

AUTHENTICITY AND LEARNING POTENTIAL IN L2 CLASSROOM DISCOURSE*

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Discussions of authenticity in L2 classroom discourse treat important linguistic and sociolinguistic dimensions of the issue, such as the genuineness of texts, the regional appropriacy of target language varieties, the real-worldliness of classroom roles and pedagogic tasks, and the relevance of each to future student needs. Psycholinguistic dimensions of authenticity tend to be downplayed or ignored, however, as do tensions between some traditional notions of authenticity and learning potential. The relationship between tasks and texts, and choices among three kinds of texts—simplified, genuine, and elaborated—need to be considered in the context of fundamental options in language teaching, not only with respect to linguistic veracity and situational appropriacy, for example, but in terms of learnability, and the text types' potential for provision of positive and negative evidence, and focus on form.

A vexing issue in language teaching, especially since the "communicative revolution" of the 1970's, is the notion of authenticity. If the intended outcome of our efforts is that students develop, not so much knowledge about a new language as a functional command of one, then they are more likely to achieve this goal, it is argued, if what is modeled in the language classroom is "real communication". Similarly, if the goal of LSP, is command of a language as it is used by participants within a particular occupation, academic discipline, vocational training area, or social survival setting, why not present learners with samples of discourse from that domain, those with what Bhatia (1993) refers to as "generic integrity", rather than something else? If students are not exposed to videotapes of real university physics lectures, surreptitious audio-recordings of native speakers (NSs) engaged in service encounters, articles from economics journals, copies of genuine job application forms, and so on, but instead are fed a steady diet of "simplified" versions thereof, or something completely different drawn from that amorphous domain called

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"general English", how are they to learn to handle the real thing? By the same logic, it has been suggested that teacher-student interaction, too, should be as similar as possible to conversation outside classrooms.

Genuineness and Authenticity

While some recent contributions, notably van Lier (1996, pp. 123-146), have broadened the scope of debate, much of the discussion surrounding authenticity over the years, and even quite recently, has focused on the authenticity of spoken or written *texts*, and for most participants the test is whether a particular text was originally produced by native speakers (NSs) for their own communicative purposes or was linguistically simplified and devised specifically for language teaching. If the latter, it is usually considered inauthentic. Thus, Wong, Kwok and Choi (1995, p. 318) write,

There is a variety of definitions for the term 'authentic materials'. In this paper, we use it to refer to materials which are used in genuine communication in the real world, and not specifically prepared for the teaching and learning of English. Examples of such materials include written and audio-visual materials from the media, materials used in the professions, and even textbooks of other subjects.

Such a view has gradually become unfashionable, however. Several writers (e.g., Breen, 1985; van Lier, 1996; Widdowson, 1976) have argued that authenticity does not reside in texts per se, but in the relationship between texts and their listeners or readers.

According to Widdowson (1976), texts, such as newspaper articles, serving as pedagogic materials may be *genuine*, in the sense of culled ready-made from some other domain and introduced, untampered with, into the language classroom, but still not be *authentic* if the pedagogic tasks performed with them or the interactions based upon them are peculiar to L2 pedagogy, such as memorization, translation, or what one current in the teaching of French calls 'explication de texte', i.e., not what would have been done with the same texts outside the L2 classroom. A taped telephone call concerning an airline reservation might be *genuine* in Widdowson's sense, and illustrate such features of natural conversation as false starts, interruptions, overlaps, and echoic responses rarely found in pedagogic materials, but remain 'inauthentic' if students are required to respond to it by

engaging in such activities as writing down the conversation via dictation, repeating parts of it, or attempting to recreate the original from memory. In Widdowson's and several other commentators' view, in other words, there are important dimensions of authenticity in addition to what I would call the *source* of a text, and one is the *use* made of it in the L2 classroom. Inauthentic uses can reduce genuine texts to mere citation forms.

A *genuine* text can lose *authenticity* if it is *used* abnormally in a variety of ways. In Tickoo's terms, a distinction must be drawn between *product*, i.e., whether the materials used are genuine, and *processes*, i.e., the interactions between individuals, groups and the whole class "which mirror aspects of linguistic or socio-cultural behaviour inside it" (Tickoo, 1994, p. 96).

