project and their willingness to go far beyond the three hours officially assigned to the subject.

The course was initiated as a discovery process as regards tasks and activity types, classroom management, and roles of learners and teacher, a process whose outcome was unpredictable. Consequently, no syllabus was adopted, no textbook chosen and no aims and outcomes were considered. Everything was left to negotiation during the process, planning and evaluating outcomes and procedures according to criteria such as suitability, success, feasibility etc. and with reference to learners' needs and interests.

As a result of their previous language learning experience learners had specific expectations and, often, preconceived narrow views of how to learn a foreign language. Besides, they had fixed ideas concerning their learning ability and the results to be expected, and with reference to the relevance and usefulness of the subject. It was necessary, in the first place, to make learners aware of
how much their views and expectations had been influenced by
the characteristics of the environment in which their
previous learning had taken place (see section 3.1.), and
persuade them that in a different and more suitable context
their views and attitudes and the results achieved might be
quite different. On the other hand, a new approach to
learning, a new style of classroom management and,
especially, the fact that learners were to assume the
responsibility for their own learning, required some
training on how to proceed. All these factors pointed to the
need to start by creating suitable learning conditions and
this became our main endeavour for the first two months of
the project.

5.2. Creating suitable learning conditions.

Figure 7 shows the three complementary and often
overlapping areas to which special attention was dedicated
in order to create suitable learning conditions. "Group
dynamics" aimed at achieving a positive and dynamic
classroom atmosphere and collaborative patterns of
behaviour. "Learning awareness" provided opportunities for
reflecting on the meaning and implications of learning a
foreign language and for discovering one's individual
characteristics as a language learner. Finally, "skill
training" was an attempt at giving learners a basic pool of
resources to cope with natural samples of the target
language and to recognise the main features and purposes of
different kinds of text. To achieve such purposes a variety of activities and exercises were especially devised by teacher and learners or adapted from ideas in current literature (mainly from Maley & Duff 1978 and Moskowitz 1978).

**fig. 7**

**CREATING SUITABLE LEARNING CONDITIONS.**

The pattern followed in these activities comprised three basic steps:

a) presentation of the activity, explanation of its purpose, clarification of possible doubts... and indication of signals to look out for,

b) doing the activity,

c) processing the activity, that is reflecting upon it and discussing its interest and usefulness, the feelings aroused, the discoveries made, etc. and the possible ways of improving the activity.

Learners always had the right to refuse to participate in
any of these activities if they felt uncomfortable or were not in the right frame of mind. However, it was only very occasionally that learners declined to join in with the rest of the group.

5.2.1. Group Dynamics.

Work in this area had three basic purposes:
- to develop a positive attitude towards language learning,
- to achieve cohesion among the groups and the feeling of working together for a common purpose,
- to find an efficient way of dealing with the organisational aspects of a large group of learners with different interests and abilities working within a school context, with limited means and resources.

In classroom group dynamics two types of factors must be considered: "psychological" factors, related to personal needs (Glasser 1986, 1987) and "managerial" factors. Both of them have a great influence on learners' attitudes and motivation and contribute to establishing concrete patterns of behaviour. As regards psychological factors and the psychological preparation of learners (Dickinson & Carver 1980), efforts were concentrated on developing learner self-confidence and initiative and on counteracting the pessimism and the fear of taking personal decisions felt by many learners as a consequence of a past sense of failure. We worked towards the achievement of a relaxed and
collaborative atmosphere in which learners felt encouraged by the environment, instead of threatened by pre-determined aims and methods or by a competitive context. Meanwhile, I tried to promote the understanding and voluntary assumption of new roles, especially the managing role of the learner and the collaborative and facilitating role of the teacher, and the idea that learning a foreign language could actually be fun. In order to achieve collaboration in a relaxed and stimulating atmosphere and for learners to be prepared to accept and seek opinions, correction and criticism from peers, it was necessary to overcome initial shyness and to break down barriers between learners and teacher and between different groups of learners, to get to know one's colleagues and establish with them some sort of bond and relationship. Only then could learners be expected to feel at ease and willing to take an active part in the planning and evaluation of the group's work and to risk using the target language as the normal means of communication in the classroom, in spite of errors and misunderstandings.

With reference to managerial factors, the first thing that was needed was to decide on a pattern of class organisation and choose its basic unit(s), whether individuals, pairs, small groups, whole group, or a combination of them. Then we had to arrange the classroom layout accordingly. Once small-group units (of 4 learners) had been chosen, it was necessary to establish suitable criteria for the formation of stable and efficient groups.
and acceptable patterns of decision-making and relationship among the groups. We had to establish a classroom language of communication (mother tongue/TL) and a rational way of sharing, exploiting and, if possible, expanding available resources. At the same time, we had to learn to operate constructively and effectively in a new way that implied a balance of group and individual decisions and that placed choice and responsibility in the learners' hands.

In the following pages a selection of the activities used to foster suitable psychological preparation is offered. Activities have been grouped in three categories according to their main purpose, even though I am aware that all of them cover more than one aspect and probably benefited different learners in different and unpredictable ways. These activities were used regularly during the first 4-6 weeks and sporadically afterwards. They usually occupied the first 15-20 minutes of the class and were followed by others related to "skill training" or "learning awareness". The teacher took part in them like everyone else. It is worth noticing that this type of activity gave learners with a poor record a boost, since they could do as well as anybody else, sometimes better than those considered as "good" students and, thus, helped to change their attitude and expectations from the very beginning. At the same time, learners began to realize that learning a foreign language means more than just swotting up grammar rules and reproducing dialogues and that it requires social and

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emotional as well as intellectual involvement (Stevick 1976).

An important factor was the use of music in the classroom which became a characteristic feature of the project. Music was selected by teacher and learners and was played during class activity, different types of music for different kinds of activity. This greatly helped to create a positive and relaxed atmosphere - many learners referred to music as a protective environment in which they found it easier to use the target language - and to keep classroom noise well within acceptable working conditions.

A) Activities aimed at promoting learner self-confidence, getting to know each other and establishing relationships with peers.

1. A self-caricature (original).

Individually, participants draw a quick caricature of themselves emphasising those traits and characteristics that are specially representative of their physique or personality and sign with the name (or nickname) by which they would like to be called in the class. Folded papers are deposited in a hat and each participant takes one and tries to find the person it corresponds to. When this happens they sit together and talk about the drawing - "why did you...?", "what did you mean by...?", "can you explain...?" - and, indirectly, about themselves. At the end, participants use the information gathered talking to the person whose
caricature they drew from the hat plus their own intuition to introduce that person to the rest of the group. The person being introduced has the opportunity to disagree with, explain or expand what is being said, while the group is encouraged to ask questions, etc. The beginning and end of the various stages of the activity are indicated by means of starting and stopping the music.

This activity is usually repeated the following day to give those participants who were found by someone before they had had a chance to find the person in their caricature the opportunity of finding out about that person and presenting him/her to the rest of the group.

2. Identity card (original).

Picture A shows the front and inside pages of the identity card filled in by participants in which they convey personal facts, likes and thoughts. Once completed, cards are circulated at random and people have the opportunity to discover interesting information about colleagues, people with whom they have things in common, etc. and to go and talk to them if they wish. The cards are then kept together in the classroom available to learners and some of the information provided can be used, for instance, as a basis for activities such as the formation of groups.

3. My colour, my shape (adapted from Moskowitz 1978)

Step 1. Individually, participants are asked to think about their personal characteristics - character and personality, qualities etc. - and their main interests and
### Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age:</th>
<th>Pets:</th>
<th>Likes:</th>
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<th>Member of family:</th>
<th>Food:</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>Books:</td>
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<td>Music:</td>
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<td>Sports:</td>
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<th>Thoughts:</th>
<th>Greatest quality:</th>
<th>Greatest fear:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What I hate most is...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Greatest ambition:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greatest possession:</td>
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<tr>
<th>Signature:</th>
<th></th>
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</table>

### Letters

I.B. Ferran Casablanas  
Course: 1987-88  
Name:                
Address:             

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to choose a way of expressing them through suitable colour, shape, drawings, etc.

Step 2. Then they are asked to take a piece of cardboard of the right colour, cut it out the right shape and add any other elements of their choice in order to produce a badge that is an expression of themselves as people.

Step 3. When participants are ready, they pin their badges on to their fronts and walk around the classroom looking at other people's badges and chatting to them: asking and answering questions about why they chose a certain shape, the meaning of a particular colour, etc.

During steps 1-3 music is used to create a relaxed atmosphere and to signal the beginning and the end of the different steps.

Step 4. Participants sit down and the activity is processed. They are asked to volunteer a first impression, to comment on discoveries made, interesting surprises and to try to remember someone with the same colour/shape, different meanings attached to a particular shape or colour, etc.

4. Treasure trove (original).

Participants are divided into 2 or 3 groups. Each day members of one of the groups bring to the classroom a selection of treasured possessions, things that have a special meaning for them, and set up "stalls" to show them to the other groups. The rest of the participants go round the stalls, stopping whenever something attracts their interest or when they want to talk or enquire about
something. Music is played all the way through and the activity is processed in the same way as in the previous one.

B) Activities aimed at promoting initiative, collaboration among peers and a sense of fun.

1. A stormy night (original).

Two adolescents spend a stormy night alone in their old house when their parents go out with some friends. The rain drums heavily on the roof and window panes, the wind howls and peals of thunder rumble across the sky. In order to fight their growing fear they try a variety of activities: listening to records, watching TV, playing games. Several things happen: the lights go out, the telephone is dead, there seems to be someone knocking on the door... The story is collectively constructed with participants impersonating the characters and objects involved. At the end the activity is processed with participants expressing opinions and feelings, commenting on the roles they played and their possible difficulty and the reasons why they chose to play them in a particular way.

2. A cocktail party by the sea (original).

Participants are asked to impersonate a character of their choice (Napoleon, a punk rocker...) at a cocktail party in a villa by the sea. (Sheets of newspaper are used to make distinctive symbols, items of clothing...). Miming, they improvise the character's actions, responding to openings and suggestions made by other guests, coping with
accidents, etc. Lively music is played and the scene is progressively built up as a result of the contributions made by the participants. The activity is processed in the same way as the one above.


Participants are divided into several random groups. Each group thinks of a word and, later, spells it to the other groups using their bodies to make the shapes of the required letters. The rest of participants try to guess the word being spelled.

Apart from this, learners and teacher brought to the class a variety of activities which they had found and enjoyed. They included games, puzzles, mazes, songs, personality tests, computer quizzes, etc. (A small selection can be seen in the following pages).

C) Activities aimed at promoting a suitable frame of mind for learning activity, calming down and relaxing learners, stimulating them... according to circumstances.

1. The statue (well known in relaxation courses).

Participants are asked to form pairs and to stand in front of their partner. In each pair one of the partners is going to close his/her eyes and pretend to be a block of clay to be moulded, while the other one is the sculptor who is going to try to produce a pleasant, relaxing shape. Soothing music is played and the sculptors proceed slowly
This letter arrived for you this morning. Can you understand it? Can you write a reply?

D + ? = David,

H + X

R. U.?

C + X

U come 2 m + O

on + day afternoon?

We C + X

the

Come + ly, and 34 the

we C + X play 10 + his in the p +

n + 3 m + C. Don't 4 + get 2

b + O y + 4

; C U on + day at + h o'c

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Your sister puts your sweater on and doesn't ask your permission first. Are you annoyed?

A friend admires your jeans and buys a pair which are identical. Are you pleased?

It's your birthday and you receive a box of chocolates. Do you eat them all yourself?

A friend wants to play tennis but doesn't have a racquet. Do you lend her your racquet?

Your mother goes into your room which is in a mess and tidies it while you are in school. Are you angry?

You have a bike which is brand new. A friend wants to ride it into town. Do you refuse?

You aren't too possessive. You're fond of your own things but you are also generous with them.

You aren't at all possessive. Be a bit more careful about your things or you'll lose everything.

You're very possessive. Beware! You risk losing things and people when you try to possess them.
COMPUTE CAREER QUIZ

Try this quiz to find out if a computer career would suit you.

1. Do you stop doing things half way through?
   a) only if somebody interrupts me
   b) sometimes
   c) often

2. Can you tell if a word is spelt correctly just by writing it out to see if it looks right?
   a) no
   b) sometimes
   c) usually or always

3. Do you have a reputation for never giving up until you have solved a problem?
   a) yes
   b) probably
   c) no

4. How much time do you spend on hobbies that need careful attention to detail?
   a) not much
   b) a lot
   c) a few hours each week

5. Do you think that a job with computers would be
   a) very interesting
   b) occasionally boring
   c) boring most of the time?

6. Do you like finding out how things work?
   a) usually
   b) sometimes
   c) never or hardly ever

7. Do you think you have a logical mind?
   a) no, not at all
   b) quite logical
   c) very logical

8. Would you notice if the same word in a newspaper article sometimes had a capital letter and sometimes didn’t?
   a) perhaps
   b) probably
   c) certainly not

SCORING
1. a) 3 b) 2 c) 0
2. a) 0 b) 1 c) 2
3. a) 2 b) 1 c) 0
4. a) 0 b) 3 c) 2
5. a) 3 b) 2 c) 0
6. a) 2 b) 1 c) 0
7. a) 0 b) 1 c) 2
8. a) 3 b) 2 c) 0

Under 7: You probably aren’t suited to a career in computers.
7 to 12: You have the right sort of mind for a job with computers, but you may not be very interested in them.
13 to 20: You should consider a career in computers. You would probably enjoy it.
Computer simulation games

Computer simulation is also used in some computer games. In these games, the computer is programmed to create a pretend situation, such as a magical land. It asks you lots of questions and different things happen on the screen according to how you answer.

On this page there is a game, like a computer simulation game, which you can play without a computer.

How to play

Follow the arrows to find your way to the castle, and answer the questions and obey the instructions as you go. When you see this sign - choose any word from the list on the right to complete the sentence. The words you choose will affect what happens to you. Answer each question as you think best and follow the YES or NO arrows according to your answer.

Words

TORCH  SANDWICH  MAP
SUITCASE  FROG  TOAD
BLANKET  CLOAK  STICK
BOAT  LAMP  LADDER
BICYCLE  RING  CANDLE
ARE YOU A SLOB?

1. - Do you eat your dinner...?
   a) in front of the television
   b) with a knife and a fork
   c) with a fork only

2. - How often do you tidy your bedroom?
   a) once a month
   b) never
   c) once a week

3. - Do you change your socks...?
   a) once a week
   b) once a fortnight
   c) everyday

4. - When your clothes get dirty, do you...?
   a) throw them in a pile on the bedroom floor
   b) wash them immediately
   c) keep them under your bed - for next week -

5. - When your mother asks you to set the table, do you...?
   a) tell her you are very busy
   b) say OK but continue watching television
   c) do it immediately

6. - When you are asked to sweep the floor, do you...?
   a) brush the crumbs under the carpet
   b) pay your younger sister to do it
   c) make a good job of it

7. - The telephone rings while you are reading. Do you...?
   a) close the book carefully with the bookmark you always use
   b) close it turning down the corner of the page you're reading
   c) mark the page with your jam sandwich
8.— On Sunday, do you …?
   a) get up early and go out jogging
   b) have a relaxed breakfast and then read the Sunday papers
   c) stay in bed till luonhtime

9.— If you drop a blob of icecream onto the carpet, do you …?
   a) ignore it and hope nobody notices
   b) rub it into the carpet with your foot
   c) wipe the carpet immediately with a wet cloth

10.— After a party at a friend’s house, do you …?
   a) offer to help but then go as soon as the party ends
   b) leave before they can ask you to help
   c) stay to help clear up

SCORING

1.— a) 3, b) 1, c) 2
2.— a) 1, b) 2, c) 3
3.— a) 3, b) 2, c) 1
4.— a) 2, b) 1, c) 3
5.— a) 2, b) 3, c) 1
6.— a) 3, b) 2, c) 1
7.— a) 1, b) 2, c) 3
8.— a) 1, b) 2, c) 3
9.— a) 2, b) 3, c) 1
10.— a) 2, b) 3, c) 1

10 to 15. You’re just too good to be true — and not particularly honest. You certainly aren’t a SLOB.

16 to 21. No, no. You have to work a lot harder if you want to be a SLOB!

22 to 25. Well, if you let yourself go— relaxed a little... you could easily turn into a SLOB.

25 to 30. CONGRATULATIONS! You are lazy, thoughtless, totally selfish... THE PERFECT SLOB!!

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moving the head, arms, legs of their partners until the desired shape is achieved. When the music stops there is a short break to allow comments between partners. Then, roles are reversed and the activity is carried out again.

2. Going through holes (adapted from Maley & Duff 1978).

Participants are divided into two large groups, a) and b). In each group they are asked to form pairs or groups of 3. Lively music is played and pairs in group a) make holes of different kinds and sizes with their bodies while pairs in group b), hand in hand, attempt to go through the various holes. Once all pairs in group b) have had their chance, roles are reversed and the activity is carried out for a second time.

As I mentioned above, activities of this type played an important part in the achievement of a relaxed, positive atmosphere in the classroom. They provided plenty of opportunity for learners to meet and talk to other learners outside their small natural groups and, thus, for breaking down possible barriers among groups and creating a better understanding among them. They also helped modify pre-conceived views, attitudes and expectations about learning foreign languages.

Managerial preparation was achieved through a series of activities aimed at establishing and becoming familiar with the basic pattern of class organisation. This included

a) classroom layout and group formation,

b) classroom language of communication, and
c) relationship among the groups and decision making.

Work in this section was delayed until the third week, once a certain amount of ground had been covered in the other areas of group dynamics.

As regards classroom layout and the formation of groups, a variety of settings (see fig. 8) were considered and discussed. Learners evaluated the advantages and shortcomings of each setting in relation to the size and characteristics of the class and chose number 7, that is groups of four learners with the teacher moving freely among them. This setting was preferred to number 1 because it offered individual learners more opportunities for using the target language and was more demanding as regards commitment to the group and participation in group work. Pairs were discarded because learners felt that interaction might not be rich enough and they would be losing opportunities of learning from peers. Consequently, setting 7 was adopted and chairs were arranged accordingly. It was agreed that after some time the matter would be reconsidered and changes would me made if necessary.

The next step was to form the groups and several criteria were analysed and discussed. After the initial inclination towards accepting already existing groups of neighbours and "old friends" as the basis for work groups, learners decided to rely more on factors such as common interests, compatibility of character and working habits, etc. Each learner prepared a profile of the "ideal work partner" and
Fig. 8a

Setting One

Setting Two

Setting Three

Setting Four

Setting Five
(no teacher)

Setting Six

Setting Seven
(teacher moves freely)
considered several possible candidates with reference to the profile. They also prepared a questionnaire to interview their candidates and establish if they would make suitable partners. As a reference, and in order to help learners decide what type of questions would be helpful and which ones would be useless, an example of questionnaire ("You and Others") was provided by the teacher and learners used some of the questions as a basis for their own. Once the questionnaires were ready, learners set out to talk to one another and, actually, negotiate the formation of groups according to their interests and views.

