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CLASSROOM PROCEDURES FOR FALSE COGNATES

Dissertação para obtenção do Grau de Mestre, Área de Concentração: Língua Inglesa, do Curso de Pós-Graduação em Letras. Setor de Ciências Humanas, Letras e Artes da Universidade Federal do Paraná.

CURITIBA

1980

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To my parents who taught me
to persevere

and

To my beloved wife Maria An-
tonieta who encouraged me all
the time.

Acknowledgements

My special thanks to Michael Watkins, for his advice on Applied Linguistics, and to Prof. Dr. Guido Irineu Engel and Prof. Shigueki Suzuki, for their help in the statistical analyses.

My special thanks to authorities of the following institutions:

The Federal University of Uberlândia, MG, by agreement with the Ministry of Public Instruction (PICD).

The Department of Education of the State of Minas Gerais.

The Faculty of Philosophy of Ituiutaba, MG.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Resumo.....	vii
Abstract.....	viii
PART I	
1. Introduction	2
1.1 Theme and Justification.....	2
1.2 Survey of the Work	2
2. The Problem	3
2.1 Definition of the Problem.....	3
2.2 Review of the Literature.....	4
2.2.1 Interference.....	4
2.2.1.1 Transfer Effects in 2nd Language Learning....	6
2.2.1.2 Types of Interference.....	10
2.2.1.3 Phonological Interference.....	10
2.2.1.4 Morphosyntactic Interference.....	12
2.2.1.5 Lexical Interference.....	13
2.2.2 Cognates and Various Causes of Errors.....	15
2.2.3 Meaning.....	19
- Conceptual Meaning.....	19
- Physical Meaning.....	20
- Componential Meaning.....	22
- Social Meaning.....	24
- Linguistic Meaning.....	27
- Implications of Linguistic Theory for Foreign Language Teaching.....	33
- General.....	33
- Relevance of Semantic Theory to Vocabulary Teaching.....	38
- Which Theory is Most Useful to Language Teaching?.....	45
2.3 Delimitation of the Problem.....	51
2.4 Objectives.....	51

2.5	The Hypothesis.....	51
3.	The Methodology.....	53
3.1	The Population.....	53
3.2	Means.....	53
3.3a b	The Collection of Data.....	54-83
3.4a b	Statistical Analyses Applied to Groups 'A' and 'B'.....	80-94

PART II

4.	Analysis and Interpretation of the Data.....	97
4.1	The Statistical Analysis of the Data.....	97
4.2	Possible Objections of the Experiment.....	98
4.2.1	Size of Population.....	98
4.2.2	Test Bias.....	99
4.2.3	A Context Plus a Translation Method.....	100
5.	Conclusion.....	102
	Bibliographical References.....	104

RESUMO

Este é um experimento piloto realizado com o objetivo de encontrar um método adequado para o ensino de falsos cognatos a alunos brasileiros de língua inglesa.

Testes de eliciação foram conduzidos usando-se um grupo homogêneo de estudantes brasileiros de inglês de nível intermediário superior da Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Inglesa em Curitiba, Paraná.

Os resultados do 1º teste foram analisados e os cognatos estudados em profundidade, conduzindo-nos a nossa hipótese inicial de que os erros aumentam em proporção à similaridade de contexto mais a infreqüência de palavras.

Dois métodos diferentes de ensino foram então aplicados: um consistiu no ensino de palavras em isolamento e o outro no ensino de palavras num contexto significativo.

Um teste neutro foi subsequentemente dado aos alunos, sendo que os resultados favoreceram o grupo cujas palavras haviam sido ensinadas em contexto.

Os dados estatísticos corroboraram as hipóteses do experimento, embora não se reivindique absoluto rigor científico ao experimento.

ABSTRACT

This is a pilot-experiment carried out with the aim of finding a suitable method for teaching false cognates to Brazilian learners of the English language.

Elicitation tests were conducted using a homogeneous group of upper-intermediate Brazilian learners of English from the Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Inglesa, Curitiba, Paraná.

The results of the first test were analyzed and the cognates were studied in depth, leading us to our initial hypothesis that errors increase in proportion to contextual similarity plus infrequency of words.

Two different teaching methods were then applied: one consisted of teaching the words in isolation and the other of teaching the words in a meaningful context. A neutral test was subsequently given to the students, the results of which favoured the group who had been taught the words in context.

The statistical data corroborated the hypotheses of the experiment, although absolute scientific rigour is not claimed for the experiment.

FIRST PART

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 THEME AND JUSTIFICATION

The theme of this paper is Portuguese/English false cognates and the problems they present to learner and teacher. Up to now there has been no systematic way of teaching false cognates with respect to Brazilian students studying English as a foreign language. A thorough description of false cognates would be of great value not only to students but also to teachers, translators and course-book writers.

1.2 SURVEY OF THE WORK

This pilot-study consists of two parts: in the first part the problem of the experiment is defined and delimited. The literature on the subject is reviewed, with the emphasis on transfer, causes of errors, and meaning. This part ends with the description of the methodology applied to pursue the proposed objectives.

The second part consists of the analysis and interpretation of the data and the last part consists of conclusions drawn and their immediate application in the practical field.