First, genuine texts serving as pedagogic materials may be inauthentic with respect to *student needs* or purposes in studying the L2 (Arnold, 1991). Tape-recordings of genuine conversations among NSs of standard British English, for example, will not be authentic, in this sense, for students the majority of whose interactions will be with other NNSs or with NSs of other varieties of English, such as varieties of American English or nativized varieties in Asia and elsewhere. Target language samples drawn from discourse domains or genres, e.g., popular science magazines involving specialist to non-specialist communication, different from those in which the learner seeks to operate, e.g., scientific journals involving specialist to specialist communication, will likewise be inauthentic by this definition. The cultural content of texts is relevant here, too. As Tickoo (1994) illustrates, idle chatter about beer and pubs in textbook dialogues may present an appropriate target in the U.K. and elsewhere, but not, for example, in some parts of Southeast Asia. It is important to remember, Tickoo points out, that some texts are suitable for students learning an L2 for integration or assimilation into a western country, but not for those studying that language for mainly instrumental uses in non-native contexts, such as English-medium education or business transactions in Singapore.

Second, *pedagogic tasks* utilizing the texts need to be authentic (Arnold, 1991; Widdowson, 1976). Taking notes while listening to a tape of a genuine business telephone conversation, Arnold points out, is not authentic (whatever its potential for language learning). In an office, the person taking notes would be participating in the conversation,

i.e., one of the speakers, and taking notes as they did so. Note-taking while on the telephone, and taking down a telephone message for a third party, are authentic tasks, in other words, but many telephone-related note-taking activities practiced in L2 pedagogic texts are not. Breen (1985) suggests that pedagogic tasks may be authentic *communication tasks* and/or authentic *language learning tasks*. The former refer to such activities as Arnold's note-taking while taking part in a telephone conversation. The latter considerably broadens the scope of authenticity to include (as far as I can see) virtually *any* exercise in language-like behavior, such as taking dictation or completing a dialogue script using items provided, i.e., as Breen recognizes, "something which most people would never do in the 'real world'" (1985, p. 65). As an example of both, Breen offers a task which has students read a text (genuine or contrived) and then with a classmate discuss problems they encountered while doing so.

Third, even when a text is genuine and pedagogic tasks based on it are authentic, the *roles* students are asked to assume while performing those tasks, and various features of the *social situation* in the classroom, may be inauthentic (Arnold, 1991). For example, commercially published LT materials may require (male or female) NNSs to play the parts of foreign businessmen haggling over mineral rights in an impoverished third world country, or of the members of a depressingly wholesome, white, middle-class suburban family, the Blands of Potters Bar. Many aspects of such roles may be alien to the learners, including age, gender, nativeness, cultural background, ethnicity, religious affiliation, political philosophy, social class, value systems, conversational content, and learning purpose. In addition, Arnold observes, the fact that non-native classmates are taking all the parts renders role-plays and simulations inauthentic if part of their purpose is to familiarize students with what it will be like to interact with NSs. Power differences, or the lack of them, can also cause problems. Especially, but not only, in company-sponsored programs, in my experience, students sometimes respect age and out-of-class status differences inside the EFL classroom, too, with students lower in an office hierarchy, for example, deferring to (usually older) "senior" students (often with unfortunate consequences when, as is often the case, the older, senior staff members have distinctly inferior English proficiency). When language students see themselves as having

roughly equal status, however, as is more often the case, role-plays which involve people of unequal status tend to lack authenticity, a situation made worse by the typical absence of props, such as office furniture or factory machinery which might help the better actors overcome the problem.

Breen (1985), again, has a very different view regarding situational authenticity. He considers language classrooms an almost unique [sic] *social* context in that people meet there for the explicit purpose of learning something, with L2 communication itself the subject matter to be worked on. Therefore, he reasons,

...perhaps the most socially appropriate and authentic role of the classroom situation is to provide the opportunity for *public* and *interpersonal* sharing of the content of language learning, the sharing of problems within such content, and the revealing of the most effective means and strategies to overcome such problems. (1985, p. 67)