The first tasks undertaken by the groups were to establish basic group resources and "class norms". Taking into consideration the thoughts and impressions that were emerging from work done in the areas of "learning awareness" and "skill training" and the kind of learning activity they would be involved in, learners decided that the minimum set of resources constantly available to each group should be a monolingual dictionary, a bilingual dictionary and a grammar book with clear explanations and exercises. (Murphy's "English grammar in use", Cambridge University Press was chosen because it fulfilled the requirements and offered correct solutions to exercises at the end of the book. In this way, learners were able to check their understanding of a grammar point on their own). The money saved by not buying a textbook was dedicated to the acquisition of these resources. At the same time, it was decided that a variety
"YOU AND OTHERS"

1. Do you think you are a) clever, b) good company, c) hard-working, d) lazy, e) sexy?

2. Do you sing / whistle / chew gum / bite your nails while you work?

3. Are you open / noisy / quiet / shy / ... ?

4. Do you find it easy to talk to people you don't know? What kind of people do you like talking to?

5. Are you absent-minded / efficient / disorganised / tidy / messy / ... ?

6. Are most of your friends a) boys, b) girls, c) fifty fifty?

7. Something that irritates you ..............................
Something that makes you laugh ..............................

8. If you could change something about yourself what would you like to change?

9. Do you work better in the morning / in the afternoon / at night / alone / in company / ... ?

10. What's your favourite pet? Have you got one? What's it called?

11. What are your favourite hobbies?

12. What are your favourite books / records?

13. What's the silliest thing that you have done recently?

14. Are you good at writing / drawing / telling stories?

15. To remember a special occasion do you a) take photos, b) collect mementos (tickets, ashtrays...), c) draw a picture of it, d) .................? 

16. If you could be born again as an animal which animal would you choose?

17. If you had the magic power to change people into anything you wanted, what would you change your teacher into?

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of textbooks, readers, reference books concerning different language skills, an encyclopedia, etc. should be available in the classroom.

As regards class norms learners decided that, since they were taking collective responsibility for the management of learning activity, it was necessary to establish a set of basic norms specifying those kinds of behaviour which were considered essential for the smooth and efficient running of the class. The final set of class norms approved by learners was the following:

CLASS NORMS

1. Speak English all the time.
2. Arrive punctually and start work immediately.
3. Collaborate with the other members of the group and with the rest of the class.
4. Be responsible for homework and tasks given to you by the group.
5. Accept decisions taken by the majority after hearing the opinions of the different groups.
6. Respect other people and classroom materials.
7. Speak in a low voice.
8. Change the groups when it becomes necessary.

The question of the classroom language of communication was seriously debated in relation to the need to maximise input (see section 3.1.) and provide constant opportunities for genuine interaction (Allwright 1984a, Ellis 1986), on the one hand, and to their initial shortcomings and the
possible effects of repeated errors on the other. The final conclusion, as shown in norm 1 above, was to strive towards the use of English as language of communication, even though they were well aware that, in the early stages, there would be a necessary mixture of English and the mother tongue. This decision was based on the fact that for the great majority of students the classroom was the only accessible context in which the target language was spoken. Classroom materials, both oral and written, were in the target language from the beginning of the project. With the exception of the first two or three weeks, the teacher spoke English on a regular basis and the learners were encouraged to do the same whenever they addressed the teacher. Within the groups, the use of the mother tongue predominated in the first term, supplemented by a growing number of English words and expressions. This situation was reversed during the second term, when the first proper task was undertaken. Progressively, the target language became the basic language of classroom communication, with mother tongue words and expressions used to fill in gaps. This was facilitated by the "language survival kit" (cf. 5.2.3) and by the fact that learners were dealing with a considerable amount of input, all of which was in the target language. By the time the third term started, English was firmly established as the normal classroom communication language.

An important element in managerial preparation was to set up an efficient system of decision making involving the
different groups. The choice of classroom layout and the establishment of the class norms provided opportunities for experimenting. The system adopted had three basic steps:

1. discussion by the groups and appointment of a group representative,
2. meeting of group representatives with the aim of arriving at a common proposal,
3. plenary discussion of proposal(s), possible amendments and final voting.

This system was applied every time it was necessary to take important decisions concerning the whole class. For the analysis and discussion of the learning process and in order to exchange views, make suggestions, etc. a meeting of all participants was established every 4 weeks.

5.2.2. Learning Awareness.

"Learning awareness" was aimed at helping learners discover and explore relevant reasons for learning a foreign language and personal ways of approaching the task of learning and of coping with the management of their own learning. Work in this area started from the very beginning according to a three-step process of reflection-discussion-conclusions. In the first 8 weeks activities usually involved the whole class. Afterwards, they were centred on the specific language needs and interests of individual learners or groups of learners and related to the types of
task they were working on. Essentially, we considered and tried to find suitable answers to the following three questions:

- Why learn English?
- What to learn?
- How to learn?

well aware of the fact that, as regards secondary school language learners, we could not rely on a scheme such as

a) determine the general aims of learners,

b) specify concrete situations in which the use of English will be needed,

c) determine the basic skills involved in each situation,

etc.

Consequently, and in relation to the first question, the main purpose was to explore advantages and possibilities deriving from learning and using English that were felt as such by individual learners (see "relevance" in section 3.1) and that could stimulate their effort and direct it towards certain areas, tasks and topics. I tried to persuade learners that learning a foreign language was not necessarily unrelated to one's personal interests and that learning could be effectively achieved while pursuing such interests. On the first day learners were asked about their expectations from the course and from the teacher. Their answers were vague and predictable and reflected a resigned attitude and a great deal of disenchantment with the subject. Then, learners were shown the conclusions reached
at the end of my discussions with students in the previous year. These conclusions, (a summary was provided at the beginning of this chapter), were confirmed by them and the need for a new approach and new procedures was established. In the following sessions the sheet "Why Learn English?" was used as a basis for the discussion of purposes for learning English. The results (shown in chapter 4) were taken as an indication of learners' general purposes - some of which were shared by a considerable majority - and as a starting point in the consideration of "what" to learn.

As regards "what" to learn, learners were asked to consider both their present knowledge and ability concerning English and specific areas of interest in which the use of English could be a help or an advantage. They had to think about and answer the following questions:

1. What can you do in English?
2. What would you like to be able to do in English?
3. In relation to what you would like to do in English, what are your main problems?
4. What are your favourite activities?

Answers to the first question were, essentially, as follows:

- understand simple dialogues in shops, at the Post Office, etc. (60 students),
- go shopping (46 students),
- give directions in the street (39 students),
- write a letter to a friend (31 students),
- read simple (simplified) books (22 students).

WHY LEARN ENGLISH?

WELCOME TO OUR CLASS.

THINK ABOUT AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. Is learning a foreign language important to you? Why?

2. What real advantages / benefits / possibilities can English offer you?

3. As regards learning English, which of these would you consider interesting purposes. Choose 4 and place them in order of importance 1-4.

| 1. to get a good job and/or do well at university |
| 2. to be able to understand songs by my favourite groups and singers |
| 3. to meet and understand people from other countries, their way of life, customs... |
| 4. to pass examinations with good marks |
| 5. to widen my cultural perspective |
| 6. to show off in front of my friends |

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Such answers are a clear reflection of the functional-instrumental approach followed in previous years and manifest learners' confidence in borrowing and reproducing some of the formulas practised. It is interesting to note that only two of these activity types - writing a letter to a friend and reading simple books - were considered relevant by the majority of learners, but only a minority felt they could cope with them.

Learners' answers to the second question give priority to comprehension over production and express a general interest in coping with information and enjoying audio-visual materials. They can be summarised as follows:

- understand people speaking English (76 students)
- read books and magazines (76 students)
- understand songs, TV programmes, films (76 students)
- discover and find out more about other countries and cultures (51 students)
- "chat up someone interesting" (32 students)

The third question (about learners' main problems) generated a variety of answers ranging from "English is an impossible language" to "I am no good at learning languages". However, some could be seen to represent a majority opinion. With reference to comprehension, learners stated their difficulty in grasping the general meaning of a sentence or paragraph. This they attributed to a basic lack of vocabulary and expressions. As regards language production, common problems mentioned were:
- being shy and not having anything to say,
- finding the right words and expressions,
- starting and ending a conversation,
- coping with unexpected situations, breakdowns in communication, etc.

As regards question 4, there was a general agreement among learners. Their favourite activities were:
- listening to songs,
- reading magazines, books and newspapers,
- watching films and videoclips and
- speaking to people.

More minority preferences included discussions of relevant topics, drama, writing stories, etc.

The answers given by learners to the 4 questions above and the comments and suggestions made during the discussion provided the necessary information for determining the kinds of materials and activities to be used during the initial training period, in order to stimulate a positive attitude and to show how learning activity can be directly and fruitfully related to personal interests.

"How to learn" represents the most complex aspect of "creating suitable learning conditions" and a crucial issue as regards learners taking responsibility for their own learning (Holec 1980, Dickinson & Carver 1980). However, becoming aware of one's learning style and characteristics and finding out one's appropriate learning path is a long-term task. Because of this, I tried to initiate and
facilitate a process of experimentation and self-discovery that was to last beyond the limits of the course.

The first step was to provide learners with basic and comprehensible information about central theoretical issues to guide their efforts and to reduce the discouraging effects and the anxiety caused by false beliefs and expectations. The information provided included a brief reference to the "nature of language" - envisaged as a complex network of interlocking systems of rules - and "language competence", but it concentrated on providing some understanding of the "nature of language learning". A series of statements, based on the General Principles stated in the Curriculum Guidelines (see chapter 4), were used as a basis for explanations and discussion. (An example of statements used is offered below, under the title of "Learning a Foreign Language).

A second task was to help learners explore the advantages and possible drawbacks of learning a foreign language in a group and to find suitable ways of combining individual needs with group requirements. Following Long & Porter's paper on "Group Work, Interlanguage talk and SLA" (1985) and making reference to learners' previous experience, group learning was envisaged as an enriching complement to individual learning and the right setting for negotiation and interaction. The following aspects were discussed:

a) group learning and motivation,

b) group learning and negotiation,
c) group learning and learner autonomy,

d) group learning and error correction,

e) group learning and task types.

The main issue as regards "how to learn" was to help students discover what kind of learners they were and what kind of approach and activity types best suited their learning styles. I tried to persuade learners that this was, essentially, a self-discovery process which required experimentation and reflection upon the results achieved as a consequence of different kinds of behaviour: dealing with a certain task in different ways, applying different kinds of tactics and techniques, etc. In order to initiate the process and as guidelines for group discussion, learners were provided with a series of questions and statements of the kind showed in the following pages. On the other hand, and in relation to "skill training", a variety of materials were approached in different ways so that learners had the opportunity of comparing effects and results. At the end of each session, learners had a chance to comment on the activities undertaken, either in group or individually, and the exchange of feelings and experiences with colleagues was encouraged as a source of information about one-another and as a way of reassuring worried learners. They were also advised to write about their discoveries and to keep a record of them.
LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

1. Learning is a never-ending process in which learning something allows us to learn something else.

2. Taking charge of one's learning process implies planning and monitoring our own learning.

3. Learning a F.L. is a complex process in which some features are common to all learners while others are individual and unique.

4. Learning a F.L. requires intensive exposure to samples of that language.

5. Learning a F.L. requires interaction with other learners, the teacher, materials.

6. Learning a F.L. requires the active involvement of the learner and her being responsible for her own learning.

7. Learning a F.L. requires a context which is relevant and meaningful.

8. Learning a F.L. requires learners to be able to create, explore and structure their own meanings and to choose topics, tactics and techniques.

9. Learning a F.L. requires some awareness of the language as a system.

10. Learning a F.L. offers the opportunity of developing basic language learning skills that can be applied outside the classroom/school.

11. Learning a F.L. offers an opportunity for the fulfillment of personal needs such as identity and self-esteem.

12. Learning a F.L. in a group offers the opportunity of learning to share, collaborate with and respect other colleagues.

M.C. 1987
5.2.3. Skill training.

Skill training had two essential purposes. The first one was to provide learners with a basic pool of resources to cope with authentic samples of the target language and to use the TL, at an elementary level, for their own purposes. This included learning how to tackle a text for gist, for specific information, for pleasure; making use of reference books - dictionaries, grammar books; exploring different language styles used in different text types; monitoring one's output and building up a "language survival kit" for communication in the classroom. Secondly, skill training aimed at giving learners a chance to explore the advantages and disadvantages of group work and to find efficient ways of organising and distributing work, of sharing decisions... During the first two months of the course a variety of short activities and exercises were used. These were followed by a common long-term task which is described in the following section.
MY WAY OF LEARNING

CONSIDER YOUR EXPERIENCE AS A LANGUAGE LEARNER AND
TRY TO ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. Do you think you are a good language learner? Why?

2. Are you really interested/motivated?

3. How did you learn the English you already know?

4. What kind of activities/exercises seemed most effective?
   What were they good for?

5. What are you good at?
   a) communicating ideas?   b) listening
   c) grammar   d)...........   e)...........

6. Are you good at remembering words / expressions?

7. How do you approach new items / difficulties / things that you don't understand?

8. When you have a problem what do you prefer?
   a) an explanation from the teacher,
   b) to work it out for yourself,
   c) .........................

9. Are you a) a quiet learner? (you like to listen)
    b) a social learner (you like to talk)
    c).........................

10. Do you mind a) speaking in public?
    b) making mistakes in front of your peers?

11. Do you mind being corrected by
    a) the teacher?
    b) another student?

12. Think of a special occasion in which you were very successful at learning something.
    What did you do?
    How did you do it?

M.C. 1987
WHICH OF THESE STATEMENTS CAN YOU APPLY TO YOURSELF?

1. If I can't understand/do something immediately I feel impatient and I give up.
2. With a new text I work word by word, trying to understand everything.
3. I try to get the general meaning first and then deduce the meaning of unknown words.
4. I am mostly intuitive and good at guessing.
5. I can't understand anything until I see it written down.
6. Before I say/do something I need to be sure that it is right/correct.
7. I need to understand the language system and how the system works before I can use the language.
8. I like to experiment with the language and try out new ways of expressing/doing things.

TRY TO WRITE A FEW MORE STATEMENTS ABOUT YOURSELF AS A LANGUAGE LEARNER.

............................................................
............................................................
............................................................
............................................................
............................................................

M.C. 1987
MOTHER TONGUE/FOREIGN LANGUAGE

NOW THINK OF THE WAY YOU LEARNED YOUR FIRST LANGUAGE (YOUR MOTHER TONGUE) AND THE WAY YOU HAVE LEARNED ENGLISH.

SIMILARITIES       MAIN DIFFERENCES


CONCLUSIONS?

M.C. 1987

The activities used in the initial training stage mainly involved the analysis of a selection of pages from books and magazines, leaflets, songs and film sequences, etc. Learners were shown how to use their knowledge of the world and their previous experience as comprehension aids, how to guess the basic message of texts (their deep function), and the effects the author wants to create by looking at the text layout, pictures, headlines, colours, symbols, etc. and how to identify and concentrate on important/relevant information. They learned to apply different types of
strategies in relation to their purpose for reading or
listening and to identify possible reasons for lack of
understanding, such as a poor context, complexity of the
language, unfamiliar/uninteresting topic, wrong attitude or
approach on the learner's part, etc. and to deal with them
adequately. (Ellis & Sinclair 1989 provide some interesting
ideas).

Once a variety of texts had been investigated and
compared, with reference to WHO the text was addressed to,
WHAT the basic message was and HOW the message was conveyed,
learners were asked to produce their own examples choosing
topic and audience and applying the knowledge acquired. A
selection of materials used for skill training can be found
in appendix 1. The following pages offer a few examples of
texts produced by groups of learners during that stage which
were checked and discussed by the whole class. Many of these
texts can easily be related to the materials shown in
appendix 1.

As regards the "language survival kit", learners were
asked to think of the main "communicative acts" they would
need to be able to express in the classroom. A common list
was made following suggestions from the different groups
and, then, learners looked through the reference books
available in search of different ways of realising the
communicative acts selected. Groups collaborated in a task
of common interest - each one was in charge of a few
communicative acts which they contributed to the large
Armando Bulla is a strange, brown-haired, fifteen-year-old student of Pau Vila High School. He isn't a good student but he lives happily. Last night he went to a religious sect and after nobody knew where Armando Bulla was.

The police thought that Armando Bulla was kidnapped by the members of the sect, but the intellectual capacity of Armando Bulla is very low and his economical situation is deplorable, so in these circumstances a kidnap is not very usual.

The police continued with the investigation, they asked all the friends of Armando Bulla but nobody had seen him after he went to the sect. At the end some policemen found clues about Armando Bulla (one sports shoe, a yellow pullover) and two steps away next to the clues, Armando Bulla was lying on the floor, and the first words that he said:

-Sorry, I forgot to come home.
YOU CAN FLY

WITH "Sonny" Sport Shoes

THE FASHION IS IN THE STREET.
The list of you is on your lips.
QUESTIONS
I'm a 16-year-old girl and I've got a big problem: I'm studying 2nd level of BUP and I want to study hard but I have got a lot of friends and I love going out with them. What could I do to study and amuse me at the same time? Thanks for your answer.

ANSWERS
Well, I think that you ought to do a plan of study and after to do homework you could go out with your group of friends.

Help! I'm drowing in Pacific Ocean 22° 15' North latitude. Could you possibly send me help? Quickly, please!

I don't know so much about shipwrecks but I think you should take the five o'clock ship.
One of the best known myths from the old Greece is the Minotaur.

The story began when Zeus, the amorous god, set his eyes on the beautiful Europe who was his great-granddaughter, and he sent Hermes to kidnap her. The messenger was transformed in a very nice white bull who obliged that Europe ride on it. He took her to the presence of Zeus who transformed himself into an eagle and violated her.

Europe got pregnant and her lover left her. She gave birth to three beautiful boys. After this, she got married to Asterion, Crete's king, who adopted the three boys.

One of those little boys, called Minos, when Asterion died, was appointed king of Crete. He got married to Pasiphae, they celebrated great parties for this event. The god Poseidon gave them a bull to sacrifice to goddess Athenea but Minos forgot to do it provoking Poseidon's wrath, who punished Minos making Pasiphae fall in love with the bull.

The bull possessed Minos' wife and she beget a strange creature with human body and bull's head. It was the MINOTAUR!

Minos, horrified, called Dedalo in order to make a labyrinth to close the Minotaur there. He conquered Greece and decided that every year they must give him seven women and seven men in order to feed the Minotaur. During years they did it, till the young Theseo, helped by Ariadne—Minos' daughter—could kill the Minotaur.
Every year Chilean people celebrate the 18th of September with different activities. For on this day, 190 years ago, in 1810, the First National Committee took place to establish the Constitution and to proclaim independence from the Spanish monarchy. On this occasion, Bernando O'Higgins, a natural son of an English delegate of the Spanish Crown and a Chilean lady was elected the first president of the Chilean Republic. O'Higgins with the help of the Argentinian General San Martin defeated the Spanish army at "Chacabuco" and "Maipu", and kicked them out of Chile. "Chacabuco" and "Maipu" are Chilean cities with Araucanian names. The Araucans are the Indians from Chile.