2. THE PROBLEM

2.1 DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

It is difficult to know which teaching method is best to prevent students from confusing false cognates. The aim of our dissertation is to find an efficient method of teaching false cognates, or at least try to minimize the number of mistakes students make when they are faced with such cognates. Much has been written about false cognates and there is substantial agreement that they constitute one of the richest sources of error for the foreign language student. No deep insight, however, has yet been provided into the subject. On the contrary, we have observed that in most of our schools false cognates are taught through the traditional means of translation, a method which would seem inadequate for teaching such words, which are already sure-fire traps, and seem to be especially so if the learner is encouraged by the teaching method to always associate L_1 and L_2^* (L_1 . L_2 = Language one; language two). Undoubtedly a more efficient method than translation should be employed if we want to achieve better results, and the attempt to

*We are using the terms L_1 & L_2 to refer ^{to} native and foreign languages respectively, as defined by Halliday, McIntosh & Strevens²⁰, p.78: "one could say arbitrarily that any language learned by the child before the age of instruction, from parents, from others, such as a nurse, looking after it, or from other children, is an L_1 ."

discover which this is, will be the main subject of this paper.

2.2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

INTERFERENCE

2.2.1 SOME GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF TRANSFER

According to Blair, Jones & Simpson², transfer is in fact a part of the learning process. There is no learning which does not involve a part of a person's past experience, and in a sense all retention or remembering is a kind of transfer, because ^{the} original circumstances in which learning took place are rarely, if ever, duplicated in a new situation.

Learning and transfer are best produced when the learning situation all the way through most closely simulates the way in which ideas and behavior will be used.

The most obvious form of transfer is that in which an identity carries over from one situation to another. The following are examples:

(i) Transfer of an identity when a single response is appropriate to two stimuli:

Stimulus ₁	"casa"	(in Spanish)	
			Response - House
Stimulus ₂	"casa"	(in Portuguese)	

(ii) Negative transfer or interference when one stimulus requires two different responses:

	Response 1 (Portuguese)	But
Stimulus "Mas"		
	Response 2 (Spanish)	More

Jakobovits²⁵ proposes a general formulation of the transfer problem: according to Jakobovits the transfer problem must deal with five basic elements: task A, training or practice on task A, training or practice on task B, and the relation between task A and task B. Since our specific interest here lies in language learning, let us refer to the five elements as follows:

P_{L_1} (proficiency on task A), P_{L_2} (proficiency on task B), T_{L_1} (training in L_1), T_{L_2} (training in L_2) and $R_{L_1 - L_2}$ (the relation between L_1 and L_2). The transfer effects to be expected in second language learning can then be expressed by the following formula:

$$P_{L_2} = F (P_{L_1}, T_{L_1}, T_{L_2}, R_{L_1 - L_2})$$

This formula says that attained proficiency in L_2 , will be some joint function of attained proficiency in L_1 , training in L_1 , training in L_2 , and the relationship between L_1 and L_2 .

In situations where T_{L_1} is very large and P_{L_1} has attained a stable value (e.g., an adult learning a second language), the general formula reduces to: $P_{L_2} = f (T_{L_2})$,

where $R_{L_1 - L_2}$ is assumed fixed. This expresses the usually recognized function in second language learning where achievement is said to be a function of training in that

language.

2.2.1.1 TRANSFER EFFECTS IN 2ND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Robert Lado²⁷ formulated in 1954 the fundamental contrastive analysis hypothesis:

"That individuals tend to transfer the forms and meaning and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture - both productively when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture, and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and the culture as practiced by natives" (p.2)... "in the comparison between native and foreign language lies the key to ease or difficulty in foreign language learning" (p.1)

More recently, according to Dulay¹², Charles Ferguson (in Stockwell and Bowen, 1965, p.B, Robert Politzer (1967)³⁹, and Leon Jakobovits (1970) have reiterated the importance of L₁ interference in L₂ learning.

Jakobovits²⁵, discusses Osgood's three laws of interlist similarity (as reviewed by Jung, 1968).

The three principles can be stated as follows:

1. Two tasks in which the stimuli are the same ^{but} the responses different (A-b, A-D) will yield negative transfer which increases the more dissimilar the responses become.

2. If the responses are the same, but the stimuli are different (A-B, C-B), positive transfer is expected which increases the more similar the stimuli become.

3. When both stimuli and responses are different in the

two tasks (A-B,C-D), negative transfer is expected which increases the more similar the stimuli become (see Figure 4).

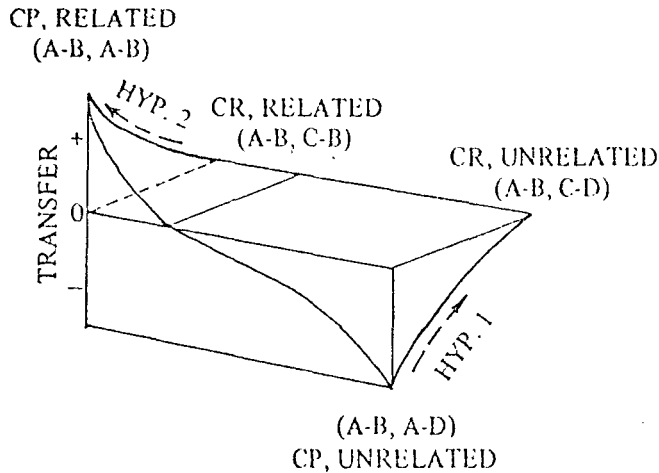


FIGURE 4. TRANSFER EXPECTATIONS IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION BASED ON OSGOOD'S TRANSFER SURFACE.³⁷

In second language learning "stimulus similarity" may be taken to refer to the environmental conditions that are antecedents to linguistic utterances: these include the physical, external environment (to be referred to as E_{L_1} or E_{L_2}), as well as the mental, internal environment (to be referred to as e_{L_1} or e_{L_2}). "Response similarity" may be taken to refer to the structural relations between the linguistic systems of the two languages (to be referred to simply as L_1 and L_2).