Lessons which involve role-plays in mock office situations are less authentic by this criterion than (to use the example Breen gives) pairwork to assess the usefulness and appropriateness of the teacher's feedback on some homework. Lessons which take language learning itself as content (as in Breen and Candlin's process syllabus), are considered authentic precisely because they utilize what Breen (see, also, Seedhouse, 1996) regards as the one way in which a classroom is truly authentic, i.e., as a site for language learning and discourse about it:

...perhaps the most authentic language learning tasks are those which require the learner to undertake communication *and* metacommunication. The assumption here is that genuine communication during learning and meta-communication about learning and about the language are likely to help the learner to learn. (1985, p. 68)

On this view, authenticity is relative; any text may be authentic to the extent that learners are allowed to use it as a *means* for learning. Breen writes: "the central issue is: given the actual social potential of a classroom, the contrivance of 'other worlds' within it may not only be inauthentic but also quite unnecessary." (1985, p. 67).

Fourth, even when the pedagogic tasks linked to genuine texts, such as filling out a real application form, are authentic by Arnold's criterion, the *task outcome* often is not (Arnold, 1991; Long, in press a) The completed application form might normally serve as

the basis for questions at a job interview, for instance, but in many L2 classrooms is as likely simply to be marked for grammatical accuracy and go no further. Arnold argues for linkage of (authentic) pedagogic tasks in meaningful series, such that the output of one constitutes input for the next. A telephone message may be read for content, for example, and a call back made or a memo drafted in response.

In sum, a consensus would seem to be emerging that authenticity is not to be secured simply by the teacher or course designer locating genuine texts. As van Lier (1996, p. 128) puts it, "authenticity is not brought into the classroom with the materials or the lesson plan; rather, it is a goal that teacher and students have to work towards, consciously and constantly." Authenticity is the outcome of what he terms teachers' and students' 'acts of *authentication*'.

Psycholinguistic Dimensions of Authenticity

Important though all these considerations are, they essentially concern the source and use of *texts*, whether drawn from outside the classroom or, as in Breen's case, from within, with social roles and pedagogy the mediating influences between genuineness and authenticity. There are two assumptions in the debate which I wish to question: first, that genuineness really is a help, and not a hindrance, to language learning, and second, that text, as opposed to task, is the place to begin discussions of authenticity. I would like to suggest that there are *psycholinguistic* dimensions of authenticity which (to the best of my knowledge) have thus far been neglected in the continuing debate, and that certain kinds of contrived texts, i.e., texts created especially for language learning, will usually be more helpful for language learning than genuine texts, even where all the concerns described above about the authenticity of classroom use of genuine texts are satisfactorily met. I believe, moreover, that tensions exist between traditional notions of both genuineness and authenticity and the *learning potential* of L2 classroom discourse. The appropriate starting place for discussion, I will suggest, is not text, but *task*. First, however, discussion of authenticity needs to be situated in the broader debate over synthetic and analytic approaches to language teaching (see Figure 1).

option 2 analytic focus on meaning	option 3 analytic focus on form	option 1 synthetic focus on forms
Natural Approach immersion procedural syllabus etc.	task-based LT content-based LT (?) process syllabus (?) etc.	structural and N-F syllabuses ALM, SW, NM, TPR, etc.

Figure 1. Options in language teaching (from Long, in press a)

OPTIONS IN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Focus on Forms

Wilkins (1976) drew an important distinction between what he termed synthetic and analytic syllabuses. As is well known by now, the synthetic syllabus breaks the target language down into lists of linguistic items, usually structures, words, notions, and functions, which are then sequenced for presentation to learners one at a time. The learner's job is to synthesize the pieces for communication. The analytic syllabus presents learners with samples of L2 use and leaves them to perform the analysis. In the classroom, the synthetic syllabus typically goes hand in hand with such pedagogic devices as display questions, repetition of citation forms, transformation exercises, and error "correction". The orientation throughout is to the code, i.e., to language as object, producing lessons with what I call a *focus on forms* (Figure 1, option 3).