During the festivities some special constructions are built in the parks outside the cities: "Las Ramadas". They consist of four 3 metre high piles of wood, a square shape, and connected together at the top with a ceiling of tree branches. Inside the "Ramadas" people meet to talk and/or drink "Chincha". "Chincha" is the Inca name of a drink made of fermented grapes. It's brown coloured and it tastes like champagne. It can make you very cheerful, full of the joys of life, or very miserable.
In the "Ramadas" people usually eat "empanadas," "pastel de choclo" and "humitas." Empanadas look a bit like steak and kidney pie but in fact taste completely different since they are prepared from minced beef, chopped onions, hard boiled eggs and olives. Pastel de Choclo is a kind of pastry made of minced chicken. Humitas are also made of maize, but nothing else, and are wrapped up in maize leaves. In the Ramadas farmers dress up in the typical costume of the Chilean cowboys and dance the "cueca," the typical dance from Chile. See below...
Actually there are a lot of people who have pets in their houses. The best
known pet is the dog, but there are . Kind of people who haven't got dogs
and they prefer another kind of pets, like cats, birds, monkeys, turtles, etc.
We often use the sentence: "the dog is the best man's friend" but are we the
best dog's friend?
We can ask some dogs and we can compare their opinions.
We'll find this kind of dogs which are fortunate and have a house where they live
very well and comfortable, they have meat, they have love, etc. They are like rich people.
But we'll find this kind of dogs which are less fortunate than the others.
They live in the street and they are like poor people.
I want to make a complaint about this trouble. A dog is like a person,
needs the things that you need too.
The dog needs meat, needs a lot of things that he doesn't find in the
street.
Then, we shouldn't make a complaint, if we
be surprised if we find excrements on the
find torn rubbish bags, etc.
They are stray dogs.
IF you want to help them, you must write to:

SOCIETY FOR ABANDONED
DOGS

Palm street 207

28H W. ENGLAND
Last week I went to a party. I was there really by chance. At the beginning I didn't want to go there but I have to say that I enjoyed myself very much. Much more than I had expected.

It was a carnival party. I mean everybody had to wear funny clothes or clothes we don't usually wear. I got all the party house with Conny. She was dressed as a flower wearing a green peplum, green trousers and in her head she was wearing a special kind of hat which looked like the petals of a real rose. She was really pretty. Then we met Audi, a fellow from our class, he had disguised himself as Mr Sherlock Holmes. I had never seen him so happy and funny. I had always thought he was really shy and not very talkative but that night he was another person. Finally the one who I had never seen looking so ridiculous was Peter. He had disguised himself as a ballerina. He was so funny that I will never forget him looking like that.

It was a night to remember, not only because of their dresses but the people that I met there were so nice and kind with everybody that I must say I really enjoyed being there.

[Signature]

21st
Come on! Work, stupid nigger! - the overseer said in the plantation, when the young boy fell down.

Stand up immediately! - he hit the boy with the whip.

Then, Philip, a 65 year old coloured man, went towards the overseer. He punched the overseer and he said:

Leave the boy alone! ...

An hour later, Philip was tied in a small dark room. He woke up with a terrible headache. He didn't know how much time had passed.

He was a tall and broad-shouldered man. He was of average weight and he had short and curly hair. He was very strong and he had been in the plantation since he was a child. He had not got any relatives. His parents had died when he was 30 years old.

"I'm tired of being a slave - he thought - I'm going to leave the plantation. I'll escape next week, and I'll go to Canada, where everybody is free."

That was happening some years before the American Civil War in the 18th century.

Next week, when everybody were sleeping, Philip escaped from the plantation. Nobody heard him; but the day after, he noticed that he was being hunted.

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One night, he stopped in a farm. There, he was found by a black woman. She was 33 years old and she was very beautiful and nice. She was a slave too, and her name was Mary. They fell in love and they escaped together. They wanted to arrive in Canada.

After a few days, they were two kms. far from the border. They stopped in a farm, for that night. They were hungry.

Mary stayed in the granary because she was very tired, and Philip went to the house to ask for some food.

Philip knocked the door and an old woman opened it.

**Philip:** Good evening, madam! Could you give me some good, please...?

**Woman:** Oh, yes! Of course! Come in, please!

**Philip:** I heard a voice from the other room...

**A man:** Yes, we are looking for a negro; his name is Philip.

**Old man:** And, what is he like...?

When Philip heard this, he tried to open the door, but a strong hand was snatching him. It was a hunter.
Hunter: If I were you, I wouldn't try to escape.

Philip was tied up and put on a horse.

Mary saw this scene from the granary. She was very sad and she began to cry. She rushed to Philip and said:

- Oh, Philip! I want to go with you!

Philip: No, you must go to Canada and be free.

Mary went slowly to the granary. The hunters took Philip away. When they arrived at the plantation, Philip was put another time in the small dark room.

Two days later, he was hanged, as an example for the other slaves.

Meanwhile, Mary arrived in Canada. She found a job but she was a servant.

She bore a child. He was Philip's son.

When he was older, his mother would explain him, his father's story.
Predictions for 1988

Society: As you know Isabel Preysler has got married to Miguel Boyer at the beginning of the year. In 1988 she'll get pregnant and as she usually does she will divorce. She'll sell these events exclusively for a lot of money.
As her first husband (Julio Iglesias) sang "Begin the beginin".

Politics: Felipe González will be appointed Marquis of the "Bodeguilla" by his Majesty Juan Carlos I.

Cinema: Carmen Maura will shoot with Marlon Brando "The last charge in Madrid". This film will bring fame to the actress and to the Spanish cinema.
'An extraordinary case, Clarence' said Inspector Jones smiling. 'We have the murderer.'

'I see' said Clarence lighting a cigar. 'Tell me it.'

'Well' Jones began 'Sir Johnatan got married to his second wife, Lady Anna, a year or two years ago. She is very attractive. She has long and clark hair. He has a son, George, who is 22 years old. Sir Johnatan wants his son to get married and settle down. Sir Johnatan made his will. The will says that when he dies, half of his fortune is to go to his wife and half to the son, but only if the son is married.'

'And is he married?' asked Clarence.

'Well, he was going to marry to a local girl called Sandy Church.'

'But, are they married?' asked Clarence.

'Yes' answered Jones. 'But this morning Sandy Church was found dead, with a shot through the head, in Lady Anna's room. The gun was in her hand and there was a suicide note by the body. It said: 'For I have I can't live with this guilt any more.'

'And what guilt was that?' asked Inspector Clarence.

'Sandy had had an affair with the family chauffeur, a man called Grimes.'

'Lady Anna wanted all Sir Johnatan's fortune for herself. She wanted to tell Sir Johnatan this affair if George didn't cancel the wedding.' And there isn't doubt that he would have stopped the wedding if he had known it.

'And the chauffeur?' asked Clarence.

'Oh, he is out of it. He was out in the car, all the morning and he didn't return till after lunch.'
But there was a bit trouble between him and George the
other day. They had a quarrel and Grimes hit George and he
broke his glasses.
Sir Jonathan wasn’t out of it too because he was out in the car
with Grimes when the murderer killed Sandy.
But the gun was in the dead girl’s right hand, and we know
that she was left-handed. But the big mistake was the suicide
note. It was written by Lady Anna because it was her handwriting.
‘So, who have you arrested?’ asked Clarence
‘Lady Anna, of course, who else?’ She decided to stop the wed-
ding. She had plenty of time to simulate the suicide.
‘Hmm’ said Clarence, ‘Am I right in thinking that Sandy had
dark hair?’
‘Why?; yes’ replied Jones surprised.
‘Well, I’m afraid, my friend but you have arrested the wrong
person’ said Clarence
‘Listen to me’ George knew that her mother wanted to stop the
wedding because she wanted all Sir Jonathan’s phone for herself.
George loved Sandy and he knew that she had had an affair
with Grimes but he didn’t worry.
Sandy and George determined that Anna shouldn’t spoil their
happiness because perhaps she was going to tell this affair to
Sir Jonathan.
Then George decided that the only way to solve the problem was
to kill his mother and make it look like suicide.
He copied her handwriting and he wrote a suicide note. He didn’t
tell Sandy anything about his plan.
Then, he went to the room carrying a gun and the suicide no-
te. He opened the door. He couldn’t see very well without his
glassed because Grimes broke them. But he could see a woman
with long and dark hair and he shot her in the head. Then
recognised the woman's face. She was Sandy.
Sandy was in the room because she wanted to talk with Anna
about the affair. She wanted to tell her that she didn't say it to Sir
Johnalan because she had forgotten the Chauveur:'
'But, why do you know all this?' asked Jones
'Because I have the murderer's confession,' answered
Inspector Clarence.
LEARNER TO LEARNER
LEARNER TO TEACHER

COMMUNICATIVE ACTS:

ASKING FOR INFORMATION
GIVING INFORMATION
DISCUSSING SOMETHING
MAKING SUGGESTIONS
MAKING PLANS
PERSUADING
AGREEING
DISAGREEING
OFFERING
ACCEPTING AN OFFER
DECLINING AN OFFER
EXPRESSING OPINIONS, POINTS OF VIEW, ...
EXPRESSING LIKES AND DISLIKES
GIVING REASONS
COMPARING
COMPLAINING
APOLOGISING
CONGRATULATING
ENCOURAGING
THANKING
ASKING FOR THINGS
ASKING FOR HELP
ASKING FOR ADVICE
GIVING ADVICE
ASKING FOR EXPLANATIONS, REPETITION, ...
ASKING THE MEANING OF ...
SAVING YOU DON'T KNOW / UNDERSTAND ...

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COMMUNICATIVE ACTS:
ASKING FOR INFORMATION learner to learner and learner to teacher
- What does this word mean?
- How do you spell "reason"?
- Sorry, I don't understand these sentences, can you repeat them again?
- When do we need to read the chapter 1 of the book?
- How do you say "calendari" in English?
- Can you give me some information about things to do there?
- I beg your pardon?

GIVING INFORMATION learner to learner
- Glass is an instrument for drinking.
- House is spelt h-o-u-s-e.
- I found a very good book about grammar.
- I discovered some sentences about English.
- I found the meaning of blood, pretty easy.
- I live in Sabadell, Sol i Padrís street.

DISCUSSING SOMETHING learner to learner and learner to teacher
- Well, you say that person is strong and cruel but I think he is a nice and wonderful man.
- Teacher, sorry but I think this question is incorrect.
- I prefer to do the other story because I want to do the first exercise.
- I think it's wrong, I don't approve of this decision.
- It should be easier.

MAKING SUGGESTIONS learner to learner
- We could look for this word.
- If you do the first section of this word I can do the second section.
- Why don't we make the poster about English cartoon pictures.
- Have you got any ideas or suggestions?
- Shall we go to watch an English film?
- Let's go to Ireland.
- You can buy the dictionary and I'll buy the grammar book.

**PERSUADING**  learner to learner
- Why don't we go to my house to do the homework?
- Would you join in our group?
- Go on. Come on.
- Why not? We can win.
- Won't you let me on please?
- You might do this work for me.

**MAKING PLANS**  learner to learner
- We could have the work of sentences tomorrow.
- Just imagine if he does the homework today.
- At the week-end we will finish the book.
- First you write the examples and I do the second exercise.
- They have decided to go there to watch an English film.

**AGREEING**  learner to learner and learner to teacher
- O.K. I go to your house at 7 o'clock.
- That's right.
- I agree. I quite agree.
- Quite.
- Exactly.
- Of course.
- Good idea.
DISAGREING: Learner to learner and learner to teacher
1. I think the class is not good now
2. Are you sure?
3. No, that isn't right
4. I don't agree
5. I can't accept
6. Definitely not
7. I don't like it
8. You can't mean that

OFFERING: Learner to learner
1. Do you want to form a team?
2. Let me help you
3. I want to form a group in the class
4. Would you like to do it?
5. Can I carry it?
6. Can I help you?
7. Would you mind doing it with me?

ACCEPTING AN OFFER: Learner to learner and learner to teacher
1. Yes, thank you
2. Yes, I prefer it
3. Yes, of course
4. Yes, I will do it
5. Yes, if you phone me, I will go
6. Yes, Of that is right

DECLINING AN OFFER: Learner to learner and learner to teacher
1. No, thank you
2. No, I couldn't
3. No, I must go home
4. No just now, thank you
5. Well, at this moment I can't
6. I'd love to but I'm afraid that now is late
7. That's very kind of you but I hate it
8. That sounds fun but I'm going to my house now
9. I'm not so keen on doing it
**EXPRESSING OPINIONS, POINTS OF VIEW:** Learner to learner and learner to teacher

1. I don't like this class, because it's boring
2. To travel hopeful is better than to arrive
3. This book is a disaster
4. Gentlemen prefer blondes
5. A week is a long time in politics
6. The electric light has no future
7. Artificial flight is impossible
8. What do you think about the strike?
9. I’m in favour of the English classes in the Institute

**EXPRESSING LIKES AND DISLIKES:** Learner to learner and learner to teacher

1. I loathe maths
2. I dislike French food
3. I love Italian food
4. Isn't it lovely?
5. Good idea
6. I never watch TV, I don’t like it
7. I enjoy going to parties
8. It’s my favourite drink
9. It doesn’t matter, I don’t like coffee

**GIVING REASONS:** Learner to learner and learner to teacher

1. I never go there, it's bad
2. Because I don't like it
3. Don’t smoke, I hate it
4. Owing to pressure of work
5. He is unfortunately ill in hospital
6. Thank you but I have to do my work
7. I want to go there because I love her
THANKING: Learner to learner and to teacher.

- Thanks! / Thanks a lot! / Thanks very much!
- Thank you! / Thank you very much! - (Ironic) Thanks a bunch!
- That's very nice/good/kind of you. Thank you very much indeed.

I'm very grateful to you. / Many thanks!
- Thanks so much. / How nice of you! / I'm very thankful to you.

Answers: - That's all right. / OK.
- It's a pleasure. / Not at all. / Don't mention it!
- You're welcome.
- Never mind.
- It doesn't matter.

ASKING FOR THINGS: Learner to learner and learner to teacher.

- Pass me the pen, please.
- Do you know where my pen is?
- Have you got/seen my pen?
- Can/Could you lend/give me a pen, please?
- Have you got another pen instead?
- Could you pick up my pen over there?
- Bring me the English book.
- Have you got a light/a cigarette?
APOLOGISING: Learner to learner and learner to teacher.

- I'm sorry I've broken your pen.
- I'm very/extremely/awfully/terribly/dreadfully sorry.
- I beg your pardon.
- I apologize./I do apologize./Please, accept my apologies.
- Excuse me./Pardon me./Do forgive me!/I'm so sorry.
- It was my fault.
- Oh dear! I'm afraid so./I'm ever so sorry!

CONGRATULATING: Learner to learner.

- I heard you'd passed the exams. Well done!
- Congratulations on passing the exams/going to Italy./Best wishes.
- Fantastic!/Marvellous!/Lovely!/Nice one!
- I must/want/congratulate you./I would like congratulate you.
- Let me/May I congratulate you.
- What a good thing you've done!
- Good! You've done it very well.
- I wish you every kind of happiness.

ENCOURAGING: Learner to learner.

- Come on!
- Hurry up!
- Cheer up!
- Buck up!
- Are you game?
- You can do it!
- Let's work!
- Great!/Lovely!/Terrific!
- You're doing fine!
- I wish I could do as well!
- Go it!
COMPARING: Learner to learner.

- This exercise/problem is easier than that. It's less easy than that.
- This exercise is more difficult/important than that. It's less difficult than that.
- This is much (or a lot) cheaper.
- This is as/so cheap as that. This is not as cheap as that.
- This is much (or a lot) more expensive.
- You work a lot (or much) harder than him.
- You speak a bit (or a little) more slowly.
- You're far more serious than him.
- This is just as cheap as that.
- This exercise is like that one.

COMPLAINING: Learner to learner and learner to teacher.

- I object to that remark! I resent that! I lodge a complaint.
- I'm afraid I have a complaint to make about this homework.
- I'm sorry to have to say that, but you aren't doing it well.
- I really must protest about the sound of this tape.
- Can't something be done to these useless exercises?
- I want to make a complaint to (someone)/about (something).
- I want to make a protest to you.
- This is terrible! That's not good enough.
- I want to complain about your behaviour.
- Would you mind not using this noisy typewriter?
- Would you please stop using this useless walk-man?
ASKING FOR HELP
(learner to teacher)
Excuse me. Can you tell me the answer please?
Could you tell me the name of the street?
DO you know how I can make the questions?
Could you give me information about the place?
What’s the best way to change?

ASKING FOR ADVICE
(learner to learner)
What shall I do with his car?
What would you do in my position?
Could you advice me about homework?
I’d like to ask to your advice.

GIVING ADVICE
(learner to learner)
I think you should ask your group
If I were you I look for a dog
The best thing for you to do is take another name.
I’d advise you to take it
If you ask me, I don’t know

ASKING FOR EXPLANATIONS, REPITION
(learner to teacher)
Can you repeat please?
What’s wrong in whi with the book?
I don’t understand, can you repeat please?
Is anything wrong with the class?
Could you explain why they want to do it?
(learner to learner, learner to teacher)

What do you mean when you say "tree"?
What's the meaning of his name?
What's "spell"?
What you want to say when you tell...

SAYING YOU DON'T KNOW

(learner to teacher and learner to learner)

I don't know the word.....
I'm not sure about the question
I wouldn't like to say how many people come
I've no idea how to do it.
group. The results were then discussed and put together as a booklet and a copy was given to each group. This booklet, (a copy of which is shown below), was used as a checklist by learners and it became an important reference for classroom communication in the target language, especially in the early stages of the course.

Another important purpose of the training period was to stimulate learners to read English for pleasure and to help them cope with books without the nuisance of constantly having to resort to the dictionary. In order to achieve this "The Great Gatsby", (the abridged version published by Heinemann), was chosen. As this was the first long text the majority of the students had come up against, great care was taken to arouse interest and curiosity in the background of the novel. Learners listened to a restrained Viennese waltz and a lively charleston and were asked to imagine and contrast the two scenes - the clothes, the decor, the way of dancing - the characters and the values of the two life styles. Photographs and cartoons brought to light what many students already knew about the fun loving 20s and 30s and this helped put the novel into historical and social perspective and aided overall comprehension. The book was read at home, 2 or 3 chapter per week, and debated in the classroom following a series of guiding questions provided beforehand by the teacher (see appendix 2). Such questions were devised to focus learners' attention on important
aspects of the plot and, during the debate, learners were encouraged to guess and anticipate events, derive conclusions, use their knowledge of the world to ask and answer questions. This way, learners were able to follow the story in the book without much difficulty and learned to derive enjoyment through active interaction with the text. Consequently, their interest and their confidence in reading English for pleasure increased. (Once the book was finished learners had the opportunity to watch the film and to compare the way the story was presented and told in the two media).

In order to facilitate further reading, each student bought a book of her choice, read it and wrote a few lines telling future readers what kind of book it was and her opinion and feelings about it. All these books were kept in the classroom and learners were free to browse around, leaf through the notes made by previous readers and choose the book they thought they would most enjoy.

Finally, another activity type was introduced in this initial stage aimed at encouraging creative writing. A wide variety of texts were selected and enclosed individually in plastic folders with a question or a comment to provoke authentic reactions from learners. These "activities" (see appendix 2) were taken by learners whenever they wanted and returned the following day with their reactions addressed to the teacher who, in turn, would respond to the comments or views expressed by learners. This, in many cases, gave rise
to a regular correspondence between learners and teacher on a variety of topics, including the learners' views and feelings as regards their process of learning.
5.3. The Learning process.