We are now ready to express the transfer expectations in second language learning which OSGOOD'S three laws would suggest.

Before doing so we shall define two terms which are widely used in discussions of second language acquisition: COMPOUND - AND COORDINATE BILINGUALISM.

The compound bilingual, says Jakobovits, is supposed to have a single meaning system hooked up to two different input (decoding) and output (encoding) channels corresponding to the bilingual's two languages. This type of bilingualism is assumed to come about as a result of learning the second language in the same environmental setting as the first, and using the first language as the indirect channel of acquisition. In this kind of psycholinguistic system every word in the second language is a mere replica of a word in the first language with a one-to-one correspondence in meaning between the two translation equivalents.

On the other side of this semantic continuum is located the "separate" system of the coordinate bilingual who is assumed to possess two independent meaning systems corresponding to his two languages.

This situation is achieved, according to this view, as a result of direct language acquisition in a linguistic-cultural community different from one's own. There is no one-to-one relation between the two meaning systems and, in fact, translation equivalents are mere approximations, their closeness depending on the similarities in the two cultures involved.

1. In a compound setting with the indirect method of teaching (where E_{L_1} and E_{L_2} are highly similar, as also are e_{L_1} and e_{L_2}) we would expect negative transfer which in-

increases in proportion to the dissimilarity between L_1 and L_2 .

2. With closely related languages (where L_1 and L_2 are similar), we would expect positive transfer which increases in proportion to similarity between E_{L_1} and E_{L_2} (and e_{L_1} and e_{L_2}), i.e., in a compound setting with the indirect method.

3. When E_{L_1} and E_{L_2} (and e_{L_1} and e_{L_2}) are relatively different (as with unrelated languages) negative transfer is expected which increases in proportion to similarity between E_{L_1} and E_{L_2} .

These principles can be restated from the point of view of the learner or teacher, whose interest is in maximizing positive transfer and minimizing negative transfer:

Hypothesis 1. With unrelated languages a coordinate setting (symbolized as CR) will yield less negative transfer than a compound setting (symbolized as CP).

Hypothesis 2. With related languages a CP setting will yield more positive transfer than a CR setting.

It is quite obvious, says Pit Corder⁶, that when people learn a second language they are not acquiring language, they already possess it. The assumption then is that some of the rules they already know are also used in the production and understanding of the second language. But the learner does not know what the full nature of the new task is; until he has learned in what way the two tasks are different he will perform the second task in the only way he knows, that is, as if it were the same as the first task. He will continue to

apply the old rules where new ones are needed, and he will make mistakes of course. Making errors in the second language can, in part, be explained by the notion of transfer. It is sometimes called 'negative transfer' or Interference.

Where the nature of the two tasks happens to be the same, of course, this tendency to transfer is an advantage. This is called 'positive transfer' or FACILITATION.

2.2.1.2 TYPES OF INTERFERENCE

"The term interference implies the rearrangement of patterns that result from the introduction of foreign elements into the more highly structured domains of language, such as the bulk of the phonemic system, a large part of the morphology and syntax, and some areas of the vocabulary" (Weinreich, 1974)⁴⁶.

2.2.1.3 PHONOLOGICAL INTERFERENCE

"We have ample evidence that when learning a foreign language we tend to transfer our entire native language system in the process. We tend to transfer to that language our phonemes and their variants, our stress and rhythm patterns, our transitions, our intonation patterns and their interaction with other phonemes." (Lado, 1957)²⁷ Eg. in comparing the sound system of English with that of Portuguese, we would find that Portuguese does not have pho-

nemes that might pass as English /tʃ - dʒ - θ - ʃ - h - r - j - w* / as in chew, jump, ether, either, hose, rose, year, we're, respectively. Portuguese speakers will have difficulty pronouncing and hearing these phonemes, according to the contrastive analysis hypothesis.

Portuguese speakers will also have difficulty pronouncing consonant clusters in English such as the initial 'st' (for example the word "star"). Brazilian speakers of English tend to incorporate an /i:/ sound to the word "star" pronouncing it /i: st'a: /.

Initial consonant clusters like 'st' 'sp' 'sk', etc are nonexistent in Portuguese.

Final consonant clusters in English are also troublesome to many Brazilian speakers of English. Word final /-rd/ is frequent in English but nonexistent in Portuguese. A Brazilian speaker therefore tends to mispronounce the phoneme /d/ of the word 'steward', most of the time, giving it palatal release.

Difficult also is the pronunciation of the ending -ed added to regular English verbs to form the past tense and past participle and the pronunciation of the ending -s added to make a noun plural or possessive, or to put a verb in the third person singular form of the present tense. It takes a lot of time for a Brazilian speaker of English to learn to pronounce the three different pronunciations of -ed:

*All phonetic symbols used here are those suggested by Gimson, A.C.¹¹

1. Ed as /d/ e.g. played /d/
2. Ed as /t/ e.g. kissed /t/
3. Ed as /Id/ e.g. protected /Id/

and the three different pronunciations of -s:

1. S as /z/ e.g. calls /z/
2. S as /s/ e.g. wraps /s/
3. S as /Iz/ e.g. foxes /iz/

An accurate contrastive analysis between English and Portuguese would show all the phonetic differences between the two languages.

2.2.1.4 MORPHOSYNTACTIC INTERFERENCE

"We know from the observations of many cases that the grammatical structure of the native language tends to be transferred to the foreign language. The student tends to transfer the sentence forms, modification devices, the number, gender, and case patterns of his native language.