Focus on forms flies in the face of virtually everything we (think we) know about how people learn second or foreign languages in or out of classrooms. It starts with an analysis of the language to be taught, not with the learner, and attempts unsuccessfully to impose a pre-determined external linguistic syllabus. It ignores such well documented interlingual phenomena as developmental sequences, processing constraints, hypothesis-testing, non-categorical acquisition, lengthy periods of form-function mapping, and the non-linearity of development—or as Rutherford (1988) put it, the fact that SLA is not a process of accumulating entities, or in Corder's formulation (Corder, 1967), that there is such a thing as the learner's internal syllabus. Research shows that acquisitional sequences

do not reflect instructional sequences (see, e.g., Lightbown, 1983; Ellis, 1989). Whether grammar or lexis is at issue, research findings refute the simplistic notion that "what you teach, when you teach it, is what they learn". If the timing of a commercial textbook's treatment of structure X does happen to be appropriate for one or more learners, it is largely fortuitous, and probably wrong for everyone else in the class, especially so long as programs around the world continue to utilize proficiency tests instead of interlanguage-sensitive diagnostic measures for placement purposes.

Focus on Meaning

The extreme reaction to this sort of LT has been to replace a focus on forms with an equally single-minded *focus on meaning* (Figure 1, option 1), exemplified (in theory, at least) by Krashen and Terrell's Natural Approach, Prabhu's Procedural syllabus, and early French immersion in Canada. This is the non-interventionist option. It employs an analytic syllabus, usually with some conception of task or other non-linguistic subject matter as syllabus content, ascribing greater importance to the learner and to learning processes than to the language. It assumes older learners have the same language-learning capacity as young children, and that implicit learning (without awareness) and incidental learning (without intention, while doing something else) from comprehensible L2 samples (positive evidence) are necessary and sufficient (see Figure 2).

There are at least four problems with this position. (a) There is an increasing amount of evidence for the existence of maturational constraints on language learning (for review, see Long, 1990; Newport, 1990), i.e., for the existence of sensitive periods, and for older learners having lost all or part of the innate language learning capacity they applied in L1. (b) It seems to be logically impossible for speakers of some L1s to learn certain L2 rules or constraints on the basis of positive evidence alone, e.g., for French speakers to learn the constraint on English adverb-placement in 2b (White, 1991):

- 1a. Je bois du cafe *tous les jours*.
- 1b. I drink coffee *every day*.
- 2a. Je bois *toujours* du cafe.
- 2b. *I drink *every day* coffee.

(c) Research findings, such as those from large-scale evaluations of Canadian immersion (for review, see, e.g., Swain, 1991), show that, given enough time, such programs can produce fluent speakers, indistinguishable from monolingual age peers on measures of receptive skills, but speakers whose "productive skills remain far from native-like, particularly with respect to grammatical competence" (Swain, 1991, p. 98), even after 12 years of exposure to French at school and university in some cases. Similarly, there is evidence from studies of naturalistic acquisition by adults that learners with prolonged natural exposure tend to stabilize prematurely, failing to incorporate grammatical structures despite plenty of opportunity to do so (Long & Sato, to appear; Pavesi, 1986; Schmidt, 1983). Since some of the unacquired forms are such items as gender marking on articles, and since such items are very frequent in the input, it is unlikely that more positive evidence is all that is lacking. It seems that some learners simply do not *notice* those items in the input, in Schmidt's sense (Schmidt, 1990, and elsewhere), and that their attention needs to be drawn to them in a variety of ways, either by enhancing their salience (see Sharwood-Smith, 1991, 1993) or by provision of explicit or implicit negative feedback (for review, see Long, in press b), a possibility to which we will return in due course. (4) A pure focus on meaning has been shown to be *inefficient* by comparisons which find rate advantages for learners who receive formal instruction of various kinds (for review, see Long, 1983, 1988)—an issue of little theoretical significance, but great practical importance for teachers and students.

Focus on Form

A third option (Figure 1, option 3), which I call *focus on form* (Long, 1988, 1991, Long & Robinson, to appear) attempts to do justice to SLA findings on learner autonomy and learning processes while preserving the beneficial effects of attention to language as object, including the provision of negative evidence (see Figure 2). Option 3 employs an analytic syllabus, with a non-linguistic unit of analysis—in this case, the task. Attention to language as object is integrated into an otherwise meaning-oriented lesson, the choice and timing of targeted forms being determined not by a pre-set linguistic syllabus—not even a covert one, as in so-called 'consciousness-raising' (Ellis, 1991; Rutherford &

Sharwood-Smith, 1985; Sharwood-Smith, 1981)—but by opportunities arising from the interaction of learners and pedagogic tasks. Focus on form can refer to *observable external behaviour* by the teacher, as when he or she explicitly calls attention to the repeated absence of a morphological marker in students' speech as they work on a problem-solving task. Its more important sense, however, is the learner's *internal mental state*, specifically, how focal attention is allocated, which, as Slimani (1991) has shown, is something that is negotiated by teachers and students and not directly observable. The intended outcome is *noticing* in Schmidt's sense of "registering the simple occurrence of some event [as opposed to] *understanding* [which] implies recognition of a general principle, rule, or pattern" (Schmidt, 1990, p. 218).