After two months, learners felt ready to launch into the first proper task. The conditions were suitable - learners had developed a certain degree of awareness of why, what and how to learn and we had achieved a positive class atmosphere, a collaborative attitude and some experience in both dealing with samples of the target language and working in a group. Besides, students were very keen to take full responsibility for the planning and evaluation of their learning process. From that moment onwards learners, individually or in groups, were free to follow their own paths, to pursue their interests and to shape the learning process to suit their characteristics and the possibilities of the context. They embarked on long-term activities involving the choice and design of tasks, finding and processing resources, making plans concerning actions, routes, roles and responsibilities, assessing results and making amends, etc. (see fig. 5). In spite of teacher collaboration, learners were very much on their own as regards everyday decisions. This requires confidence in one's ability to overcome obstacles, to deal with language needs and to monitor progress. For this reason, it was decided to choose a common task, one that was rich and flexible enough to allow for different interests and different routes. A common task meant a common basic approach in relation to the main stages, activity types and models and the possibility of having periodical debates in
which learners could discuss common problems and benefit from ideas and suggestions contributed by other groups.

The choice of task was the result of a brainstorming session in which a variety of suggestions were put forward and discussed. A "magazine" was eventually chosen because of the many possibilities it offered and because the necessary resources were easily available.

At this point learners were given several copies of a sheet like the one shown in fig. 8 to use as a reference for their planning and evaluating. Such sheets served as a record of the decisions taken, a reminder of actions and responsibilities and a place to jot down any ideas or suggestions related to the task. It was established that the task would occupy a whole term and, consequently, it would be finished approximately a fortnight before the Easter holiday. (The decision to start a new task a couple of weeks before the holidays was justified on the grounds of giving learners the opportunity to start designing the task and planning their initial actions before the school closed, followed by plenty of time to consider their plans, gather and process information, consult references, etc.). It was also decided that each group would have, at least, two working sessions with the teacher, one at the beginning to discuss the design of the task and the basic resources and another towards the end to make sure that the output was acceptable. Apart from this, the teacher would always be available for consultation during class hours.
The path followed by learners in their endeavour to produce a magazine varied from group to group and from individual to individual. Through trial and error and bringing together their skills and experience, groups tried to find their most efficient way of coping with the demands of the task chosen and gave it a distinctive character by adapting it to their interests and abilities.

In spite of the differences in the routes followed and in the outcomes produced, we can identify in the process a set of basic procedures - which correspond to the kinds of activity generated by the different areas of "the learning process" (fig. 5) - that are common and represent the backbone of all learning activity as it was. From the moment the task was chosen until it was completed, learners engaged in a process of negotiation - planning and evaluating -
concerning learning purposes, task design, resources, action plans and assessment. They had to discuss and reach agreements, to look for and process information, to organise and distribute work, to design and monitor production, to modify and improve previous plans and decisions. All this was done in groups and was the result of constant interaction and collaboration.

As I mentioned before, there was an agreement to use English as the only language of communication (see "Class Norms", section 5.2.1) and, although this was not possible at the beginning, it was progressively achieved during the second term. The determination of learners, aided by the initial "survival kit" (see "Skill Training", section 5.2.3) and by the fact that all the information manipulated was in English, made possible that classroom negotiation was conducted in the target language. Thus, the classroom became a context in which the target language was normally used with the highest level of authenticity that is possible in a monolingual class. Once the initial decision had been taken, learners were using their own (as opposed to borrowed) language in order to express their own meaning in relation to the task, their needs and interests, their problems and their findings, etc.

The organisation of the class continued on the basis of groups of 4 students as learners had decided and groups were left to develop their own working patterns. In this sense, the class was only brought together for general debates and
there was no general preamble at the beginning of sessions. Upon arrival, learners took their places and got on with their work without any need to be told what to do.

5.3.1. Learning Purposes.

The point of "learning purposes" is twofold. Firstly, they help relate learning activity to learners' individual interests and needs and to reinforce the feeling of responsibility for one's own learning process. Secondly, they provide a reference for assessing achievement at the end of a task and for guiding the monitoring of one's performance.

At the beginning learners found it difficult to state specific learning purposes. They could not go beyond general, all-encompassing notions such as "understand spoken English", "communicate in English", or the expression of vague interests like "reading magazines", "watching films", etc. Progressively, their purposes became more concrete and interests were supplemented with language needs discovered during the process. Quite often learning purposes were the expression of the learners' need to find outlets for their creativity and imagination and to prove themselves capable of doing things and of their thirst for information and new experiences. It was common practice to begin with just a few general purposes expressing why a task had been preferred to others:
. find out more about a certain pop group,
. discover a particular country,
. learn to operate a video camera,
. have fun,

and then, as a result of discoveries made and needs felt add more specific purposes such as
. capture and maintain the reader's imagination,
. express precision, ambiguity...
. summarize/highlight information properly,
. ask questions properly.

Another common type of learning purpose expressed learners' concern with working well as a group, combining collaboration with efficiency. This was apparent in learning purposes like the following:
. collaborate with colleagues to get good results,
. organise group work in an effective way.

On the whole, I believe that learning purposes contributed to enhance learners' awareness of their learning progress and to facilitate the monitoring of their performance by focussing their attention on specific areas of language and language use which needed consideration. In this way and in the meaningful context of the task undertaken, explicit knowledge became available to learners in favourable conditions for it to be internalised.

5.3.2. Task Design.

As regards "task design", learners had to establish the
kind of magazine they were going to produce in relation to
the audience it would be addressed to and decide its main
features. This included, on the one hand, the title, length,
format, layout and covers, and the contents — sections,
style, tone, etc. — on the other.

As regards procedures and although different groups
operated in different ways, a series of common, very general
steps can be identified. These steps should not be seen as
an obligatory path, but as a reflection of the types of
action usually undertaken by all groups, one way or another
and often simultaneously, at the stage of task design.

1st. step: exchange of ideas and first suggestions in
order to establish inclinations and preferences and, if
possible, available skills within the group.

2nd. step: looking at models; browsing through magazines,
especially those of a similar kind to the one(s) considered
in order to get new ideas, to confirm or modify initial
intentions, etc.

3rd. step: presentation and discussion of proposals and
final agreement.

4th. step: first outline of the magazine indicating its
main features, possible running themes, special touches.

5th. step: listing necessary resources, especially models
to study in greater detail and sources of information for
the contents of the different sections.

Initial plans were clarified and modified in relation to
resources available, new ideas, obstacles encountered, etc.
As was predictable, many groups coincided in designing a magazine for teenagers with a series of common sections such as "pop world", "sports", "humour", "problem pages", "horoscope", etc. Nevertheless, they approached them in very different ways and each magazine shows traces and characteristics that are individual and unique and that reflect the idiosyncrasy of the group. An example of this is the magazine called "Death" (see below) in which a running theme of the supernatural and a mock-horror tone are conveyed through the appropriate design of front and back covers, the choice of topics such as "Ghost story", "My memories, by Dracula", "Who's that witch" (a feature article on Madonna) etc. and a series of drawings depicting witches, ghosts, monsters, etc. that decorate every single page.

5.3.3. Resources.

As shown in fig. 5, the term resources is used to include 4 related types of aids learners can resort to in demand for guidance and/or basic data. Ample and purposeful contact with varied resources - processing general information, studying models and references, becoming aware of and trying to master the skills required for the achievement of a task or a text - is a fundamental issue, since it offers learners the opportunity for conscious and unconscious internalisation of data from the environment. And it is precisely the combination of conscious and unconscious
We thought it would be a
night like the others, but we
didn't expect us lost in that dark night of that
cold winter.

We were surrounded by tall
black elm-trees, strange shadows we
were rounded us. We were so frightened by them
that we fell down in a horrible dream.

It was about midnight when I
arrived at an old mansion, the wind was blowing
and the windows were hit by the strong wind,
which opened and closed them. When I got into the
house I got surprised by the atmosphere.

A sharp smell rounded me. I
couldn't breath. I were hypnotized when so-
dust became a strange shape and looked at me with a hungry look. Its body wasn't
a body, it was an old sheet.

Astonished by the airs that it was still running from its
sheet, I saw how that fantastic ghost was coming towards me. The noise from
its chains deafened me.

Its eyes began to shine. I turned round, suddenly I thought
my heart was going to explode. Then
I felt a big wrinkled hand. I shouted.
Transilvania was the perfect place to be born. That country has plenty of marvellous places under the moonlight. I will never forget the face of the moon looking at me from the black sky.

I was living in the family tombe between strange flowers. Pleasant by the wonderful music from my cousins the wolves, I decided to write my memories.

NO DAY NO YEAR

I lived to die and I died to live. I was born on a cold Friday Thirteen about midnight between two centuries.

My castle was sit in the surbubs of Transylvania. I was happy between my parents. My dad was the one who sucked blood the best! Both showed me all the tricks.

SOMEDAY

I couldn't see myself because all the mirrors didn't want to look at me. But I could feel the impression of the people round me; all them had terrible impressions. One night, when I was a child (300 years old) I noticed that my two fangs were growing. It was the beginning could happen to me!

We celebrated it with a wonderful party. I will never forget that day. After that my hands become longer and beautiful, very beautiful. Then I was someone great.

Signature:

TO BE CONTINUED
Dead Smile.

“Dracula: Bit me!”

“I wish you'd called me sooner, Mrs. Hoodie.”

“What about my gantastic cry?”

“Could you help me for a moment, Henry dear—i'm having a bit of trouble with my zip.”
Stars:

Her power reached further than life...
His power reached further than death...
They only had one thing in common. They wanted to get the control of all the creatures.

DON'T GO ALONE!!! Perhaps you won't return...
THE RECONSTRUCTION OF FRANKENSTEIN!!

Its pieces were found in Sabadell.
The neighbours are very happy and they want to build a monument.
If you want to be a supporter here are the telephone numbers:
Tf: 7173689
Tf: 7172122
Tf: 7179545
Tf: 7172740

If you leave us your direction, Frankenstein will thank you in person.

Thanks for your participation.
THE ENERGY THAT WILL RETURN YOU TO LIFE
YOU WILL NEVER DIE
acquisition that accounts for the different language features mastered by learners (see chapter 3).

The first contact with resources usually consists of the search for and processing of information or the study of models for the desired output. In the case of the magazine, it was the latter. Learners browsed through a variety of British and American magazines such as "Mad", "Smash Hits", "Number One", "Jackie", etc. in order to get ideas and to decide what kind of magazine they were going to produce. At this stage contact with resources was fairly superficial and centered on the most salient features like layout, sections included, tone, etc. Later on, they were studied in more detail and for more specific purposes.

Once the outline of the magazine had been planned, learners tried to establish the different kinds of resources they would need and where and how to get them. Normally, the following types were considered:

a) Sources of information. Apart from the news, fiction, commercials, etc. available in newspapers and weekly magazines, learners used feature articles, reports, etc. from the National Geographic, the Times Magazine, Newsweek, leaflets, brochures and encyclopedias in order to gather information for their different sections. Songs and videoclips were also used as a source of information for their "pop world" section. The information gathered was then processed and adapted to their specific needs.

b) Models. Newspapers and, especially, magazines were
studied as models for:

- the layout of the magazine and its various sections. Learners analysed the way in which information was organised and arranged throughout the magazine, the proportion of graphic material, the use of colour, headlines, empty spaces, the devices employed to capture and maintain attention, etc.

- the tone and register suitable to particular audiences, and magazine types,

- the style of language. Learners considered features such as the length of paragraphs and how they were linked, the kind of vocabulary, the predominant tenses and the reasons behind their choice, etc. corresponding to different sections and topics in different types of magazine.

c) References. Dictionaries, grammar books and other materials geared towards an understanding of the basic rules of the target language and its use in different contexts and for different purposes were always available. They were used both as a way of overcoming obstacles encountered or filling gaps and in order to develop some of the skills necessary to carry out the task. From the beginning learners were encouraged to become familiar with basic features of the target language such as word order, tenses and aspects, the formation of statements and questions, etc., to look for examples of the rules discovered in available texts and to be willing to experiment with their use in different contexts. At the same time, they were persuaded to check
their doubts by consulting reference books or by asking colleagues or the teacher. And, above all, they were told to read as much as possible, as a way of improving their understanding of the language system.

d) Skills. The different tasks chosen made different demands as regards skills. Some called for (video) recording or interviewing means and abilities, others for a certain degree of knowledge about scientific processes, etc. As regards the magazine, a variety of skills were required to use the language adequately to create desired effects. Skills to keep the reader's interest, to create an atmosphere of suspense, or to be ironic, persuasive, etc. In the case of the "problem page" section, for example, learners had to learn to cram maximum information in a short space, to sound genuine and anxious in the presentation of problems and sensible and persuasive in the replies. Learners spent time studying and discussing the way these things were done in different magazines and trying to achieve similar effects. Help was provided by the teacher whenever requested.

5.3.4. Action Plans.

Action Plans refer to the organisation by the groups of their working patterns and relationships. They concern the way in which groups take general decisions, coordinate the activity of their different members and the actions and routes undertaken once a task has been chosen and the way
they deal with problems.

Groups varied in the way they reached a general consensus in relation to the kind of group structure they had and the presence or not of an accepted leader. In spite of the differences, however, it is my experience that decisions were normally the result of negotiation and that roles and responsibilities were assumed on a basis of interest, expertise and availability of time and means. Conflict was rare and was always dealt with within the group.

When the magazine started, groups had been together for some time and they had some experience in organising group work. What was new was the complexity of the task, the quantity of data to be gathered and processed, the variety of actions to be undertaken and the greater need for close collaboration and coordination.

As examples of actions embarked upon by learners in their efforts to produce a magazine I would like to mention the following:

- looking for necessary information and processing it. Finding suitable information was often a lengthy process which, sometimes, required letters to institutions in different countries, visits to embassies or travel agencies. Once the information was available it had to be processed and adapted to the purposes of the group.

- Analysis of models for the magazine in general and for specific sections and items. This implied a study of the main features of the models as well as the reasons that
explained such features.

- Discovering the basic skills underlying the different aspects of a magazine type and devising ways of mastering those in which the group was deficient. Learners spent time, for instance, analysing magazine techniques to maintain the reader's attention and examining how colour and design are used, how graphic and written materials are combined to highlight specific items and to convey certain feelings. They also studied different narrative styles, contrasting the effects achieved by narrating in the present tense - as in the opening pages of Puig's "Kiss of the Spiderwoman" - to those of the more common past tense narrative. Commercials, humour, letters to problem pages, the type of vocabulary and expressions used with reference to the pop world were analysed as well, in an effort to produce texts that were appropriate and acceptable in their context.

- Deciding upon the length, outline and order of the different pages and sections.

- Checking and improving texts produced by colleagues (see Assessment).

All these actions had to be distributed among the members of the group and coordinated with reference to the design made of the task. Learners took roles and assumed responsibilities according to their interests and abilities, according to the facilities they had easy access to - at home, in the neighbourhood - the extra time they could dedicate to the task, etc. Groups established different
patterns to combine work inside and outside the classroom, to discuss problems or to check output, and a timetable for the different steps of the task.

Finally, in order to fulfil the responsibilities undertaken and to carry out the necessary actions, each individual and each group followed the routes that seemed most suitable and/or effective, according to the types of activity and the characteristics of learners.

5.3.5 Assessment.

Assessment can be considered as the quality control element of the process. At different stages, output was monitored by learners in order to decide whether it was acceptable as regards the language and appropriate with reference to the design and purposes of the task and it was corrected whenever necessary. At the end, the task was assessed as a whole by the group, comparing results to plans, considering the quality and quantity of language produced, the quality of the layout, the time and effort dedicated to the task and the degree in which learning purposes had been achieved.

As regards the magazine, groups devised different methods for checking drafts produced by their members. Sometimes correction was done collectively, with everyone making suggestions on how to improve language and presentation. In other cases this was done individually, circulating drafts
round the group. Whatever the method chosen, it is

**Fig. 9**

**ASSESSMENT.**

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<thead>
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M.C. 1987

important to stress the fact that final output was the result of group work and had been accepted and approved by the whole group. Furthermore, in the final stages of a task groups had a second get-together with the teacher to discuss the acceptability of output. The teacher made comments and suggestions regarding issues such as quality of language and content, layout and presentation, etc. But it was the learners' responsibility to make corrections and improve their output if necessary.

In order to help groups and individuals monitor their production and evaluate the learning process a series of simple instruments were designed (see figs. 9 and 10) and
used as a basis for judgement and discussion. Assessment instruments were used as a reference whenever the acceptability and appropriacy of output were considered, whether at the end of a task or in the intermediate stages. The "Task Evaluation" sheet (fig. 11) was specially useful at the end of tasks and provided valuable information on the aspects and areas of the process that needed improvement.

Fig. 10

ASSESSMENT

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As I mentioned before (see section 4.2), learning purposes, task design, action plans and assessment are five overlapping and closely related components of a dynamic framework characterised by a continuous process of planning.
and evaluation. The initial design and action plans were often modified, either because of the appearance of new ideas and resources or as a consequence of unpredictable difficulties or dissatisfying results. The dynamic and interactive nature of the process, together with its openness and flexibility, allowed learners to plan and negotiate their learning activity, to explore different routes and to maximise their contact with samples of the target language in a varied and purposeful manner.

Once the magazine was completed, the results assessed and the process properly evaluated, learners were asked to reconsider (the issue had already been discussed before) the advantages and disadvantages of the learning approach followed over the traditional one and to decide whether it was worthwhile to continue working the same way. The answer was unanimous. Learners had enjoyed the process and were very satisfied with the outcome. They felt that, not only were they really learning a foreign language but discovering at the same time how to make the most of their individual abilities and of the opportunities of the environment. And all this they had achieved while pursuing their own interests.
TASK EVALUATION

THE TASK WAS:

INTERESTING

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WORK WITHIN THE GROUP WAS:

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COLLABORATION AMONG THE GROUPS WAS:

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FURTHER COMMENTS:

M.C. 1987
The second long-term task was chosen by each of the different groups without any other restrictions than those imposed by the school setting and was carried out following the basic procedures of the "learning process" framework. Some groups decided to continue focusing their attention, mainly, on the written language because of their specific interests and the availability of materials, but also because they felt that oral communication was taken care of as a result of group interaction. They chose tasks such as adventure novels, collections of short stories, journeys to exotic countries, comics, etc. (Excerpts from these tasks can be found in appendix 3). One of the classes chose a collaborative task involving the 9 groups. They produced a novel of adventure modelled on E. Blyton's "The Famous Five" in which 8 groups were responsible for one chapter each, while the ninth group acted as coordinators. The following page shows one of the sheets used to coordinate the activity of the different groups. In it we can see the location of the different groups and their areas of influence, important events in the story that concern particular groups, weather conditions, etc. Other groups preferred a change and decided to embark on tasks like short plays to be filmed, videoclips, radio programmes and audiovisual displays combining recorded sound with slides.