E.G. The correlation of an "-S" inflection in the verb in English, as in RUNS, JUMPS, with singular form in the subject, e.g., THE CAR RUNS, THE CARS RUN; is a problem for Spanish speakers who have a correlation of forms that operates differently. In Spanish the plural form of the subject, COCHES 'cars', with its "-S" inflection, correlates with an "n" inflection in the verb: EL COCHE CORRE, LOS COCHES CORREN, 'THE CAR RUNS, THE CARS RUN'" (Lado, 1957).²⁷

As a result, learners will tend to identify the 'S' morpheme with plural and fail to add it to the third person singular form of the present tense of verbs.

What Lado says about Spanish would also be true of Portuguese - speaking learners of English. It is very frequent to hear such forms as "He go" etc.

2.2.1.5 LEXICAL INTERFERENCE

At the lexical level the transfer effects of cognates are well known both in terms of their facilitative effect (as in the huge savings involved in learning French vocabulary for an English speaking person) as well as their negative effects (as with the notorious pitfalls involving FAUX AMIS, where formal similarity is not accompanied by similarity of meaning).

The transfer problems involved in word meaning and stylistic usage seem even more complex than those involving the phonological and grammatical aspects, undoubtedly because our methods of analysis are so much less systematic at the moment in the former instance. (Jakobovits, 1970).²⁵

Comparing the foreign language vocabulary with that of the native language we will find words that are (1) similar in form and in meaning. HOTEL, HOSPITAL are obvious examples in English and Portuguese;

(2) Similar in meaning but different in form, for example the English word 'tree' and the Portuguese word 'árvore';

(3) Similar in meaning but with stylistic or dialectal restrictions, for example the English word petrol and the American word gasoline.

(4) Similar in form but different in meaning, for example, Portuguese has a word, ASSISTIR; which is similar in form to English ASSIST, but the meaning is practically always different. Portuguese ASSISTIR is similar in meaning to English ATTEND, while English ASSIST - carries with it the feature of helping, of supporting.

In addition to those broad relationships listed above, words that are similar in form in two languages may be a) partly similar in meaning, for example the English word 'DISCUSS' and the Portuguese word 'DISCUTIR';

b) altogether different in meaning, but carrying meanings that exist in the native language, for example the English word 'pretend' and the Portuguese word 'pretender';

or c) they may be different in meaning and carry meanings which have no basis in experience for someone going from the native language into the foreign one, for example words referring to flora or fauna, to sports and games, to dishes, or to other aspects of life which are absent from his native environment.

According to Lado,²⁷ words that are similar in form but different in meaning - deceptive cognates - constitute a special group very high on a scale of difficulty. They are not adequately sampled on frequency criteria alone because their similarity in form to words in the native language raises their frequency in student use above that normal for the language.

In other words, they are more important than their frequency rating might indicate.

S. Pit Corder⁶ calls them FALSE COGNATES or FAUX AMIS the incorrect choice of a word in the second language because of its physical resemblance to a word in the mother tongue.

"False cognates are words in which outward similarity of the foreign word to an English word is not accompanied by an overlap in meaning" (Politzer, 1972)³⁹

2.2.2 COGNATES AND VARIOUS CAUSES OF ERRORS

Lado²⁷ claims that similarity to and difference from the native language in form, meaning, and distribution will result in ease or difficulty in acquiring the vocabulary of a foreign language.

Mackey³³, on the other hand, states that in the actual use of the language, homophones and homographs can be more of a peril than a help. In order to use them safely, one has to go to all the trouble of learning the cases in which they are cognates and the cases in which they are not; and when they are similar, to what extent they are similar. For example, English HOUND and German HUND are similar in form and meaning, but in order to use the English word correctly the German learner has to forget about the word HOUND and learn the word DOG, the usual equivalent of German HUND.

p.93.

Wilkins⁴⁸ also challenges Lado's hypothesis when he says, "It is not always true that differences between native and target language lead to error through transfer. Nor it is true that the native language is the sole source of error.

It is therefore an over-simplification to say that differences cause errors while similarities do not".

In order to justify his assumptions Wilkins poses and answers three questions:

1. Are all the errors to be anticipated from the above (phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical) examples of.

transfer from the mother-tongue?

No. The Russian speaking English is only transferring mother-tongue forms as long as he is omitting articles in English. His difficulties do not disappear when he is no longer doing that. He still has to wrestle with the complexities of article usage in English and he will commit systematic errors in doing this. To understand these errors we need look only at the grammar of English.

2. Are there cases where transfer does not occur as predicted?

Yes. Particularly at the grammatical level it is not always the case that differences of form between the two languages lead to the attempt to use mother-tongue forms in foreign language performance.

3. Are there cases where a comparison will predict positive transfer and therefore no error, but where errors do in fact occur?

Yes. Dusková mentions examples where the structure of English and Czech seem exactly parallel but where nonetheless errors occur systematically.

Confusion arises between the infinitive and the past participle, or between the present and past participles.

S. Pit Corder⁶ points out that "Learning and Teaching take place OVER A PERIOD OF TIME: This is also something we can do little about. We certainly cannot make all the data available simultaneously, nor can the learner process them all simultaneously.

Errors are a result of partial knowledge because the teaching learning process extends over time. Language is a

self-contained system, all parts being interconnected, a system of systems. In a sense nothing is 'fully' learned until everything is 'fully' learned."

Elsewhere in his book he says that it is the physical resemblance between cognates which leads to analogical overgeneralization. Moreover in many cases there appear to be several simultaneous processes going on; transfer, overgeneralization, faulty categorization, not to mention lapses and syntactic blends, which operate in the planning and execution of an utterance.