While the jury is still out on the relative merits of various syllabus and methodological options within option 3, exemplified, among others, by Long and Crookes' TBLT, Breen and Candlin's Process Syllabus, and some forms of content-based LT, I think it is fair to say that several arguments, and increasing amounts of empirical evidence, have largely discredited positions 1 and 2 (for review, see, e.g., Long, in press a; Long & Crookes, 1992). Conversely, findings from experimental studies of implicit and explicit learning, experimental studies of focus on form versus focus on meaning, and quasi-experimental studies of the effects of focus on form, provide increasing support for *some* sort of program which utilizes an analytic approach plus a contextually embedded, learner-driven focus on language as object (for review, see Long and Robinson, to appear).

AUTHENTICITY REVISITED

Simplified Texts

There are legitimate reasons for being wary of language teaching materials as useful samples of anything else. Texts produced to help teach a language are by definition written by language teaching materials designers, and for the most part these good folk use their intuitions when modeling language use, often resulting in important differences between the models and how language is used when the purpose is communication, not to illustrate the workings of the code. This is usually obvious when textbook dialogues are

offered as samples of general conversation. It is almost always obvious when the samples are supposed to represent specialist communication of some kind, since few teachers or materials writers are insiders in the specialist discourse domains concerned. The problem has been somewhat ameliorated by the advent of corpus-based materials, but these still constitute only a tiny minority of those in use today.

Three additional sources of inauthenticity are the tendency for texts contrived for language teaching to lack *open-endedness*, *implicitness*, and *intertextuality* (for illustrations and discussion, see Long, in press a). Analysis of talk in as diverse a range of settings as a rural U.S. railway station, a Melbourne duty-free shop and a British architect's office shows that skilled participants embed texts, e.g., "bracketed" quotes from an earlier telephone conversation or an office memo, into current talk, and refer explicitly and implicitly to previous, co-occurring and future texts, often crossing modalities to do so. Even ostensibly simple "stand-alone" railway ticket purchases revealed these features; conversations between passengers and the ticket clerk rarely began or ended with the words spoken and involved far more than what the transcripts appeared to indicate. By contrast, most writers of language teaching materials present learners with self-contained, stand-alone dialogues and reading passages in which all needed information, and no more, is introduced and utilized within a single text or the ensuing comprehension questions. (I have written some that way myself.) Typical spoken or written discourse models for language teaching have a beginning, a middle, and an end; little or nothing is left unstated; and allusions are rare. Whether this facilitates comprehension or acquisition is an empirical question, but authentic it is not.

Against the background of the three basic language teaching options, focus on forms, meaning, and form, moreover, it is possible to see how, in addition to these problems, adopting linguistically simplified texts, such as so-called "graded readers", is to repeat at the suprasentential level the mistakes of the synthetic approach to teaching grammar. Artificially linguistically controlled texts, such as graded readers, are notoriously prone to stiltedness and blandness, due to the difficulty of speaking or writing about anything in a natural and interesting manner while confined to (say) two verb tenses, a narrow vocabulary range (of perhaps the 600 most frequent words), and limits on sentence length.

Simplified texts serve no genuine communicative purpose, or at best, one that is subservient to the principal reason for their existence, language teaching. Their real function is to attach a modicum of meaning, but rarely communicative value, to the structure or vocabulary list of the day, this despite the fact that the structures with which they are seeded, like those in a structural syllabus, are unlikely to be appropriate learning targets for more than a few students at the time they encounter them, and for the same reasons. The results are surreal dialogues between John and Mary commenting on each other's apparel, and reading passages of the "Run Spot, run! See Spot run" basal reader variety aimed at older L2 learners. Simplified Shakespeare was illustrated delightfully at this seminar seven years ago with the immortal "Stab, Hamlet, stab!" (Nunan, 1990). Such dialogues and reading passages alike are, in turn, the basis for classroom interaction reminiscent of Becket on a bad day (Dinsmore, 1985).