At this stage learners were experienced, they had been through the whole process and knew what it involved. They had worked out ways of finding sources of information,
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**Note:** The table appears to be a schedule or event plan, but the content is not clearly legible due to the image quality.
coping with difficulties and acquiring the necessary skills. They were ready to become fully autonomous and to pursue their individual and group interests in their own ways. The tasks undertaken in the third term were carried out by learners with very little help from the teacher. Firstly, because of a teacher's strike which caused the intermittent closure of the school several days a week for almost two months. As a consequence, learners had to do a fair amount of their work outside the school and had little contact with the teacher. Secondly, because learners felt more confident in their ability to sort out problems and satisfy their own needs, discussing them with the rest of the group, making use of references, etc. and required less help from the teacher. In spite of the circumstances, the results achieved show remarkable quality and prove how successful learners were in managing their own learning process.

5.4 The Role of the Teacher.

Until now, as regards the Sabadell project, the centre of attention has been the learner and I would like to say a few words about the role of the teacher (in relation to autonomous learning), based on my experience during the project. First of all, I believe, two basic points should be made:

First, autonomous learning requires teacher (and school) autonomy as a pre-requisite. Schools need to be centres of
decision and teachers must be free
- to create the necessary conditions for learner autonomy and to adapt to learners' changing needs and characteristics,
- to negotiate with learners the principles and values stated in the philosophy of the curriculum,
- to manage teacher education and material resources according to their own needs.

In this sense, a well-established "national curriculum", with pre-designed syllabus and materials and standard courses for in-service teacher education, runs counter the main requirements of autonomous learning.

During the Sabadell project we were free to create our own learning/teaching conditions and teacher and learners negotiated - and adapted - the principles and values put forward by the "Project of Reform of Secondary Education", then under experimentation in Spain. Such freedom was a determining factor in the success of the project. (An adaptation of these principles and values to modern language learning, based on our negotiations during the project, can be found in the "General Principles", section 4.1).

Second, autonomous learning requires a change in the attitude and role of teachers in relation to the change operated in their functions and tasks. In the past teachers have been the centre of the class as depositors of knowledge to be transmitted, as initiators of classroom activity and controllers of learner behaviour. Often, especially in
modern languages, methodological progress has been associated with detailed lesson planning – that expertly combined elements of the "four basic skills" and in which aims, language items, exercises and activities and their timing were carefully specified – the expert presentation of "motivating" materials, the creation of a lively pace, etc. This enhanced the dominance of teachers and the use of their personality as a way of cajoling learners into accepting and participating in the activities so carefully planned. This dominance, which is often unconscious and deeply rooted in many teachers and the kind of relationship it creates with learners becomes a serious obstacle for autonomous learning. It is my experience that, as with learners, teachers need a "training" period as well to adapt to the new working style, to learn to move out of the way and to give learners the opportunity of taking their own decisions. This does not at all mean that the role of the teacher becomes unimportant, only that it changes according to the new tasks she is asked to perform.

Wright mentions two main functions of teachers:

1. "to create the conditions under which learning can take place". We can call this the social or managerial function.

2. "to impart, by a variety of means, knowledge to their learners"(1987:51-52): the instructional function.

In autonomous learning the instructional function is reduced to the minimum in favour of the social, managerial function.
Carver & Dickinson state that in autonomous learning "the teacher's main task is to lead the learner to autonomy in learning" (1982:119). This task I would like to complement with another one which is also central to the teacher's managerial function, that is to guarantee the conditions for learners to be able to proceed in an autonomous way. The performance of these tasks involves, among other things,

- contributing to raise learners' awareness of why they are learning a foreign language, what is that they want to learn and how they can best approach the process of learning (see section 5.2).

- training learners to operate in an autonomous way. This implies both psychological training - developing the necessary self-confidence and initiative to take responsibility for one's learning process - and managerial (or methodological) training (see section 5.2).

- facilitating learning and learning activity. This means helping learners organise the setting, acting as a reference for resources, being a moderator of the relationships among individuals and groups, promoting collaboration and the implementation of class norms, and helping learners discover language rules and patterns.

- contributing to learners' motivation. I believe that motivation is, essentially, an internal factor related to one's purposes and intentions and, consequently, it is not triggered from outside. Nevertheless, the teacher can contribute to the development of learner motivation by
helping learners overcome fears and negative feelings related to past experience, removing constraints, creating a positive, stimulating atmosphere and, above all, helping learners discover their own capabilities as language learners and the personal relevance of the language learning process.

Finally, teachers have two other functions with important repercussions on the process of learning:

First, teachers should be researchers in connection with the various teacher tasks mentioned above. Teachers are in the best position to observe the effects of actions, tactics, etc. and the shortcomings of the process, to experiment with possible alternatives and to relate and contrast learning theory to classroom practice.

Second, teachers should be the main agents of curriculum development. Because of their intermediary position, teachers can greatly contribute to linking curriculum principles and guidelines to the reality of the classroom and to organising and adapting teacher education according to the needs experienced during the learning/teaching process. In this sense, teachers have a crucial function as managers of curriculum development.
PART III.

EVALUATION OF

THE PROJECT.
This part of the thesis will be devoted entirely to the evaluation of the Sabadell project and my main concern will be to assess learner achievement as regards the mastery of the rules of the target language and its use for communicative purposes. Other aspects will also be considered, including in particular the development of "learning to learn" abilities, the learners' view of the learning process and their attitudes and motivation.

I intend to undertake an extensive and objective evaluation of the Sabadell project on the basis of a detailed analysis of the great deal of data generated by the project concerning both process and outcomes. Special attention will be dedicated to the results of the long-term tasks designed and carried out by learners. The information obtained from these and other sources - task evaluation sheets, classroom diaries - will then be interpreted in relation to our understanding of the learning process as described in part 2. In the evaluation of the long-term tasks I was aided by a group of teachers who volunteered to examine and assess the materials.

6. THE EVALUATION OF A PEDAGOGICAL PROJECT.

The traditional view of educational evaluation has been that of a process concerned with gathering and judging information about the success or failure of a given learning/teaching situation and the methodology usually employed for collecting information has been psychometric
testing. However, this approach has been criticised on different grounds. From a pedagogical point of view, the complexity of the process and the difficulties in striking an acceptable balance between the constraints of an objective evaluation and the necessary respect for the complex network of factors—intentions, expectations, roles and relationships—that characterise classroom activity have prompted the search for alternative views. Among others, Parlett & Hamilton (1972) have questioned the emphasis placed on specific test results and given support to a view of evaluation as "general illumination". Stenhouse (1975) has emphasised the view of evaluation as self-evaluation in a context in which the curriculum is envisaged as a probe through which hypotheses are explored and tested. As regards language learning evaluation, the traditional approach has also been criticised as a result of developments in the field of applied linguistics (I will come back to this later).

All definitions of evaluation have a strong ideological component and are closely related to different views of learning, education and society in general. As Hamilton (1977) puts it, "Evaluation entails a view of society. People differ about evaluation because they differ about what society is, what it can be and what it ought to be. Much of the debate about evaluation is ideology disguised as technology"(Introduction).

In part 2 of this thesis I stated my view of evaluation
in relation to language curriculum development. I argued that pedagogical evaluation essentially belongs in the classroom as the counterpoint to planning and that it concerns all the steps and procedures of the learning process. Only when decisions are taken in the classroom does the classroom become the focus of curriculum development and continuous development becomes possible. In this context, as Stenhouse (1975) suggested, there is no need for the separation between "planner" — teachers, syllabus designers... envisaged as people who offer solutions to problems — and "evaluator" — the person who judges how successful solutions are. Teacher and learners are responsible for both planning and evaluation and the curriculum evolves and improves continuously through its constant adaptation to the needs and characteristics of the participants in the learning process and the progressive analysis and elimination of its shortcomings. However, the presentation of the Sabadell project for public scrutiny entails the evaluation of its achievement in a way that can be measured and compared. This requires the adoption of a more suitable view of evaluation. Two well-known and, perhaps, extreme definitions of evaluation are those put forth by Popham and Richards. According to Popham (1975), systematic educational evaluation consists of a formal assessment of the worth of educational phenomena. To Richards et al. (1985) evaluation means the systematic gathering of information for purposes of making decisions.
Popham's view is a highly restrictive one that considers formal assessment only, while Richards' is so broad that his definition can be applied to other processes such as needs analysis, etc. A new definition is required that reflects the fact that evaluation is context-specific and that allows for different combinations of the various dimensions of evaluation to suit the context - type of project, participants and purposes - and the data available. The main dimensions to be considered are:

- formative/summative,
- product/process,
- quantitative/qualitative.

As Brown (1989) points out, these terms refer to different elements of a continuum (rather than to sets of opposites) and should all be taken into consideration. In this respect, he declares that "At the University of Hawaii, we are finding that both quantitative and qualitative data provide valuable information that should be used (...) This paper is generally arguing for gathering as much information as possible from as many perspectives as reasonable in order to make the evaluation and the resulting decisions as accurate and useful as humanly possible" (1989:232).

In accordance with the points made above, I would like to propose the following definition of evaluation: the systematic gathering and processing of all the information available to assess the efficiency and relevance of an approach, framework or method and to appraise the attitudes
and views of the participants, in a particular learning context. This is the view that will be followed in the evaluation of the Sabadell project.

The evaluation of the Sabadell project should include all the available information - quantitative and qualitative, concerning the product and the process - and should be tailored to fit the context and purpose of the project as closely as possible. In order to achieve this I shall consider in turn the following elements:

1. the purpose of the project,
2. the design of the evaluation, and
3. the evaluation procedures.

6.1. The purpose of the project.

As stated before, the main purposes of the Sabadell project were - to improve the level of learner proficiency in using the target language for their own individual (and group) purposes, and

- to develop a positive attitude towards the learning of the target language.

For evaluation purposes, proficiency in using the target language for individual and group purposes will be specified in terms of proficiency in communicative language ability, as defined by Bachman(1990a). Bachman's notion of communicative language ability is consistent with previous work in communicative competence (Hymes 1971, Canale & Swain...
1980, Canale 1983, Savignon 1983) and it implies that the ability to use the language communicatively requires both knowledge of the language and the ability to use that knowledge. It recognises the full context of language use - the contexts of discourse and situation - and the dynamic interaction between context and discourse (Savignon 1983). According to Bachman, communicative language ability implies two types of competence: language competence and strategic competence. Language competence has two essential components: a) "organisational competence", comprising "those abilities involved in controlling the formal structure of language for producing or recognizing grammatically correct sentences, comprehending their propositional content, and ordering them to form texts" (Bachman 1990a: 87), and b) "pragmatic competence": "the knowledge of pragmatic conventions for performing acceptable language functions, and... knowledge of the sociolinguistic conventions for performing language functions appropriately in a given context" (1990a: 90).

Strategic competence is defined as a "general ability which enables an individual to make the most effective use of available abilities in carrying out a given task" (Bachman 1990a:106).

A set of categories was devised to capture the different capacities involved in this notion of communicative language ability and to assess the level of proficiency achieved by learners. (see 6.3).
6.2. The design of the evaluation.

A common design in educational evaluation is to have an experimental group that receives the special treatment whose effects we wish to evaluate and a control group which receives a different type of treatment. Both groups are formed at random with individuals of the same population. In the evaluation of the Sabadell project I intend to adopt this design pattern, although the characteristics of the control group are somewhat unorthodox as a consequence of the circumstances of the project. As has been mentioned before, the experimental group consisted of two classes of 38 third-year students each allocated to me by the director of studies, following well-established school criteria which are designed to mix ability, sex, etc. These two groups took part in the project as described in part 2, for three complete school terms - from October to June. What I shall call the control group consists of a total of 42 samples of written materials produced by third-year students learning English in Secondary schools in the area where the Sabadell project took place. As I made clear above (cf. section 5.1), the Sabadell project did not start as a research experiment to test certain hypotheses or the effects of new teaching techniques, but as an attempt to find solutions to specific classroom problems and to overcome a general feeling of failure and dissatisfaction. It was a pedagogic experiment in the sense of a trial-and-error process in which choice of procedure resulted from a combination of theoretical
assumptions, past experience of the participants and a great deal of intuition concerning the relevance and efficacy of different activity types. But there was no control group, no pre-determined behaviour and no variable-controlled tests. Because of this, and in order to have a baseline for comparison, I had intended to construct a proficiency standard for the Sabadell area. I wrote a letter to the heads of the English departments of all the "Instituts de Batxillerat" in the county (Valles Occidental) and requested a varied selection of materials produced by their third year students. Unfortunately, their response was less enthusiastic than I had anticipated - a fact that seems to confirm Ree's finding (1989) that, in general, Catalan teachers are still reluctant to bring into the open matters concerning the everyday course of their classes and the achievement of their students.

Of the answers received, more than one third were blank copies of tests and examinations that third year students were expected to take at the end of the course. The rest, a total of 42 samples, included:

2 descriptions of a picture with the following instructions: "Tell me in about 100 words what you can see in this picture. Where is it? When? What are they doing?",

3 sets of four-line dialogues practising specific functions,

10 compositions (with a given set of nouns to be included),
27 samples including letters, dialogues, stories and anecdotes, itineraries of imaginary journeys, etc. in which learners could express themselves more freely.

The number of samples available is insufficient as a basis for the construction of a reliable proficiency standard. Nevertheless, for the purpose of establishing the relative degree of achievement of the students who took part in the Sabadell project, these materials can act as a random control group and offer an acceptable source of comparison, especially if their evaluation shows a high degree of consistency and uniformity.

6.3. The evaluation procedures.

Learner proficiency as regards communicative language ability will be evaluated by means of analysing and scoring the long-term tasks produced by the experimental group according to a set of categories especially designed to capture the kind of abilities specified in the purposes of the project (cf. section 6.1). The scores obtained by the experimental group will then be compared to those of the control group. Additional information will be obtained from a questionnaire filled in by a group of teachers who volunteered to study and evaluate the tasks produced by the experimental group. Learners' views and attitudes will be evaluated through the analysis of a complete set of task evaluation sheets corresponding to the final task of the
project, and the study of an available set of classroom diaries.

The evaluation procedures used were chosen for practical as well as theoretical reasons:

1. The type of data that were available to base the evaluation on. In an ideal world I would have chosen a more even balance between normative and interpretive analyses, but quantitative data on which to carry out psychometric tests and comparisons were scarce because of the reasons stated above.

2. Quantitative research is only one of several ways of gaining understanding of language learners and of specific learning contexts, and one that is not easy to use in complex contexts like real school settings. Actually, orthodox experimental research has contributed little to our understanding of classroom learning (Van Lier 1988). In this respect I would like to make the following considerations:

a). Educational research is always difficult and surrounded by a great deal of uncertainty. Lightbown (1990) reminds us of "the impossibility of identifying comparable control groups or ensuring random selection for treatment groups; the influence of unmeasured variables such as momentary motivation and attentiveness; the problem of knowing what happens in the classroom environment when no observer is present; the fact that in second language situations learning continues outside the classroom" (Lightbown 1990:82).
b). Scientific experimentation tends to distort reality by overemphasising certain elements and/or ignoring others (Brumfit 1984b). Human intentions, needs and interests are important factors in determining what happens in the classroom and such factors cannot be ignored unless we view human beings as purely mechanical characters. Besides, if we try to control and pre-determine classroom behaviour we shall destroy the natural dynamics of the classroom and kill its spontaneity – the possibility of learners following their needs and interests, (a central issue in this project) – and spoil the natural relationships between learners, learners and teacher, and between learners and TL data.

c). In language learning quantitative and qualitative research, following normative or interpretive approaches, are both necessary and complementary. "Quantitative research often screens important variability or misses significant interactional processes. But there is no need to oppose qualitative and quantitative research. Each is capable of 'critical thinking' and each has its place in IL (interlanguage studies). The danger is in imagining that enquiry that does not involve quantification is not scientific or in failing to acknowledge the contribution that can be made by 'hybrid' research (i.e. research that employs both qualitative and quantitative procedures)" (Ellis 1984c:284).

A similar opinion is expressed by Van Lier who argues against the restrictive view of those who consider
statistical tests to be the only acceptable tool-of-the-trade for verification and explanation. "In L2 research, as in other areas of educational or social science research, it is predominantly assumed that explanation must ultimately come from proof of cause-effect relationships, and that the only way to obtain such proof - or at least levels of probability and prediction - is through the administration of statistical tests to suitably circumscribed samples following controlled treatment. It is perhaps worth pointing out that this elaborate procedure is developed for no other reason than that it is notoriously difficult to obtain proof and to control, administer and observe treatment in educational settings... The statistical apparatus, and its quasi-experimental source, is a remedial programme for a borrowed scientific procedure, and is fraught with problems" (Van Lier 1988:11). Studies based on experience and intuition and explanations based on observation and description of actions and their outcomes should be considered as relevant as controlled experiments.

d). All types of tests have limitations as a result of the fact that they are indirect measures of abilities. Besides, they all have a subjective component; subjective decisions have to be made about the design, the production of test items and the scoring of tests.

e). In relation to language tests two problems must be considered: the authenticity problem and the validity problem. As regards authenticity, psychometric tests do not
capture or reproduce the essence of language use. As Canale (1984) puts it "Just as the shift in emphasis from language form to language use has placed new demands on language teaching, so too has it placed new demands on language testing. Evaluation within a communicative approach must address, for example, new content areas such as sociolinguistic appropriateness rules, new testing formats to permit and encourage creative, open-ended language use, new test administration procedures to emphasize interpersonal interaction in authentic situations, and new scoring procedures of manual and judgemental nature" (Canale, 1984:79). That this problem has not been solved yet is clearly indicated by Bachman (1990a) when he writes "As suggested by Canale, one major challenge will be to develop techniques for efficiently administering and scoring authentic language tests" (Bachman 1990a:298).

The validity problem has different aspects. One of them is the ethical basis of validity. Tests reflect value systems and the values and beliefs of the participants in a pedagogical project should be reflected in the test. In the case of the Sabadell project, for example, effort and perseverance should be acknowledged. Another aspect concerns the usefulness of tests, in the sense that they are (or are not) relevant to the future activities of testees and can be considered as good predictors of performance in such activities.
The kind of evaluation used in the Sabadell project complies with the requirements of validity and authenticity as expressed above. The use of written tasks as proficiency tests is quite acceptable, and the fact that they are not widely used might be due to reasons of time and efficiency: "One of the main reasons oral interviews and compositions are not more widely used, for example, is that they are very time-consuming, both to administer and to score. Thus, despite the fact that most of us would agree that these test types can involve authentic language use, considerations of efficiency often take precedence over those of validity and authenticity" (Bachman 1990a:298).

f). In context-based research it is necessary to respect the setting - in our case the classroom - and to make sure that any findings are made relevant to the possibilities and limitations of the setting.

g). The success of the learning process is normally judged in terms of the results achieved. If the measuring is done through tests and examinations, we can ascertain whether the process was successful or not, but tests cannot tell us how success was achieved. For this we need to observe the process in order to describe it; describe it in order to explain it; explain it in order to understand it. (This is precisely what I have tried to do in the previous chapters).
6.3.1. A set of categories for the evaluation of written texts produced by modern language students.