Here are some examples of errors cited by Pit Corder:⁶

a) Overgeneralization (i.e. "the use of previously available strategies in new situations... In second language learning ... some of these strategies will prove helpful in organizing the facts about the second language, but others, perhaps due to superficial similarities, will be misleading and inapplicable" (Jakobovits)²⁵)

For example, the learner of English who wrote witnessers had overgeneralized the rule which derives agent nominals from verbs;

b) Faulty Categorization, which is similar, for example, when a child acquiring English says: I SEED HIM we could say he is overgeneralizing the rule for the formation of the past tense, or applying the rule to a category to which it is not applicable.

c) Syntactic Blend (i.e. the conversion of one structure into another without breaking off, or it may also refer to a mistake a native speaker makes when he starts an utterance, breaks off and starts another one with a different structure.

(Pit Corder)⁶. An example might be: "I'd like could you go and close the door."

d) Lapses (i.e. temporary regression, due to psychological pressure to an earlier stage of competence). Examples are hard to give as their occurrence is random and unpredictable.

Pit Corder's opinions in part find support in the contrastive analysis hypothesis that interference is due to unfamiliarity with L₂, i.e. "to the learner's not having learned the target patterns, and is manifested in the language he learns." (Dulay¹² - quoting an assumption of behaviorist psychology).

Little of the above theoretical literature deals directly with the central problem of our dissertation . i.e. false cognates. How, then, can we relate such concepts as overgeneralization, mother-tongue interference, etc., to the processes which take place in the foreigner's brain when he continues to confuse false cognates in communication, even though he is well aware, when he stops to think, of their difference in meaning?

'Push', 'actual', 'sensible' etc, can be cited as obvious examples.

In most cases there seem to be a number of processes going on simultaneously, says Pit Corder⁶ and it is hard to identify a single cause of error with certainty. Be that as it may, and although psycholinguistic theory has yet provided no helpful insights, the problem is glaring, and cannot be ignored by the teacher.

We shall now look to semantic theory, to see what help the

teacher may expect to find from that direction:

2.2.3 MEANING

F. Palmer³⁸ states at the very beginning of his book "Semantics a New Outline" the following: "There is no very general agreement either about what meaning is or about the way which it should be described."

In the following section we shall consider some of the most influential attempts to arrive at a definition of meaning.

CONCEPTUAL MEANING

One of the oldest views, found in Plato's dialogue CRATYLUS, is that the signifier is a word in the language and the signified is the object in the world that it 'stands for', 'refers to' or 'denotes'.

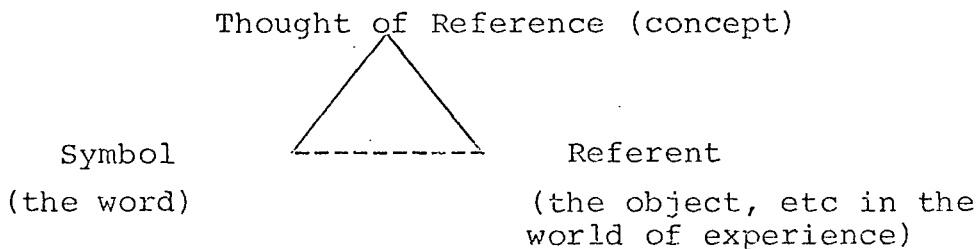
A more sophisticated view is one that relates words and things through the mediation of concepts of the mind, for example the 'sign' theory of de Saussure and the 'semiotic triangle' of Ogden & Richards.

The sign for^{de} Saussure⁴² is not something which stands for something else, but a relationship between two things: 'the linguistic sign unites... a concept and an acoustic image' i.e. a signified (signifié) and a signifier (signifiant).

Lepschy²⁹, interpreting the Glossematics theory of meaning, makes a connection between Saussure and Hjelmslev:

"Saussure had pointed out that langue is form and not substance, and that the linguistic sign is a relationship between signifiant and signifié. Hjelmslev translates this into his own terminology: there is a sign-function, between expression-form and content-form. It is thus misleading to think that the sign is a function contracted by two forms, and if it 'stands for' anything we have to say that it stands for the expression-substance as well as for the content substance: if a linguistic sign is 'the sign of' the thing meant, then it is 'a sign of' the speech sounds which manifest it as well. In fact there is a distinction between substance and purport (in Danish substans and mening). The purport becomes substance when it is formed".

The best-known analytical model of meaning, the 'basic triangle' of Ogden and Richards, was presented in 1923:



Ullmann⁴⁴ comments thus on the 'basic triangle': "The

essential feature of this diagram is that it distinguishes between three components of meaning. On this reading, there is no direct relation between words and the things they 'stand for': the word 'symbolizes' a 'thought or reference' which in turn 'refers' to the feature or event we are talking about."

Ullmann adds the following: There is nothing fundamentally new in this analysis of meaning; the mediaeval schoolmen already knew that 'vox significat mediantibus conceptibus' (the word signifies through the medium of concepts)".

PHYSICAL MEANING

Ten years later, Bloomfield³, in *Language* (1933) brought out a "scientific" definition of meaning.

"We can define the meaning of a speech-form accurately when this meaning has to do with some matter of which we possess scientific knowledge.

"We can define the names of minerals, for example, in terms of chemistry and mineralogy, as when we say that the ordinary meaning

of the English word saltⁿ 'sodium chloride (NaCl)', and we can define the names of plants or animals by means of the technical terms of botany or zoology, but we have no precise way of defining words like love or hate, which concern situations that have not been accurately classified - and these latter are in the great majority".