Genuine Texts

Dissatisfaction with linguistically simplified texts is what has often given rise to interest in genuine ones. In fact some authors argue back and forth about the merits of these two alternatives as if they were the only choices available. Yet genuine texts, too, suffer from serious problems of *psycholinguistic authenticity* even when those concerning classroom authenticity are dealt with satisfactorily. Many pedagogic suggestions concerning authenticity are defensive measures designed to do two things. The first is to protect the *potential* for authenticity that such texts offer against threats from traditional synthetic classroom pedagogic practices, which can quickly reduce even the best material to *language-like* behavior. As reflected in the concerns about classroom authenticity raised by Arnold, Breen, van Lier, Widdowson, and others, there are many ways the threats can be realized. The second is to render genuine texts, originally produced for NS listeners or readers, accessible to NNSs. This is no mean feat with students of anything other than advanced proficiency, i.e., with most L2 students, since there are far more beginners than finishers. Spoken or written NS-NS discourse is likely to be incomprehensible to them, and the devices most likely to be employed in the effort to increase comprehensibility, such as vocabulary glossing, explaining difficult grammar points, and translation, are

precisely those which make classroom use of the texts inauthentic in the ways Arnold et al warn against. Just as importantly, genuine texts are as likely as linguistically contrived ones to constitute psycholinguistically inappropriate input. Both linguistically simplified *and* genuine texts reflect a product orientation to language teaching, one which does not respect the learner's internal syllabus. The fact that genuine texts are uncontrolled linguistically means that they will often present grammatical and lexical targets far in advance of students' current processing capacities, i.e., targets that are not learnable or teachable in Pienemann's sense (Pienemann, 1984). Those targets will be inappropriate in a less calculated way than the ones presented sequentially by linguistically graded materials, but inappropriate nonetheless.

What needs to be recognized is that texts, like sentences illustrating isolated structures, do not just appear out of nowhere. When a synthetic linguistic syllabus of some kind is chosen, be it lexical, structural, or notional-functional, the textbook writer and classroom teacher are faced with the problem of creating meaning or some communicative purpose after the fact for a disembodied grammatical pattern, a citation form—of breathing life into the structure of the day. Similarly, bringing found texts into the classroom, whether linguistically contrived or genuine, creates unnecessary problems which the literature on authenticity spends much of its time then trying to solve. Many pedagogical suggestions are really attempts to recreate authenticity that has been lost through adopting genuine texts (much less artificial, linguistically simplified ones), texts separated from the tasks and speakers that gave them life. Texts are records of people's attempts to communicate with one another. In the broadest sense of the term, they are the means by which actors no longer on the scene once tried to accomplish communicative *tasks*. It was the tasks that motivated the texts, not the other way around.

Elaborated Texts

By starting with tasks, rather than texts, several (although by no means all) problems with authenticity can be avoided. Rather than try to preserve authenticity, or reinject it into a disembodied text, a preferable approach is to begin by selecting *pedagogic tasks* which are authentic in terms of their relevance to learners' needs, defined in terms of *target*

tasks, as established by a task-based needs analysis. The texts employed arise naturally from those tasks in two ways. First, some are created by teachers and learners as they work on the tasks, and so are authentic in the sense that they are close to what the target discourse would be like if engaged in by these NNSs outside the classroom today, where NS-NNS and NNS-NNS, not NS-NS, communication is the target, after all. Discourse produced in this way, unlike *either* simplified or genuine found texts, allows negotiation for meaning, during which, research has shown, learners receive feedback on their output, either from NSs or NNS, believed critical for language learning (Long, in press b; Mackey, 1995; Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, & Linnell, 1996), including implicit negative feedback (see Figure 2). One kind of implicit negative feedback, corrective recasts, are reformulations of learner output which maintain message content while supplying missing obligatory grammatical information. Recasts appear especially valuable, and better than models, as a means of inducing focus on form and noticing (Oliver, 1995, Ortega & Long, 1995).