The evaluation of a course or experiment cannot be properly carried out without a close consideration of the context in which it took place. The characteristics of the environment, with its possibilities and limitations, and the purposes and intentions of the participants are crucial factors that help determine language proficiency and should be taken into consideration as regards the definition of evaluative criteria and the choice of a suitable set of categories. Traditionally, the notion of foreign language proficiency has been closely associated with the mastery of the grammatical and lexical components of the target language, a view that was broadened with the expansion of the Communicative Language Teaching approach to include the ability to use the TL in different situations. This is a restrictive definition of language proficiency for two reasons:

1. It ignores the effects of the learning environment. As Harley puts it, "Language proficiency must be conceptualized within a developmental context as a function of the interactions that students or learners experience in their languages" (1990:25), and

2. It reflects a biased view of learning and communication which emphasises face-to-face interaction as the main learning purpose, a view that does not necessarily match the priorities and possibilities of all modern
language learners.

Learner proficiency will be evaluated in terms of the capacities involved in the notion of communicative language ability, as defined in section 6.1, and taking into consideration the context of the project and the characteristics of the participants.

The participants in the Sabadell project were learners of English as a foreign language (as opposed to native speakers and ESL learners) working within the boundaries of the school environment. Consequently, they were subject to a series of constraints which affected the richness of the learning environment, the amount of contact with the target language, the opportunities for free use of the TL, etc. Besides, they did not have any "target" needs (Hutchinson & Waters 1987) for learning English and their learning purposes varied in relation to individual needs and interests. In these circumstances, and as regards the evaluation criteria, the overall organisation of the text and its communicability should take priority over local correctness, and the ability to use the TL in an original and efficient way for one's individual purposes should be emphasised, even if that means an increase in local grammatical errors. (This type of error takes time to be eradicated and does not prevent language users from achieving their purposes). Consequently, the set of categories devised for the evaluation of the project are:

- communicability: the ability to express ideas,
feelings, opinions... in a clear and effective way,
- originality: the ability to choose and manipulate
tasks, topics, ideas... in an individual way, and to
use one's own language for the expression of one's
meaning and the achievement of one's purposes,
- presentation: the ability to plan and coordinate the
different elements of a task effectively and to lay
them out to their best effect for the purpose of
attracting and interesting the reader,
- organisational structure: the ability to organise
discourse in a coherent and cohesive way,
- grammar and vocabulary: the degree of accuracy and
effectiveness in the use of grammatical structures and
appropriacy in the choice of vocabulary, and
- mechanics: level of command of spelling and punctuation
conventions.

According to the points made above, priority is given to
communicability while the weight of local correctness is
restricted.

The categories of communicability, organisational
structure, grammar and vocabulary and mechanics are intended
to reflect the different types of competence included in the
notion of language competence: grammatical competence,
textual competence, illocutionary competence and
sociolinguistic competence (Bachman 1990a:87), while
originality and presentation are meant to sample the type of
ability that characterises strategic competence.
Apart from the reason already mentioned, the inclusion of originality as an evaluation category is due to the importance attached to learners using their own language to express their own meaning in adolescent modern language learning (see section 3.1). As regards presentation, several reasons justify its relevance. The first is the educational value of producing a well planned and well executed piece of work. Second, communicability in written tasks depends not only on the correctness and appropriacy of the language used, but also on the ability to engage and maintain the interest of readers and to present them with an attractive text that arouses a variety of feelings. Finally, for learners to become aware of the different features that contribute to a "good" written text, a great deal of deep processing of task and language models is necessary and this means an increase of "intensive exposure" to the target language. For each category, 4 different grades have been established - very good, good, adequate and weak - corresponding to 4 levels of competence and each grade has a range of possible scores. Out of the four grades, the top three represent different degrees of positive achievement, while the fourth one indicates that a minimum acceptable level has not yet been reached.

The categories chosen and their grading, as well as the criteria that give them support are designed to be consistent with the principles that emerged as crucial during the project and that have been outlined in previous
chapters. The grading system makes assessment easy and consistent while allowing a certain degree of variation to account for varying individual appreciation.

CATEGORIES FOR THE EVALUATION OF WRITTEN TEXTS PRODUCED BY STUDENTS OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE.

COMMUNICABILITY.

VERY GOOD: ideas, opinions, feelings... are conveyed in a (20-25) clear and attractive way. The use of language is highly appropriate to function and context. It is a pleasure to read.

GOOD: Ideas, opinions, feelings... are clear. The use of language is usually appropriate to function and context. It causes the reader little difficulty.

ADEQUATE: The intention of the writer can be perceived and the basic message is conveyed though with some effort on the part of the reader.

WEAK: The message is not adequately conveyed. It demands a great deal of effort on the part of the reader.

ORIGINALITY.

VERY GOOD: The choice and manipulation of tasks, topics, ideas and situations are highly individual and original.

GOOD: Good level of originality in the choice and manipulation of tasks, topics, ideas and
situations.

ADEQUATE:  Ideas, topics and situations are mostly (5-10) "borrowed" but treated with a certain degree of originality.

WEAK:  There is a clear lack of originality in the (0-4) choice and manipulation of ideas, topics and situations.

PRESENTATION.

VERY GOOD:  The presentation of output - general layout, the (12-15) use of graphic, chromatic... support, etc. is of high standards.

GOOD:  The presentation of output is adequate and (8-11) effective.

ADEQUATE:  The general layout is adequate but not (4-7) particularly effective.

WEAK:  The presentation of output is both inadequate and (0-3) ineffective.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE.

VERY GOOD:  Excellent logical organisation. Highly coherent (12-15) and cohesive discourse.

GOOD:  Good organisational structure and logical (8-11) sequencing. Discourse is usually fluent.

ADEQUATE:  The structure is usually clear but simple. Some (4-7) ideas are loosely related and organised. Sequencing is logical but requires some effort on the part of the reader.
WEAK: Poor organisation. Confused or disconnected (0-3) ideas. It lacks logical sequencing and requires a great deal of effort on the part of the reader.

GRAMMAR AND VOCABULARY.

VERY GOOD: Accurate and effective use of a wide range of (12-15) grammatical structures.

Appropriate and effective use of a wide range of vocabulary.


Appropriate and consistent use of an adequate range of vocabulary.

ADEQUATE: Inaccurate use of an adequate range of (4-7) grammatical structures. Frequent errors in both complex and simple constructions.

Appropriate use of a limited range of vocabulary.

WEAK: Poor mastery of grammatical structure.

(0-3) Inappropriate use of a basic range of vocabulary.

MECHANICS.

VERY GOOD: Excellent command of spelling and punctuation (9-10) conventions.

GOOD: Correct use of spelling and punctuation (6-8) conventions with occasional errors.

ADEQUATE: Errors of spelling and punctuation are frequent
WEAK: Poor mastery of spelling and punctuation conventions seriously affects comprehension.

7. LEARNER PROFICIENCY.

Apart from its potential educational value - in general terms - a framework of modern language curriculum development must be proved to be efficient in promoting the learning of modern languages before its general use can be seriously considered. For this reason the evaluation of the Sabadell project will mainly consist of an assessment of learner proficiency as regards the use of the target language.

Since no tests or examinations were given to participants either at the beginning or at the end of the project (see "assessment", section 5.3.5), this evaluation will be based on learner output, that is the long-term tasks undertaken by the students during the project. These tasks, which were carried out according to the procedures described in section 5.3, offer a great deal of information about learner proficiency in communicative language ability.

The great majority of tasks available are written tasks, since students were more reluctant to part with the audiovisual materials produced. Because of this, and taking into consideration the fact that it would have been very difficult to find other audiovisual materials produced by secondary school students of English that could be used in a
comparative analysis, I decided to restrict the evaluation to written texts, including the written scripts corresponding to audiovisual tasks whenever they are available.

7.1. The Control Group.

In order to obtain comparable results, the evaluation categories outlined above were applied to the control group samples even though some of the categories were not always fully relevant due to the type and purpose of the activities. This is a common problem in educational research, especially with experiments that rely on the comparison of two groups that have received different treatment - approach, method... - (an example of this can be found in the evaluation of the Bangalore project, Brumfit 1984c, Beretta & Davies 1985). The need for comparable data induces the application of the same evaluation measures, even though the results might be biased in favour of one of the groups. In our case measures will be taken to counteract any possible bias against the control group.

The application of the 6 evaluation categories produced common features suggesting a common proficiency stage were identified for each one of the categories and, consequently, the results of grading within each category were remarkably uniform.

As regards "communicability", most samples lack
authenticity (of purpose) and creativity. This might be due to the fact that tasks have been imposed and learners feel no real interest in them. There are few attempts to capture and maintain the interest of the reader. On the contrary, one has the impression that tasks were taken as a job that must be done. This attitude obviously affects communicability. Apart from this, there are a series of factors that hinder comprehension and demand from the reader a considerable amount of effort. Among them the following are worth mentioning:

- learners tend to reproduce (borrowed) words and expressions mechanically, often using them in contexts in which they are inappropriate. This results in artificial or unacceptable clauses and paragraphs. The best examples of this are the four-line dialogues and passages 35 and 41 (see appendix 4).

- lack of consistency in dealing with the notion of time and a mixture of present and past tense structures: *

  "I left the zoo, and I go to the restaurant because I work in a very little restaurant. I was cooking the supper of a family when suddenly I see in a local TV programme..."

(Sample 12).

- lack of coherence (see "organisational structure"),

- general grammatical confusion. An extreme example is

  "Getting a pay rise (for a job)"

A "I've get a pay rise"

B "Oh, that's fantastic! When did you pay you?"
A "I pay a 5£"

B "Oh, dear! When did you pay now?"

A "I pay a 70£" (Sample 14).

As far as "originality" and "presentation" are concerned, my prediction that most samples would be poor was confirmed. Either because learners are following specific instructions from the teacher and reproducing set patterns or because tasks are envisaged as language-practice exercises, there seems to be little personal involvement and, consequently, little effort invested in conveying the right meaning in the right way in order to achieve a satisfying final product. The quality of presentation does not seem a concern at all; what matters is, first, the teacher's instructions as regards the task and, second, the grammatical accuracy of the text produced. This reflects an attitude which is characteristic of contexts in which the responsibility for the learning process is in the hands of the teacher and learners are confronted with tasks which are seen as irrelevant to their present needs and interests. In such cases, as I mentioned above, the lack of personal contextualisation of meaning and the lack of personal involvement of the learner result in borrowed language being used to express borrowed meaning.

As regards "organisational structure", a common feature is the simplicity of clauses and paragraphs and the usual repetition of basic patterns such as "I... because...":

"They went to the supermarket because one girl, Wendy,
bought a tin of Coca Cola because she was very hungry" (Sample 10), or "Now we... Now we...": "Now we cross the Backfiars bridge and we decide to visit County Hall... Now we cross the Westminster Bridge and near of there, is the Big Ben" (Sample 37).

Sequencers and connectors are scarcely used and sentences and paragraphs are loosely linked, mostly by "then", "and", and "but", or simply listed one after the other without any connectors. Referential pronouns are also infrequent with nouns being repeated instead, or used incorrectly.

In general, ideas are loosely organised or openly disconnected, a fact that indicates that learners had no previous plan of what they wanted to say and did not monitor their output properly before handing it in. On some occasions the text is hardly coherent, as in sample 3, or in the following example: "But the more important was that we weant at the hotel the bags were there and we decided return the clothes but Lidia, Eli and I, we return the clothes and finally all the clothes were returned" (Sample 32).

The lowest results were obtained with reference to "grammar and vocabulary", as a consequence of a common set of problems which, repeatedly, affect the great majority of samples. The main ones are:

- problems with the use of prepositions: confusion between "to" and "for", "at" and "to", "of" and "from"... omission of prepositions with verbs like "look" and
"listen", or prepositions added to transitive verbs such as "tell", "order"...

- problems with the use of pronouns: confusion between subject and object personal pronouns ("they" and "them") and between personal object and possessive pronouns ("us" and "our"), omission of subject pronoun...
- problems with the use of the definite article,
- problems with the expression of number: lack of agreement ("this photographs"), plural of adjectives, wrong use of "much" and "many", "has" and "have"...
- problems with the use of the saxon genitive,
- problems with tenses which indicate a lack of understanding of the basic principles underlying the notion of tense and the different tenses:
  a) mixture of past and present tense and of progressive and perfective aspect,
  b) inconsistent use of the present progressive even in basic practice exercises: *"dog is bite", *"he is play", *"they winning" (see samples 1 and 2),
  c) wrong formation of tenses: *"I'm fallen in love",
     *"didn't killed", *"went to played"
  d) confusion between present perfect, have got and have got plus infinitive,
  e) problems with inversion of the auxiliary verb in sentences like *"we have to decide when are we going to do the travel to England" or *"I asked where was the supermarket".

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- limited range of vocabulary; frequent use of general terms like "do", "work" (instead of "firm", "business"...) and wrong use of nouns with related meanings such as "cook", "meal", "dish", "food"...

- frequent use of literal translation from Catalan:
  "Thanks Mr. Niro by concede this interview",
  "In the Summer arrive people from other cities",
  "I bring glasses" (instead of I wear glasses)
  "We have wishes to arrive at..."

- problems with relative clauses:
  "I met the history teacher that he was being there too"
  "I can't know who have it sended for me".

The highest relative scorings were obtained in relation to the category of "mechanics". This could be due to the fact that spelling rules and punctuation conventions can be applied mechanically, without the need to understand complex underlying rules (such as the ones that govern syntax, for example). Another contributing factor could be the tendency shown by learners in similar circumstances to follow patterns previously modelled by the teacher (or classroom materials), and to stick to "known" vocabulary and expressions.

Table 12 shows the results obtained by the application of the categories and grades outlined in section 6.1 to the 42 samples. As can be observed, there is a considerable degree of homogeneity among the scores corresponding to each of the categories, a fact which could be taken as an indication
of a broad common stage as regards proficiency level. For our purposes, this grading uniformity seems to reinforce the validity of using the mean scores in each category as a baseline, a reference to compare to the scores obtained by the students taking part in the Sabadell project. (The mean scores are shown in Table 11).

However, these scores might be biased as a result of the negative effect on the control group of the evaluation of aspects such as "originality" and "presentation" (which cannot be considered as learning/teaching purposes in the average Spanish modern language class). In order to discover and counteract, if necessary, such possible negative effect comparisons of general profiles (including scores in all the categories) will be contrasted with scores obtained in the last three categories - organisational structure, grammar and vocabulary, and mechanics - taken individually and as a whole.

Table 11.

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The addition of the mean scores gives a total of 43.79 points from a maximum of one hundred.
Table 12.

RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION OF THE 42 SAMPLES.

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7.2. The Experimental Group.

The experimental group will be evaluated on the basis of the learner output that is available. This consists of:

a) 4 examples of "magazines" (tasks 1, 3, 4, 11 and 15) corresponding to the second term,

b) 10 examples of the autonomous tasks undertaken during the third term. They include:

. "Something for Someone" (task 2), a follow up to their previous magazine,

. "Danger Under The Rain" (task 5), a novel of adventure,

. "The Witching Hour" (task 6), a short story inspired by R. Dahl,

. "Olympic Short Stories" (task 7), a collection of short stories set in Barcelona in 1992 and linked by the common theme of the Olympic Games,

. "Not All Dead Bodies Are Able To Rest" (task 8), a Heinemann type of reader on the topic of parapsychology,

. "A Modern Version of Children's Tales" (task 9),

. "Genesis" (task 10), a reader presenting a highly imaginative theory of the origins of the human race,

. a detective story in which readers choose the title and the course of events (task 12),

. "The Last Party" (task 13), an adventure videotape,

. "The Green Island" (task 14), an audiovisual story that combines a set of slides with a recorded sound-
track.

Although these materials represent only a small part of the output generated during the second term, they comprise all but one of the tasks undertaken by the 18 groups in the third and final term of the project, since "Danger Under The Rain" – task 5 – is an extensive novel produced collectively by a whole class. (The only task missing is a radio programme produced by the group that did the "Modern Version of Children's Tales"). Consequently, we can evaluate learner achievement at the end of the project and on the basis of tasks which were undertaken and carried out once suitable conditions for autonomous learning had been established.

A common feature of these tasks, as regards achievement, is the high degree of success attained by learners in producing attractively designed and well-constructed materials and in using the target language effectively for their specific purposes. In spite of local errors, the language used shows a remarkable level of complexity of sentence and paragraph, a high command of grammatical structure and vocabulary and a proficient use of dialogue, descriptive and narrative techniques, etc.

In relation to the evaluation categories established above (see section 6.1), Communicability is really outstanding as a result of the combination of three main factors:

1. Good task design and attractive presentation.

Readability and comprehension are facilitated by a suitable
choice and organisation of ideas, topics and sections, the use of headlines, tables of content, drawings and photographs, etc. and the effective layout of the different kinds of material.

2. Personal involvement in the task. Learners are doing something they are interested in and they want to do it well and to share it with others. There is an interest in communicating which can be seen in their effort to capture the reader's attention, to revive memories of past events and situations and to create a suitable atmosphere. As examples of this we can see the beginning of "Summer Books":

"Remember the long Summer days! Remember those horrible days, when you were alone because everybody had gone on holiday and you were alone, with only a book in your hands. At that moment that book was your best friend"
(Task 1, p. 6),

or the "Letter from the Ed" (task 11, p. 1) below.

Learner involvement is reflected in the creative freshness of the language as well as in the fact that learners write about their interests, express their attitudes and feelings and try to adopt different styles to suit different moods and topics. The following extracts will illustrate the points I have been trying to make. Consider, for instance, the satirical expression of the learners' views of school in "Guide to Good Studying" (task 2, p.9), the liveliness of dialogue in "The Witching Hour",

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"THE WITCHING HOUR", Chapter III.

"Half an hour later the four children were in the bank of the river completely wet and without any frog. Suddenly Billy shouted:

- Look everybody, what's that floating on the water?
- It's something green. It seems a frog. Let's go for it!

But when they went up to it, they noticed it wasn't what they thought.

- It's a lantern - reported Richard.


- Does it work? - Billy asked.

- Oh, Billy. Don't you see it's wet? It can't work.
- But perhaps the batteries are dry - he insisted.
- It doesn't matter: the lantern is damaged because of the water. But if you don't believe me, here you are: check it.

Billy took the lantern and tried to switch it on. Then he opened it to take out the batteries but... he found a paper instead.

- What's that? - the others asked.

- It's a paper. A message. Do you want me to read it?

- Of course not, Billy - they answered - We are not interested in it at all... Read it !!

(from task 6, chapter III).

or compare the styles adopted in the factual - scientific - report of "The Warthians" (task 7), the problem page -
"Dear Pam Anders" - (task 4) and the lyrical sensitivity of "The White Sand" (task 1).

"THE WARTHIANS"

"The Warthians are not the only species in the Warth - we've seen another kind of being they call horse which looks intelligent too - but perhaps they are the only handed species and that has made their supremacy possible: as they move along on their bottom appendixes they can carry things with their upper ones. So far, we can realize how different they are from us. But the differences are specially remarkable when we study their head. The head is a sort of fifth appendix, on top of the main body. It is the most important part, even more than the hands. All their organs of perception, as well as their thinking organ, are located there in a very elegant setting though not very practical: they can only see half a sphere around them, the part they call "in front", but the part called "behind" remains invisible unless they move their heads. Their thinking organ is quite small - a tenth part of ours - though it seems to work pretty well for their needs. The head is the part they show the most, whereas the other parts of their body can be covered with different materials, usually called clothes. The heads seem to be different one from another, so the Warthians can easily identify each other. We haven't been able to notice the features
that make the differences. Anyway, these features
determine something called "beauty", related to some kind
of attraction "male" Warthians feel for "females" and
viceversa, in order to achieve reproduction. This is a
very obscure point in our observations: we've heard about
sex, though it is something they don't show on TV. We
wonder why." (From a report on human beings - Warthians-
made by the inhabitants of a far away planet on the basis of
the television images they had picked up. Task 7, "A New
Planet; An Old Question").