Bloomfield defined the meaning of a linguistic form thus:

'The situation in which the speaker utters it, and the response which it calls forth in the hearer'.

His assumptions went further than either Malinowski or Firth, who made statements of meaning in terms of the situation. He defined meanings as the situation, which is wholly definable in empirical or physical terms.

Bloomfield illustrated his theory with an account of Jack and Jill. Jill is hungry, sees an apple and with the use of language gets Jack to fetch it for her. If she had been alone she would have first received a STIMULUS (S) which would have produced a REACTION (R) she would have made a move to get the apple. This can be diagrammed

S ----- R

Since, however, Jack was with her, the stimulus produced not the reaction R, but a linguistic reaction, that of speaking to Jack, which we may symbolize r. The soundwaves resulting from this in turn create a stimulus for Jack, a linguistic stimulus (S) which results in his non-linguistic reaction R of getting the apple. We now have a more complicated picture

S r s R

Meaning, according to Bloomfield, consists in the relation

between speech (which is shown by r.....s and the practical events (S) and (R) that precede and follow it.

COMPONENTIAL MEANING (i.e. the attempt to define the meaning of a word as the sum of certain semantic features).

In the earliest published version of transformational grammar Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures*, (1957) - meaning was in effect ignored. But since a pioneering article of semantics by Katz and Fodor²⁶, the history of transformational grammar has been broadly a matter of conceding to semantics a more and more important position in linguistic theory. We shall refer to this later.

Part of the aim of semantics for Katz and Fodor was to 'account for the number of readings of a sentence'. An example was The bill is large. This is clearly ambiguous -it has two 'readings' resulting from the two meanings of bill. The sentence can, however, be 'disambiguated', i.e. one or other of its two readings can be established if we extend it with... but need not be paid.

This extension is, of course, possible only with one of the meanings of bill. Now Katz and Fodor accept that the ambiguity of this sentence and its disambiguation by this method are proper subjects for semantics. Yet the discussion of them is immediately followed by the argument against a 'complete theory of settings' (i.e. context) that such a theory would have to represent all the knowledge that speakers have about the world. This point is illustrated by the fact that

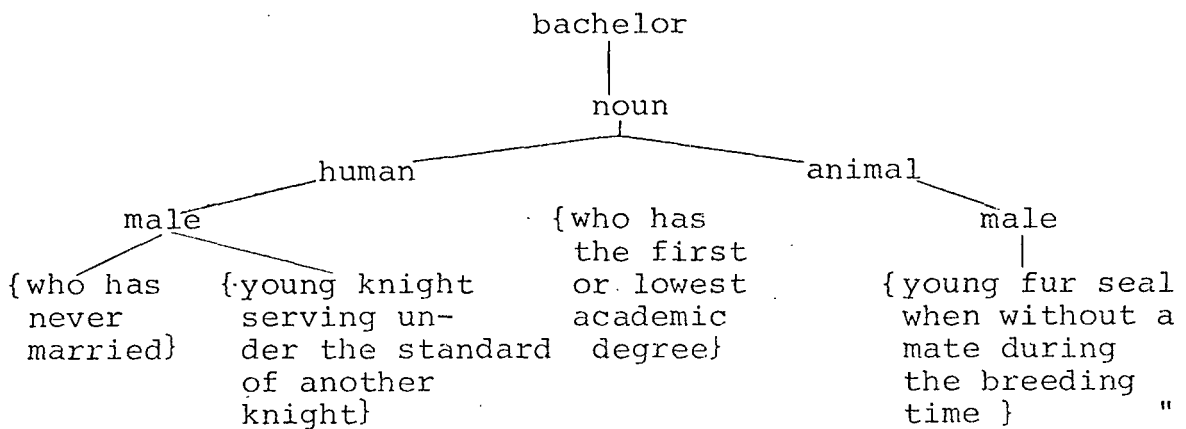
ANY kind of non-linguistic information may be used in the understanding of a sentence. One set of examples they use to show this is Shall we take junior back to the zoo? Shall we take the bus back to the zoo? Shall we take the lion back to the zoo? To understand these, it is suggested, we have to know all about boys, buses and lions, and that such information cannot be included in a semantic theory. Yet a moment's reflection will show that the position is no different than with bill. For on the one hand it seems reasonable to say that we need the information that there are two kinds of bill. On the other hand we can extend these other sentences to show the meaning differences with... to see the other animals? ... or walk?, ... or put it in our own cage? It is obvious, says Palmer³⁶ that we can always invent extensions to sentences to deal with any kind of 'meaning' relating to any kind of information that may be relevant. If this is so, and if the use of such extensions is a valid method of establishing sense relations, it follows that ANY kind of information can be the basis of a sense relation and that sense, no less than reference, ultimately involves the whole of human knowledge.

Katz & Fodor²⁶ introduced a version of componential analysis into semantics, thus integrating it with syntax within terms of components - "the total meaning of a word being seen in terms of a number of distinct elements or components of meaning." (Palmer)³⁵.

Katz & Fodor pointed out that a dictionary would distinguish between four meanings of the word bachelor.

Palmer³⁵, commenting on this, writes:

"(i) a man who has never married, (ii) a young knight serving under the banner of another, (iii) someone with a first degree, (iv) a young male unmated fur seal during the mating season. These four meanings, can, moreover, be partly differentiated by what they call 'markers' which are shown in round brackets, e.g. (human) (animal) and (male), together with some specific characteristics which are called 'distinguishers' and placed in square brackets, e.g. [first degree] in the case of the academic. The semantics of bachelor can thus be set out in a tree diagram:



SOCIAL MEANING

In 1930 J.R. Firth¹⁵ the leading British linguist of the thirties, defended the proposal that meaning be studied in terms of situation, use and context: "if we regard lan-

guage as 'expressive' or 'communicative' we imply that it is an instrument of inner mental states. And as we know so little of inner mental states, even by the most careful introspection, the language problem becomes more mysterious the more we try to explain it by referring to inner mental happenings observable. By regarding words as acts, events, habits, we limit our inquiry to what is objective in the group life of our fellows".