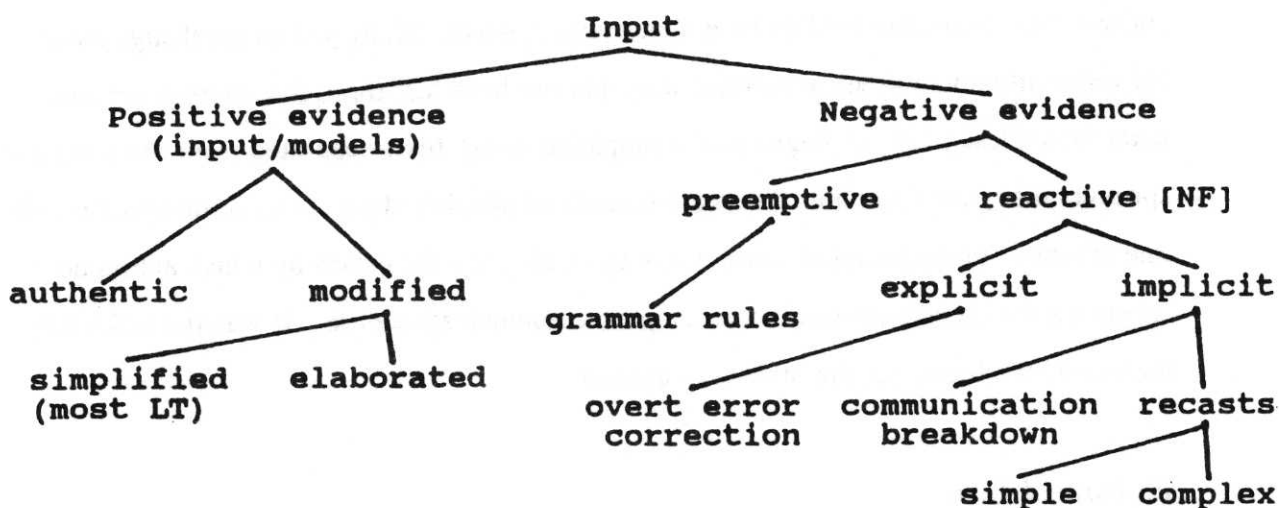


Figure 2. Data for SLA (from Long, in press a)

Second, where new input is required, it is provided not in the form of linguistically simplified or genuine texts, but of what Parker and Chaudron (1987) call *elaborated* ones. Elaboration as an approach to designing spoken and written texts for L2 learners derives from work on foreigner talk discourse in the 1970's and 1980's which showed, among other things, that while NSs often simplify their output for learners in various ways, notably by decreasing utterance or sentence length, they do not grade their speech or writing linguistically in the way that linguistically controlled language teaching materials do. For example, rather than avoiding use of low frequency lexical items and new grammatical constructions, they tend to use them, but to compensate by elaborating, or building redundancy into, the discourse in other ways that make the new forms comprehensible to the NNS. Commonly employed devices for this purpose include clear signaling and marking to increase topic saliency, reversion from subject-predicate to topic-comment constructions, preference for a here-and-now orientation, matching order of mention to chronological sequence of events, eight types of repetition (partial and complete, exact and semantic, of self and other), and frequent use of clarification requests, confirmation checks and comprehension checks (for review, see, e.g., Long, in press b). An important advantage of such an approach to text design for language learners is that it allows students to be exposed to the new items, which needs to happen frequently if they are ever to learn them, yet to do so with comprehension, which is needed if the forms are to be mapped onto their meanings and functions. Linguistically simplified texts impede the learning process by removing many unknown items from the input and by providing unnatural use of those items that survive the cut. Genuine texts impede the learning process by retaining the new items without compensatory devices to facilitate comprehension, and, again from a learnability perspective, by presenting too dense a linguistic target due to the lack of elaborative redundancy.