"DEAR PAM ANDERS".

"Dear Pam Anders:
I'm 16 and my brother is 18. Our problem is not unusual
but that doesn't make it any better to solve. I hope you
can help us.
Our parents are very nice and I know they want the best
for us, but how do we make them understand that we are no
longer babies, and we are quite capable of making
decisions by ourselves? They won't even let us choose our
own clothes. Do you think this is reasonable? They object
to all our friends and are always trying to get us to
meet 'nice people'. Do you think this is right? Another
thing: my father wants my brother to become a business
man because he is one; and my mother, who is a nurse, is
trying to make me take up nursing. Why won't they let us
decide by ourselves? 

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If they keep on treating us like children, I don't know what we'll do. Even our grand-parents, who are really old-fashioned, understand us better than our parents. Please answer our questions, and say what you would do if you were us.

MISERABLE

( ANSWER )

"It's really a common problem among young people; you have said they want the best for you, so have you tried talking to your parents about your problem? Perhaps talking they'll listen to you. If this is not possible, why don't you ask your grand-parents to have a word with them. They'll understand you better and perhaps your parents would listen to them..." (task 4, p.34).

3. A level of language which is grammatically acceptable, highly appropriate to function and context and remarkably fluent. With the exception of a few passages, these tasks are a pleasure to read.

As regards originality and presentation, the 14 tasks show very high standards which reflect the depth of the learners' commitment to the task. Three different kinds of originality can be identified:

a) originality of ideas. This can be seen in the choice of tasks and topics, names..., the invention of characters, plots and situations and the production of original games, puzzles, etc. Examples of the latter are "The Hunt of the Teacher" (task 1, pp.3-5), the "Party Puzzle" (task 2, p.7),
or the "Text Crossword" (task 3). Furthermore, original thinking is shown in the different ways learners deal with everyday topics, according to the style and characteristics of the task and in their effort to adopt the different ways of thinking and speaking that they consider appropriate to different types of people. Good instances of this are the following letters sent to the "Beauty Problems" page and an interview with "The Ripper" (Task 11, pp.27-28).

"BEAUTY PROBLEMS"

"- I'm Lily. I've always considered my beauty as most important. Last weekend I was reading a magazine called - Death - when I saw a beautiful model. Her face was full of wrinkles. I'd like to be like her. What do you advice me?"

"- I'm a vampire. I'm 300 years old and I've a son who is 20. I am very worried because his fangs haven't grown yet. What can I do?

   Bites and hugs."

(From task 11, a mock-horror magazine, p.27).

Finally, it is worth mentioning the original ways in which stories or adventures are given a context and a purpose. The reader of "Genesis", for instance, is told in the introduction that "This book isn't for anyone. It's extra-specially made by the most uncultured people for the greatest scientists who have been studying the
beginning and the evolution of humanity.
Don't get astonished if you realise that you have been wrong as the rest of the scientists.
In these pages you will know how you arrived to be what you are now, and you will discover the bases of your ancestors." (task 10).
The collective novel of adventure "Under the Rain" is presented as a report of a class trip to the South of England in response to a mysterious letter from a girl called Emma (see "The Adventure comes travelling by mail", below).

b) Originality of design. The general layout of the tasks - the organisation of content, the combination of text with empty spaces, photographs..., the abundance of drawings and decorative patterns, the design of front and back covers, etc. - is remarkably original and creative (see "presentation").

c) Originality of language. The 14 tasks reflect a considerable effort to use the learners' own language to communicate individual or group ideas. Learners are being creative - not merely translating from their mother tongue or reproducing words and expressions mechanically - and they are trying to find styles, tones and registers that are suitable to their characters and contexts. As an example we can compare the different styles used in the advertisement for D. Bowie's new album "Icy Eyes" (task 2), the fast-moving dialogue in the comic "Chicago 1927" (task 15), and

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the description of the evolution of human features in "Genesis" (task 10).

As regards presentation, the first thing that strikes the reader is the remarkable standards achieved as a result of the belief that in an accomplished task a suitable and attractive presentation is as important as acceptable language. Bearing this in mind, learners spared no efforts in their attempt to attract the reader's attention and to make their tasks pleasant and easy to read. This was achieved by means of a careful design of task, sections (chapters, scenes...) and pages, the inclusion of poetry, humour and surprise, a meticulous choice of suitable drawings, photographs and motifs to complement the text, the production of attractive covers, headlines... and the neat typing of the text. The degree of success achieved can easily be seen in the extracts enclosed in this and previous chapters (in spite of the loss of colour in the reproduction). A further example can be found on the next page, the table of contents of the magazine "Death" (task 11).

With reference to the "organisational structure", "grammar and vocabulary" and "mechanics" categories, the 14 tasks and, especially, those corresponding to the third term show a high level of proficiency and reflect the fact that a considerable amount of time and effort had been dedicated to the planning and monitoring of output (see sections 4.2 and 5.3). The overall organisation of the text is very good:
ARE YOU SUPERSTITIOUS??

When you arrived at this pro
of
you will
k
now
if you
can read our
magazine
Pag n°: 3-4

DREAMS
What did you dream
last night?
Perhaps to¬
morrow is too late to
know it.
Pag n°: 13-16

WHO'S THAT WITCH?
All you want to
know about this product
of the managers.
Who is she?
She is ca¬
led Madonna.
Pag n°: 18-19

MY MEMORIES by Dracula
Chapter by chapter, you
will know how Dracula beca¬
me what he is.
Pag n°: 8

MY CHILDHOOD by Frankenstein
My creator
knew how to make
his dreams come true.
I was that dream.
A creature totally
new
Pag n°: 25

YOU TOO CAN BECOME A
FAMOUS GHOST!
To read this magazine,
you need some extraordinary
qualifications.
Here we present you the
way to get them. pag n°: 11
ideas are clear and well interrelated and they flow according to a logical sequence; discourse cohesion is achieved through the efficient use of connectors, sequencers and referents. A wide range of grammatical structures - expressing present, past and future events, progressive and perfective aspect; modal verbs; conditional forms... - is used effectively and accurately. Vocabulary is usually rich, with a wide range of specific and technical terms used appropriately. However, as was to be expected, there are careless mistakes and some common errors which seem to indicate that some aspects of the language have not yet been properly acquired. Among the latter, the most common areas of difficulty are:

. the use of the definite article, which is often overused,
. the position of adverbs: "I almost can remember",
. the use of certain prepositions, (confusion between in/into, in/on, in/from...)

In the three cases, and in many instances, learners appear to be following mother tongue rules rather than target language rules.

There is also a variety of careless mistakes, incorrect forms - "think in" instead of "think of", "sticked" instead of "stuck"; wrong words - "although" for "in spite of", "reveal" for "rebel" - etc. which appear sporadically in the text and represent inconsistent "slips of the tongue".

Neither these nor the more consistent errors mentioned above
affect the general comprehension of the text or demand any special effort from the reader.

As regards "mechanics", both spelling rules and punctuation conventions are usually applied accurately and effectively. The existence of inconsistent spelling mistakes is probably due more to lack of practice in the use of a typewriter than to ignorance of the corresponding rules.

The application of the categories and grades outlined in section 6.1 to the 15 tasks gave the following results:

Table 13.

RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION OF THE 15 TASKS
OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP.

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(1) In these two cases presentation has not been considered because the tasks are essentially audiovisual. The script has been evaluated on its own.

In spite of the small differences in range, a striking feature of this evaluation is the remarkable homogeneity of the results and the overwhelming majority of top-range scorings for the six categories. The only cases in which the "very good" grade has not been obtained are the following:

- with reference to communicability, task 15 has been considered "good" because the plot of the story depicted in the comic is not as clear as could be,
- with reference to presentation, task 12 has been considered "good" because the general layout of the story could have been more reader friendly,
- with reference to organisational structure, task 3 has been considered "good" because the final pages of the
magazine seem to have been produced in a rush, without the necessary monitoring and fall well below the standards of the rest of the task,

- with reference to grammar and vocabulary, tasks 3, 4 and 15 have been considered "good" because some grammatical constructions are not consistently accurate,

- with reference to mechanics, task 3 has been considered "good" because of the presence of too many careless spelling mistakes in the final pages.

It should be noted that tasks 3, 4 and 15 correspond to work done in the second term of the Project.

In order to check the degree of objectivity of my evaluation and as a way of assessing the reliability of the categories used, I asked two experienced teachers from the Institute for Applied Language Studies (University of Edinburgh) to carry out separate evaluations of the 15 tasks. The results obtained (which are shown in the following pages) reveal a high degree of correspondence among the three sets of figures. This is also the case when we compare the total scorings for the different tasks in the three evaluations (table 16) and the average scorings corresponding to each one of the categories used in the evaluation (table 17).

As regards the totals, the minimum scoring for a "very good" grade in the 6 categories is 81. This is obtained by

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Table 14


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the 15 tasks in the three evaluations with the exception of task 3 in Bax's evaluation which obtains a total of 77 points.

Table 16
TOTAL SCORES OF THE 15 TASKS IN THE THREE EVALUATIONS

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(* Tasks 13 and 14 have no scores for "presentation" because they are essentially audiovisual tasks.)

Table 17
MEAN SCORES PER CATEGORY

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295
The scores in table 17 show an average "very good" grade in every category in the three evaluations, and very minor differences of range.

In order to check the reliability of these evaluations, I decided to investigate the "inter-marker reliability" of the figures in table 16 which show the total scorings given to the tasks by the three evaluators. The degrees of correlation obtained are the following:

\[ M.C. - ADAM: \quad r = 0.92 \]
\[ M.C. - BAX: \quad r = 0.88 \]
\[ ADAM - BAX: \quad r = 0.81 \]

In the three cases a high level of correlation indicates that reliability is acceptable.

The high scores obtained in the three evaluationes mentioned above are confirmed by a group of teachers who had the opportunity of studying some of the tasks during a Summer course in Barcelona (July 1990). A total of 16 teachers, of whom 9 were teaching English in Spanish Secondary schools and 7 were attached to different adult language teaching institutions (University departments, British Council, ESADE, private academies...) volunteered to evaluate the tasks. Due to lack of time, they could not evaluate all the tasks so they chose a selection at random. The results are shown below in tables 18 and 19.
Table 18

EVALUATION OF THE 15 TASKS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP.

EVALUATORS: SPANISH SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS.

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Table 19

EVALUATION OF THE 15 TASKS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP.

EVALUATORS: TEACHERS FROM ADULT LANGUAGE INSTITUTIONS.

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It is interesting to note the greater regularity of the evaluations corresponding to the secondary school teachers (1 to 9), which could be seen as confirmation of the principle stated above (section 6.1) that the evaluation of a course or experiment cannot be properly carried out without a close consideration of the context in which they took place, and without some awareness of the characteristics of the environment, with its possibilities and limitations, the purposes and intentions of the participants, etc. The differences between these two sets of evaluations can be easily seen in the tables of total scores shown below (tables 20 and 21) and in the graphs reflecting the statistic range of scores for each of the evaluation categories.

Variability among scores is clearly captured by the Standard Deviation measure which in the case of the secondary school teachers' evaluations, (totals shown in
table 20), oscillates between

SD = 3 (in task 4) and SD = 4.3 (in task 6),

while it reaches SD = 7.5 (in task 7) when we consider the evaluations of the adult-school teachers (table 21).

Table 20

TOTAL SCORES OF THE TASKS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP.

(EVALUATOR: 9 SPANISH SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS)

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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>83! 88!</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

MEAN VALUES: 87! 93! 83! 85! 87! 88! 93! 87! 86! 83!

Inter-marker reliability was not measured in this case because the fact that not all the teachers had evaluated all the tasks became a serious complication and required a complex computer program to which I had no access. However, the homogeneity of the figures and their proximity to the Arithmetic Mean are an indication of reliability.
Table 21
TOTAL SCORES OF THE TASKS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP.

(EVALUATOR: 7 ADULT TEACHERS)

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<td>95: 89: 95: 95: 95: 90:</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>88: 89: 90: 83: 77: 93:</td>
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</table>


The views of the Spanish secondary school teachers are particularly relevant to this evaluation, since they are in the best position to judge whether a framework like the one put forward in this thesis will be welcome by teachers and whether the results achieved in the Sabadell project are good enough to warrant the changes in approach, teaching style... that the generalisation of the framework will necessarily require. In this respect, the positive results obtained in the evaluation of the 15 tasks by a group of Spanish teachers (see tables 18 and 20) are quite encouraging as a reflection of a favourable verdict. Their view coincides with the opinions expressed in the questionnaire shown below in which teachers reflect upon the
TASKS

TOTAL SCORINGS

EVALUATOR: 9 SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

TOTAL SCORES OF THE TASKS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

GRAPH 1
EVALUATOR: ADOLENT TEACHERS.

TOTAL SCORES OF THE TASKS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP.
QUESTIONNAIRE

NATIONALITY..........................

TYPE OF SCHOOL YOU TEACH IN............... COUNTRY........

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS A LANGUAGE TEACHER...........

These materials have been produced by students learning English as a foreign language in the 3rd year of a Secondary school in Catalunya. Please, look through them and answer the following questions.

1. WHAT IS YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION?

2. WHAT ARE THE ASPECTS THAT MOST CAUGHT YOUR ATTENTION? WHY?

3. WHAT LANGUAGE LEVEL WOULD YOU ATTRIBUTE TO THESE STUDENTS?

4. HOW DOES THIS COMPARE WITH THE AVERAGE LEVEL ACHIEVED IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS? as regards
   - VOCABULARY/EXPRESSONS
   - SYNTACTIC STRUCTURES
   - COMMUNICABILITY
   - GENERAL ACCURACY
   - OTHERS

5. WHAT FACTORS DO YOU THINK CONTRIBUTED TO THIS LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT?

6. WHAT BENEFITS CAN YOU SEE IN THIS STYLE OF WORKING?
   - FOR THE STUDENTS?
   - FOR THE TEACHERS?

7. WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT IT?

8. FURTHER COMMENTS...
tasks' output and the process followed to achieve it (the questionnaires can be seen in appendix 5). It is interesting to note the remarkable level of agreement in the answers that can be summarised as follows:

To question number 1. - What is your first impression? - teachers reply that the first general impressions were "surprise and admiration" for the high standards of the tasks as regards both the language level and the quality of the layout. They also stress the amount of work put into the tasks and the degree of motivation required to do so. One of the teachers writes: "My first impression was a great surprise. These are very well-constructed tasks and I can't possibly believe that my students could do something like that" (questionnaire n. 16).

In response to question number 2. - What are the aspects that most caught your attention? - teachers emphasise the high command of the language - fluency, richness of vocabulary... - the creative capacity shown by learners (a capacity that can be exploited for language learning) and their interest in what they are doing.

Questions 3. and 4. - What language level would you attribute to these students? and How does this compare with the average level achieved in Secondary schools? - obtain a clear answer: the language level of the 15 tasks is perceived as being much higher than the average level of secondary school students. Examples of this can be seen in the following quotations: "The level is higher in all
aspects but mainly in vocabulary, expressions, communicability and general accuracy. In secondary schools in Spain the overall level is much lower" (questionnaire 1). "As a whole, I would never expect my third year students to reach this level with the methods we use" (questionnaire 5). "Incredibly better" (questionnaire 3).

As regards question 5. - What factors do you think contributed to this level of achievement? - the factors most commonly mentioned are autonomy, motivation and collaboration in something they are really interested. In the words of one of the teachers, "The main factor, in my opinion, is that they work on something they like and this fact makes them feel more involved" (questionnaire 4).

In answer to question 6. - What benefits can you see in this style of working? - teachers consider this style of working as more rewarding and motivating for both teachers and learners, as a consequence of the success and enjoyment derived from the learning process. One teacher also mentions "the possibility of dealing with 'diversity' in the class (i.e. diversity of levels, characters, ways of learning, interests, etc. of students) and avoiding class routine" (questionnaire 3) as an important benefit.

Question 7. - Would you be interested in finding out more about it? - obtains a unanimous answer: "Yes". All the teachers consulted were keen to find out more about the project and, especially, to learn how the output was achieved, (the learning process framework).
The views expressed by the teachers who answered the questionnaire and their interest in finding out more about the procedures followed in the Sabadell project are encouraging, first, as a measure of the achievement of the project, but mainly as an indication of the willingness of the profession to experiment with new approaches to language learning in order to achieve better results.

7.3. A comparison between the control and the experimental groups.

As regards the comparison between the scores obtained in the evaluation of the 15 tasks of the experimental group and those corresponding to the control group, the mean scores are:

Table 22

<table>
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<th>MEAN SCORES</th>
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<td>Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; vocabulary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mechanics</td>
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</table>

The totals obtained by adding the average scores in the 6 categories are,
for the control group $X_a = 43.8$ (from a maximum of 100),

for the experimental group $X_b = 87.0$

(The latter is slightly undervalued as a result of the fact that, as we mentioned before, tasks 13 and 14 were given no marks for "presentation" because they are mainly audiovisual tasks).

Before we derive any conclusions, we must consider how significant the difference between the two figures is and whether it could be due to the fact that some of the categories used in the evaluation of both sets of materials were biased against the control group. In order to do this, we shall consider the scorings corresponding to the three final categories: "structural organisation", "grammar and vocabulary" and "mechanics" (table 23) and compare them to the results obtained when the 6 categories were included.

As table 23 shows, the relationship between the mean scores corresponding to the experimental and control groups, when only the three final categories are considered is the same as the one observed when all the categories were included. In both cases the average total of points obtained by the experimental group tasks is approximately double the corresponding one in the control group. This clearly indicates that the difference in scores is not due to any unfair treatment of the control group resulting from the inclusion of aspects such as originality and presentation, which can not be considered as learning/teaching purposes in the average modern language class. When only the more
traditional structural aspects of language proficiency are considered the results are very much the same.

Table 23

TOTAL SCORES FOR ORGANIS. STR., GRAM. & VOCAB. & MECHANICS

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<td>18</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17</td>
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In order to investigate the statistical significance of the differences encountered, a T test was applied to the two sets of totals in table 22. The results were as follows:

With a level of significance of \( p = 5\% \),
with 55 degrees of freedom,
the t observed \( t = 15.5 \) is considerably higher than the critical t, \( T_{crit.} = 2.00 \)
Consequently, the difference is significant.
Finally, individual categories were considered and
scores in the Sabadell project and the control group were compared. Table 24 shows the corresponding means for the control group and the experimental group (according to M.C.'s evaluation). The outcome of this comparison is very much the same as the earlier ones and confirms previous results:

1. the differences between scores in the experimental and the control groups are not due to the disproportionate weight of categories like "originality" and "presentation",

Table 24

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<tr>
<td>EXPERIMENTAL GROUP</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CONTROL GROUP</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(42 samples)</td>
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2. the tasks in the experimental group obtain consistently higher scores in each of the categories considered,

3. the categories in which the differences are greater are precisely grammar and vocabulary and communicability, two aspects which are central to any language learning approach.