Leech²⁸, after quoting the above passage, adds: "Firth had been influenced in this view by the great Polish-born anthropologist B. Malinowski, who, in his study of the part played by language in primitive societies, had found

it appropriate to treat language as 'a mode of action, not an instrument of reflection'. 'Language in action' and 'Meaning as use' might be taken as twin slogans for this school of thought."

R. Wells⁴⁷ in 'Meaning and Use' states the following: 'Meaning is use.', thus sharing one of Firth's points of view.

M.A.K. Halliday's theoretical standpoint, in the words of Gunter Kress¹⁹, is that "Language is a social

activity. It has developed as it has, both in the functions, it serves, and in the structures which express these functions, in response to the demands made by society and as a reflection of these demands. In his most recent work, Halliday has concentrated on integrating the various aspects of his thinking into a coherent framework under the general rubric of what he calls 'social semiotics' (the social system, or the culture, as a semiotic construct)."

In particular in Halliday's essay 'Language as social semiotic' in The First LACUS Forum, and in his discussion with Herman Parret in the latter's Discussing Language, the theme, says Kress, is that language is explainable only as the realization of meanings that are inherent in the social system, the meanings that constitute the culture. It is of course not the only form of their realization; but it is its place in the broader environment of other semiotic systems that has shaped its evolution and determines its nature and functions.

This Halliday sees as coming under four headings:

I - The linguistic system itself;

II- The development of the system in the child;

- III - The text, that is the instantiation of the 'meaning potential' in actual contexts of situation;
- IV - The social structure.

Recently, says Kress, Halliday has returned to an investigation that he began pursuing ten and more years ago, into the way in which the context of situation is, in Dell Hymes' phrase, 'constitutive of' the text. Halliday is convinced that it is possible to show a systematic relationship between the text, the linguistic system, and the situation, provided that the situation is interpreted not as the material environment (in however abstract terms) but as a semiotic structure whose elements are social meanings, and into which 'things' enter as the bearers of social values.

The anthropologist Edward Hall¹⁸, a pioneer of the study of nonverbal communication, adds a further dimension to meaning:

"When people think of language, they tend to consider it primarily in terms of the words that they say or write. To look at language in this way, however, is to ignore the very significant role played by nonverbal communication. For example, it has been estimated that in a conversation between two people, only 35% of the message is conveyed by the words. The remaining 65% is communicated nonverbally, by how they speak, move, gesture, and handle spatial relationships. Thus Kinesics, the study of movement (related to Greek Kinesis, movement) and Proxemics, the study of the ways in which space is handled, (related to Latin proximus, nearest) are important aspects of nonverbal communication. Awareness of their importance is not really new -- writers and artists have long utilized very effectively their observations of nonverbal communication. But for most of us, the idea that "language is more than words" is new; we have not sufficiently realized the important role that is played in all kinds of interpersonal relationships by Kinesics and proxemics. We need to study them systematically.

cally, especially because of their many practical applications in medicine, diplomacy, education, race relations, business negotiations -- any situation in which people interact and need to understand one another."

Julius Fast¹⁴, in his book entitled 'Body Language', cites the classic example of the young woman who told her psychiatrist that she loved her boyfriend very much, while nodding her head from side to side in subconscious denial, thus contradicting verbal communication.

LINGUISTIC MEANING

In this section I group theories which aim to define the meaning of items in terms of other linguistic items.

i) In 1942 Harris²¹ published an article (Morpheme Alternants in Linguistic Analysis, Lg 18,) which opened the way for a series of other works in the field of morphology. He tried to specify three steps in the analytical procedures:

- a) identify, in each phonemicized utterance, minimum parts which occur with the same meaning in other utterances: these are morphemic alternants;
- b) group into one morpheme those alternants which (1) have the same meaning, (2) are in complementary distribution, (3) do not have a total distribution larger than other particular alternants and
- (c) produce general statements applicable to all morphemes which exhibit the same differences between their alternants.

Harris saw the meaning of the word as wholly stateable in terms of the context in which it occurred. His linguistic analysis is largely concerned with the Distribution of linguistic elements.

Meaning is dealt with in terms of SYNTAGMATIC (as opposed to PARADIGMATIC) relations.

By syntagmatic, according to F. Palmer^{3,8}, is meant "the relationship that a linguistic element has with other elements in the stretch of language in which it occurs, while by paradigmatic is meant the relationship it has with elements by which it may be replaced or substituted."

Thus if we consider The cat is on the mat we could talk of a syntagmatic relation between cat and mat, but if we compare this with The dog is on the mat we have a paradigmatic relation between cat and dog.

Distribution, therefore, would deal with purely linguistic relations of a syntagmatic kind.

Palmer says that the attempt to state meaning in this way is not satisfactory, the most important reason being that to define meaning in terms of distribution is very largely to put the cart before the horse. Words have different distribution BECAUSE they have different meanings.

ii) Halliday also does not ignore the importance of distribution. In McIntosh and Halliday^{3,4}, (1966) meaning is defined thus:

"The meanings a given word has (however we may define meaning) are in some direct way associated with our experience of that word in a variety of contexts, our association of that word with other words which have, in our experience, a somewhat similar range, and our association of the word with other words of similar shape, often but not always etymologically related. Such similarly shaped words may well play diverse grammatical roles, so they will not necessarily have at all the same range; the association, by thus straddling grammar, may therefore lead us to draw conclusions about a word with one such range from another with another range."