Figure 3 presents a simple example of the three types of texts discussed thus far. Approximately 20 studies have been published comparing the effects on comprehensibility of the simplification and/or elaboration of spoken and written texts. The work has been reviewed elsewhere on more than one occasion (see, e.g., Chung, 1995; Long & Ross, 1993; Toya, 1992; Yano, Long, & Ross, 1994), with the

following generalizations. (a) Linguistic simplification increases surface comprehension, but not always more than elaboration. (b) Elaboration improves comprehension. (c) Lower proficiency learners appear to benefit more from either type of modification. (d) Global text modification following either approach generally improves comprehension, but isolated adjustments of either kind are usually insufficient to improve comprehensibility of whole lecturettes or reading passages. These findings suggest that elaboration can be an effective means of promoting text comprehension.

1. *Simplified version*
Paco had to make money for his family. Paco worked at night.
He often went to sleep in class.
2. *Genuine (NS-NS baseline) version*
Because he had to work at night to provide for his family,
Paco often fell asleep in class.
3. *Elaborated version*
Paco had to work at night to earn money to provide for his
family, so he often fell asleep in class next day during his
teacher's lesson.
4. *Modified elaborated version*
Paco had to work at night to earn money to *provide for* his
family. As a result, he often fell asleep in class next day
during his teacher's lesson.

'provide for' means a educate
 b leave
 c support

Figure 3. Paco sentences

With respect to genuineness and authenticity, it is worth noting that elaborated texts in the experimental studies alluded to above have achieved the fairly positive results indicated despite the elaborated passages or lecturettes having considerably greater sentence or utterance length (due to the use of such devices as appositionals to paraphrase new lexical items or whole ideas), and despite, consequently, being typically between one third and two thirds longer overall than the simplified and baseline versions with which they were compared (meaning that subjects assigned to the elaborated conditions were faced with reading more material in the same amount of time). The elaborated versions have tended

to be more difficult even than the NS baseline versions, as assessed by objective readability measures. Such added complexity is a by-product of the effort to maintain purity of the experimental treatment. There is no reason for this disadvantage to transfer into the classroom, however. Elaborated texts, whether reworked versions of NS-NS communication or original creations, can be improved upon for pedagogic purposes by making the small revisions necessary to break overly long, difficult to process, sentences into shorter ones (see Figure 3), thereby reflecting virtually the only linguistic simplification consistently observed in empirical studies of NS-NNS conversation.

Additional modifications can be made directly to elaborated texts to help induce focus on form and noticing. Important lexical items or grammatical points can be "flagged" in various ways (cf. 'input-enhancement', Sharwood-Smith, 1991, 1993), e.g., by underlining or italicizing. Such procedures have been shown capable of improving language development (Finnish suffixes and English relative clauses, by Alanen, 1995, and Doughty, 1991, respectively), and to do so without detracting from the amount students learned of the subject matter of the texts in question (Doughty, 1991). Similarly, vocabulary learning has been shown to be improvable by adding a choice of (say) three potential paraphrases of a new lexical item in the margin, a synonym and two distractors (see Figure 3), which students have to make while reading (Hulstijn, 1992). Hulstijn found this condition better for vocabulary development than L1 glosses in the margin (which guaranteed that the correct meaning would be understood), despite the fact that wrong choices among the three paraphrases sometimes carried over to posttest results, leading him to propose his intuitively appealing "mental effort hypothesis" (see, also, Kim, 1995; Watanabe, 1992). Again, like the overly long sentences in pure elaborated texts, any errors caused by wrong choices in the multiple choice condition is an unwanted side-effect which can easily be remedied in the classroom, either by the teacher or by other learners during group work.

CONCLUSION

Many problems with text authenticity in language teaching are epiphenomenal, the product of an ill-founded choice of L2 texts and text-types themselves as the starting point in planning code-oriented language teaching methodology. With task as the impetus, on the other hand, elaborated texts are created spontaneously by teachers and students inside the classroom and/or contrived outside for language teaching, although not following the traditional approach to L2 materials design, linguistic simplification. Elaborated texts are not genuine, therefore, in Widdowson's terms, but they are authentic in a relevant psycholinguistic sense. The kinds of modifications such texts contain are the kinds that learners encounter outside the classroom and the ones that co-occur with successful child and adult language learning. Moreover, elaborated texts reflect a model of communication designed for NNSs, which is arguably more appropriate, at least transitionally, than either of the alternatives, simplified or genuine. Elaborated texts represent the kind of discourse in which most learners will participate (as distinct from merely be exposed to) outside the classroom at least until their proficiency increases considerably, and perhaps always.

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