In view of the figures presented in the previous pages
and supported by the results of the different evaluations, I feel justified in concluding that

a) the level of proficiency observed in the experimental group was considerably higher than that in the control group in all the aspects considered, and

b) if the control group can be considered as a rough indication of the average level achieved in secondary schools, the Sabadell project obtained a proficiency level significantly higher than the Spanish average.

This was acknowledged by the Spanish secondary school teachers who had access to the 15 tasks. Besides, their comments in answer to the questionnaire and their commonly expressed interest in finding out more about the project and, especially, about how to proceed in the classroom, are indications of a favourable attitude towards adopting the approach and trying it out in their classes.
8. LEARNERS' VIEWS AND ATTITUDES.

The evaluation of the Sabadell project would hardly be complete without specific reference to the views and attitudes of the learners who took part in it. For this purpose we shall analyse the results of the task evaluation sheets (figs. 10 and 11, cf. section 5.3.5), corresponding to the last task of the project, and consider the opinions and feelings expressed by learners in 17 classroom diaries. As regards the evaluation sheets, results are available for the 18 groups that took part in the project.

The two task evaluation sheets offer an evaluation of both the final product of the task and the procedures followed to achieve it. As figs. 12 and 13 clearly show, the learners' views are positive: they are pleased with the results obtained and consider the path followed as effective and interesting. They also stress the fact that they have worked hard - they decided to add an extra evaluation category, "quantity of work", and gave themselves full marks in it - but their work has been rewarding: they have learned a great deal and they have enjoyed the learning process. (Comments in the classroom diaries tend to confirm this view). This is hardly a common picture among adolescent modern language learners who, as we pointed out in the first part of this thesis, are generally dissatisfied with both classroom activities and the results achieved.

Fig.14 offers interesting information about the learners' view of the learning process during the project.
LEARNERS' ASSESSMENT OF THE FINAL TASK (PRODUCT).

NUMBER OF TASKS: N = 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GOOD</th>
<th>ACCEPTABLE</th>
<th>UNACCEPTABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QUALITY OF LANGUAGE</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>/</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUANTITY OF LANGUAGE</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VARIETY OF CONTENT</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>/</td>
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<tr>
<td>USE OF VISUAL MATERIAL</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>/</td>
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<tr>
<td>DESIGN - ORIGINALITY</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>/</td>
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<tr>
<td>- VISUAL IMPACT</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>- ADEQUACY</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>/</td>
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<tr>
<td>QUANTITY OF WORK</td>
<td>10</td>
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(Task 5, "Danger Under The Rain", was evaluated together by the 9 groups that were responsible for it. Consequently, only 10 tasks appear in fig. 12).

1. A great majority of the groups consider the last task undertaken "very interesting", while 4 of them judge it as "quite interesting" only. In the latter case, a little disappointment could be due to the fact that learners may have misjudged what the task involved or the amount of work necessary, or encountered unexpected problems with resources, action plans...

2. A great majority of the groups consider the task "very effective" as a way of achieving the common purposes of the group and the individual ones of its members. Indirectly,
and, since at that stage a great deal of the "learning purposes" were related to aspects of the target language, this view reveals a positive evaluation of the procedures followed as a way of learning a foreign language.

Fig. 13

LEARNERS' EVALUATION OF THE FINAL TASK (PROCESS).

NUMBER OF GROUPS: N = 18

THE TASK WAS:

INTERESTING     EFFECTIVE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY</th>
<th>QUIET</th>
<th>NOT MUCH</th>
<th>VERY</th>
<th>QUIET</th>
<th>NOT MUCH</th>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
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THE RESULTS WERE:

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<tr>
<th>VERY GOOD</th>
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THE DESIGN WAS:    THE RESOURCES WERE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VERY GOOD</th>
<th>ALRIGHT</th>
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<th>VERY GOOD</th>
<th>ALRIGHT</th>
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<td>5</td>
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THE ACTION PLANS WERE: WORK WITHIN THE GROUP WAS:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>VERY GOOD</th>
<th>ALRIGHT</th>
<th>POOR</th>
<th>VERY GOOD</th>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>16</td>
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COLLABORATION AMONG THE GROUPS WAS:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>VERY GOOD</th>
<th>ALRIGHT</th>
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In general, it was the groups that were involved in tasks that required a considerable amount of time and effort dedicated to dealing with technical problems, such as
operating recording equipment, editing audiovisual material... that found the task less effective. One of the groups added the following "further comment" to their task evaluation: "we are very sorry about the technical problems in the video but we didn't know anything about the camera and its various elements. Although, after making the film we saw a lot of mistakes, it was too late to do it again. In spite of all this, we have enjoyed it very much. It was a fantastic experience."

3. The results achieved are considered "very good" in four cases, while 14 groups see them as "alright". Learners are generally quite pleased with the output of their tasks, nevertheless they realise that it could have been better if circumstances such as teachers' strikes had not interfered, or if they had had more experience in autonomous learning, better resources... (This view is confirmed in the classroom diaries).

This tendency to under-value their achievement reveals the strict sense of justice and fairplay of adolescent learners - usually the marks they gave themselves were lower than my own - and their determination to obtain the best possible results.

4. As regards "design" and "action plans", the great majority of groups express their satisfaction:

Design: "very good", 11; "alright", 7.

Action plans: "very good", 14; "alright", 4.

They have managed to develop a suitable way of dealing with
tasks and activities, benefiting from their strengths and abilities, obtaining positive results and maintaining their interest in the task.

"Resources" are a central issue in autonomous learning and it usually takes time to build a pool of materials, models, references, sources of information... that satisfies the basic needs of a group of learners. In our case, the majority of groups thought that "resources" could have been better: "very good", 5; "alright", 13.

5. Collaboration among learners is a key factor in group learning and one that requires serious attention. The evaluation sheets (see fig. 13) reveal total agreement among the groups in considering "work within the group" as "very good". However, their evaluation of "collaboration among the groups" shows surprising results:

"very good", 8; "alright", 3; "poor", 7;

I believe this to be the consequence of a misunderstanding. One of the classes (9 groups) decided to produce a common task: "Danger under the rain" (task 5), and the different groups worked together, coordinated by one of them ("the coordinators"). In the other class each group chose a different task and worked independently of the others. In the latter, a "poor" evaluation does not imply a negative view of collaboration among groups, but simply a statement of the fact that groups did not normally collaborate with each other but worked independently.

I would like to emphasise the fact that the learners'
positive evaluation of the tasks reflects their positive view of the procedures followed during the project. Learners had an interesting and successful experience that helped persuade them that learning a foreign language was within their reach and could be a relevant and enjoyable activity. They chose and produced tasks according to their interests and abilities; they discovered ways of using their learning abilities effectively and of benefiting from collaboration with other learners with similar interests. And, most important of all, they did it mostly on their own; consequently, they could do it again. This positive attitude is clearly reflected in the classroom diaries.

The available classroom diaries are very informal and incomplete. This is due, partly, to our lack of experience, but, also, to the effects of the teachers' strike that affected the project. In daily entries, learners noted down their feelings after the various classes and made comments about the course in general and their learning progress in particular. To sum up, the diaries reflect:

1. LEARNERS' WORRIES.

Learners express concern about changes in the teaching/learning style: "A new activity for me. It was interesting but we felt a little intimidated. Afterwards it was OK, maybe because Magi is like us" (15-X-87). "I think that choosing the best classroom distribution and choosing group partners is a strange English activity, but maybe it will be effective in the future"
At the beginning, some "good" students are worried about the effect of the new working style on their marks:

"Today we've started to work with the Great Gatsby. I haven't enjoyed the class today. We have to mark our achievements. I think it is difficult for you and the teacher to think the same, because if I don't like to speak he will never know my level of English. I don't think my marks will be as high as they used to be" (10-XI-87).

Learners also express their timidity in the first days of the course, "I'm a shy person and I don't know how to start a conversation. I don't know the rest of the class and this is a problem"(15-X-87), and their difficulty in using or, even, understanding the target language: "Today we've had the first English class and my biggest surprise was to hear the teacher speaking English all the time. I understood very little" (6-X-87).

"This is the second class and I don't understand the teacher"(8-X-87). However, a few weeks later the same students were writing "I understand everything now and I feel good" (23-XI-87) and "I am very happy now in the English class" (22-II-88).

2. LEARNER AWARENESS.

As the course progresses, learners reflect their growing awareness of the importance of elements such as extensive
reading, using the target language with their partners, "changing group helped me speak English in the classroom because all the members of the new group do it and I have to do it too" (6-VI-88), and reflecting upon one's interests and abilities. In relation to this and after some time dedicated to developing "learner awareness", a learner writes "I think we can learn a lot this year" (20-X-87) and another states "I like the new way of learning English although it is very strange" (9-XI-87).

They also become aware of their progressive improvement: "This is the day I've best understood the teacher. I don't know why, perhaps I'm getting used to listening to English words, phrases... I think this is very beneficial for my training" (5-XI-87), or "I'm very happy because my English has improved since October. Now I can read novels quickly and understand everything" (11-IV-88).

3. GENERAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE NEW LEARNING APPROACH.

In the early stages of the course several learners expressed doubts about the new learning approach and, especially, about working in groups. It was normally "good" students who believed they could do better on their own.

When work on the magazine started, a learner wrote "I think working in a group is good if every member wants to work, but if one of them doesn't it isn't a good idea..." (14-I-88). And another one stated: "I am not at all convinced" (3-XII-87); However, a few weeks later she had
changed her mind: "We continue with the magazine. It seems a good thing to do" (21-I-88).

The extensive/intensive reading activities that started with The Great Gatsby also produced a negative reaction from some students. At the beginning, one of them wrote "What a bore. I don't like Gatsby" (17-XI-87), but barely a month later her opinion had changed: "I like Gatsby. It's been a very interesting book" (15-XII-87).

Once learners had overcome their initial fears and got used to working in groups and making their own decisions, and once they became aware of the advantages and possibilities of the new approach, their attitude was quite positive. They became totally engrossed in their tasks and resented any kind of interruption, even if it was to offer further resources, develop skills, etc. This point is corroborated by a great deal of entries on the diaries during the second term, while they were working on the magazine. (The third term was disrupted by strikes and the diaries were largely ignored). The following are just a few examples:

"A magazine. What a difficult but interesting project! We need a lot of imagination for it" (30-XI-87),

"I like working on the magazine, it's something special" (21-I-88),

"Good! The whole hour was for the magazine" (1-III-88),

"I would have preferred to work on the magazine but... a nice class anyway" (15-II-88),
"We worked on the magazine all the time. It's getting very funny. A very good class" (21-I-88).

"Our magazine will be the best! It's fantastic. Today we worked on it too" (26-I-88).

A general view of the course as a whole can be found in a few diaries only, but there is complete agreement among them in reflecting a positive view. Here are the comments available:

- "Although at the beginning I had reservations about the new way of working, I must say that, personally, I have learned more English this year than in all the past years together. I think this is very positive" (6-VI-88).

- "Finally we have reached the end of the course. It has been very different from other years but the results have been very good, although we had to work very hard. This year we've been unlucky with the strike. If we look at it in a positive way, we had more time to do a good job, but it broke our continuity. We could have done better things. Anyway, to cut a long story short, I think that in general the results were quite good and I am very happy" (8-VI-88).

- "Today was the last class and we were very tired but happy. I have enjoyed the class this year, it was very different and original. Now I must remember my objectives, but I am very happy because they are all more or less achieved".
9. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

The purpose of this thesis has been to describe, evaluate and interpret in the light of current literature in the field an alternative framework for language curriculum development which originated from a pedagogical experiment carried out in a secondary school in Catalunya.

As has been stated before, the main reason for the Sabadell project was the degree of failure and dissatisfaction experienced by modern language learners and teachers, and its purposes were:
- to improve the level of learner proficiency in using the target language for their own purposes, and
- to develop a positive attitude towards learning a foreign language.

On the basis of the procedures followed and the results achieved in the Sabadell project, I have argued that
a) failure and dissatisfaction among language learners are mainly the result of a poor and inadequate learning environment, rather than a low learning capacity,
b) such an environment is the consequence of the type of curriculum chosen and the framework within which modern languages have operated,
c) an alternative framework of curriculum development should be adopted, on the basis of a model of instructed language learning and centred on the notions of:
learner autonomy; learners take responsibility for their learning process so that the learning path and the pace of learning are determined by individual learner characteristics and their interaction with the constraints of the learning environment,

- the personal relevance of the learning process; learning activity is perceived by learners as being relevant to their present needs and interests.

In part 1 we discussed the "Ends-Means" design structure and the common features among the three main teaching methods that originated from it. Special attention was paid to the "Threshold Level" because of its influence upon the Catalan secondary school language learning system. Then, we analysed the characteristics of the "traditional" language classroom and pointed out its shortcomings. Among others, we discussed

- the inadequate and restrictive concept of learning,
- the neglect of the psycholinguistic dimension of language learning and the creative - individual and unique - component of language learning and language use,
- the limitations of traditional classroom discourse and learner participation in the learning process, which provide the learner with little opportunity for
negotiation of meaning,
the neglect of the needs and interests of adolescent learners and, consequently, the lack of personal relevance of the learning process.

We concluded that these shortcomings and the discouraging effects they have on learners are responsible for failure in modern language learning.

In part 2 a model of instructed language learning was proposed as the basis for a framework of language curriculum development, a model comprising the characteristics and roles of the learning/teaching environment, the characteristics and roles of the learner and the interaction between them (see fig. 4). We hypothesised that instructed language learning was the result of multiple interaction between learner characteristics (learner differences, cf. 3.5.2) and the various constraints of the learning environment (cf. 3.4). From a pedagogical point of view and on the basis of the experience of the Sabadell project, we posited "intensive exposure" and "negotiative interaction" to be the key factors that trigger the operation of the mental processes that are responsible for language learning, and we explained how intensive exposure and negotiation imply the notions of "activity", "involvement", "relevance" and "flexibility" (cf. 3.1).

Language learning -like communication- is essentially a process of negotiation of meaning in which the unique characteristics of individual learners play a crucial role.
in selecting and processing language data available in the environment, and where personal involvement is a requisite for success. As regards adolescent learners, personal involvement is closely related to the perception of learning activity as personally meaningful and relevant to one's present needs and interests, and it is the expression of one's own meaning that triggers the use of one's own language, (as opposed to borrowed language), and the deeper mental processing of language data.

The central role attributed to the learner and his/her individual characteristics (learner differences) in the model proposed implies that the learning environment should respond as closely as possible to the characteristics and needs of learners and, at the same time, stimulate and facilitate the purposeful pursuit of their individual interests. Consequently, the learning process will be the result of negotiation among learners, between learners and teachers and between learners and the available resources. Moreover, learners will take the responsibility for the managing of their own learning processes.

In agreement with the theoretical issues raised above and following the procedures of the Sabadell project, an alternative framework of language curriculum development was discussed, a framework outlining principles and procedures and leading to a variety of possible routes that learners can explore in relation to their needs, interests and purposes (cf. chapter 4). This framework distinguishes two
related but different levels:

- the Curriculum Guidelines, essentially a source of information and guidance addressed to teachers, and
- the Learning Process, a set of procedures geared to promoting learner autonomy and negotiation among course participants.

As a whole, the framework proposed corresponds to our definition of curriculum as "an educational project, outlining principles and procedures, whose aim is to guide and facilitate all the learning activity resulting from classroom interaction" (cf. chapter 2). The Learning Process - the syllabus, envisaged as an operational framework for the promotion and organisation of learning activity - is the central constituent of the curriculum.

The second half of part 2 provides a detailed description of the Sabadell project accompanied by samples of the materials produced by learners in the different stages of the project (cf. chapter 5. Besides, a wider selection of learner output can be found in Appendix 3). It comprises:

a) the section entitled "creating suitable learning conditions": an initial period dedicated to
   . developing learner awareness,
   . creating group dynamics, and
   . skill training,

b) the Learning Process: classroom procedures, roles and relationships, are exemplified by a detailed description of the first long-term task undertaken by
the groups, considering in turn
  . learning purposes,
  . task design,
  . resources,
  . action plans,
  . assessment.

Part 3 comprises the evaluation of the Sabadell project, with special emphasis on the language proficiency of the participants but including, also, studies of learners' attitudes and views of the procedures followed and their outcome.

The basic results of the evaluation were:
1. learner proficiency was remarkably high. Each one of the tasks obtained a global score corresponding to the maximum grade ("very good"),
2. global learner proficiency scores in the Sabadell project were significantly (t = 15.5) higher than the scores of the control group:
   control group: Xa = 43.8
   experimental group: Xb = 87.0 (cf. table 22)
3. the difference between the two sets of scores (experimental and control groups) was consistent across the six categories considered, and especially high for grammar & vocabulary and communicability,
4. the achievement of the Sabadell project was clearly acknowledged by all the teachers (N = 16) who
evaluated the tasks and, especially, by the Spanish modern language teachers,

5. the learners who participated in the project manifested a positive attitude towards it. The task evaluation sheets (figs. 12 and 13) show that they were pleased with the outcomes and found the process effective and interesting.

The Sabadell project was an example of a pedagogical experiment based in the classroom and originating from specific needs of the participants. It grew and developed in close connection with the purposes of the learners and the possibilities and limitations of the environment.

The Sabadell project was an example of a learning process organised and led by learners who took responsibility for their own learning and who learned how to exploit their interests and abilities for the purpose of learning a foreign language, and how to make the most of the resources available and the classroom conditions.

Finally, the Sabadell project was an alternative way of approaching and organising the whole language learning process, a practical illustration of the alternative framework of modern-language curriculum development for which I have argued in this thesis, a framework based on a model of language learning that emphasises the interaction between

- the characteristics, needs and interests of the
learners, and
- the possibilities and constraints of the learning environment.

The positive results of the Sabadell project, as regards both learner proficiency and learner attitude, confirm our initial hypotheses (as stated at the beginning of this chapter) and give support to the framework of language curriculum development proposed and the theoretical assumptions that underpin it.

The high level of language proficiency achieved and the positive attitude revealed by learners are clear indications of the language learning potential of adolescent learners and of the quality of the outcome to be expected when they apply themselves to the task of learning. In addition, the approach and procedures followed during the Sabadell project demonstrate the importance of reducing instructional constraints and of creating a learning environment that caters for the individual characteristics of learners and stimulates their interests. They corroborate that, as regards modern language learning and after an initial phase dedicated to raising learner awareness and training learners towards autonomous learning, it is
- a linguistically rich and stimulating environment,
- suitable learning path and pace, determined by the learning style and the perceived needs of learners, and
- personally relevant activities,
that create the ideal conditions for learning to take place,
as a result of intensive exposure to the target language and negotiative interaction among learners, between learners and teacher and between learners and target language materials. Personal involvement in meaningful activity and ample opportunity to negotiate one's own input from a variety of sources and according to one's learning needs and one's growing awareness of the target language system are crucial requisites for adolescent language learning. I would further add that it is their absence from the modern language classroom that is at the root of widespread learner failure and dissatisfaction.
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