Halliday made a distinction between grammar and lexis, based on the distinction (which is not clear-cut, but gradual) between closed systems and open sets of terms from which a choice is made. In grammar the syntagmatic notion of structure corresponds to the paradigmatic notion of system, and similarly, in lexis the syntagmatic notion of collocation corresponds to the paradigmatic notion of set.

It would be helpful here to define some terms widely used in Halliday's work. The following definitions are by Barbara M.H. Strang⁴³.

"For co-occurring in syntax we may use the term collocate; an item collocates with another in its environment, the two together forming a collocation. To the paradigmatic class of items with the same privilege of occurrence we may give the name set."

Halliday, showing the difference between grammatical and lexical items and assignment of classes, gives the following example:

"The sentence he put forward a strong argument for it is acceptable in English; strong is a member of that set of items which can be juxtaposed with argument, a set which also includes powerful.

We find alongside a strong argument, the strength of the argument, he argued strongly, his argument was strengthened. The collocation does not hold simply between strong and argument but between all the related words strong, strength, strongly, strengthen and argue, argument.

It follows that if collocational restrictions are to be handled in the lexicon, the basic lexical item will have to be not the words (lexemes) strong, strengthen, etc., but some general item that subsumes them all."

iii) John Lyons³¹ following up Trier's version of field-theory, draws his own conclusions about the theory of se-

semantic fields.

His very first assumption is that field-theory is concerned with the analysis of sense.

Lyons defines 'sense' thus: "Sense is here defined to hold between the words or expressions of a single language independently of the relationship, if any, which holds between those words or expressions and their referents or denotata."

Lyons also states in his book 'Semantics' the following:

"Trier looks upon the vocabulary of a language as an integrated system of lexemes interrelated in sense. The system is in constant flux. Not only do we find previously existing lexemes disappearing and new lexemes coming into being throughout the history of a language; the relations of sense which hold between a given lexeme and neighbouring lexemes in the system are continually changing through time. Any broadening in the sense of one lexeme involves a corresponding narrowing in the sense of one or more of its neighbours. Trier compares the structure of a lexical field at time T_1 with the structure of a lexical field at time T_2 . They are comparable because, although they are different lexical fields (and necessarily so, since they belong to different synchronic language-systems), they cover the same conceptual field."

At this point Lyons introduces a distinction between 'lexical field' and 'conceptual field' which may not be Trier's, as Lyons says:

"The part-whole relationship which holds between individual lexemes and the lexical field within which they are interpreted is identical with, or at least similar to, the

part-whole relationship which holds between the lexical fields and the totality of the vocabulary."

Lyons cites the following passage by Trier: "Fields are living realities intermediate between individual words and the totality of the vocabulary; as parts of a whole they share with words the property of being integrated in a larger structure (sich ergliedern) and with the vocabulary the property of being structured in terms of smaller units (sich ausgliedern)".

Lyons takes the continuum of colour to explain what he means by conceptual field:

"Considered as a continuum, the substance of colour is (in his distinctions of 'area' and 'field') a conceptual field (Sinnfeld) by virtue of its structural organization, or articulation, by particular language-systems. The set of lexemes in any one language-system which cover the conceptual area and by means of the relations of sense which hold between them, give structure to it is a lexical field (wortfeld); and each lexeme will cover a certain conceptual area, which may in turn be structured as a field by another set of lexemes (as the area, covered by 'red' in English is structured by 'scarlet', 'crimson', 'vermillion', etc. The sense of a lexeme is therefore a conceptual field; and any conceptual area that is associated with a lexeme, as its sense, is a concept."

Wilkins⁴⁸ gives an excellent summary of Lyons's sense relationships:

1. "Synonymy. A 'weak' rather than a 'strong' definition is given to 'synonymy', in that there is no expectation that words will be substitutable for one another in all contexts without distinction of meaning. However, in a given context, it is possible that one item may be substituted for another with the overall meaning of the utterance remaining the same. For example conception is synonym of idea in the context:

My idea of a university is of a communi-

ty of scholars where the substitution of conception does not seem to change what the sentence communicates. However, in the sentence:

His new idea seems a good one
no such substitution is possible, and therefore in this context conception is not a synonym of idea. For any one lexical item over a range of contexts a pattern of substitutability would emerge as we discovered where words could replace one another and where not.

2. Hyponymy. By 'hyponymy' is meant a relationship of inclusion. Vehicle includes car, bus and so on. Just as the meaning of vehicle depends upon what its hyponyms are, so the meaning of car depends on its being a hyponym of vehicle and its sharing this status with a number of other words. If there is some change in the constitution of this set, inevitably the meaning of each of its members changes. More important from our point of view is that relations of hyponymy are never exactly the same from one language to another. We will readily identify potato with Kartoffel in German, but vegetable and Gemüse do not have equivalent lists of hyponyms.

3. Incompatibility. The relation of 'incompatibility' is in a sense the reverse of hyponymy, in that it is one of exclusion. The incompatibility is between items that are similar in meaning. To say morning is to say not afternoon, not evening and not night. A relation of incompatibility also exists between colour terms since the choice of red, for example, entails the exclusion of black, blue, yellow and so on. Not all colour terms are incompatible. Scarlet is a hyponym of red.

4. Complementarity. This is a relationship in which to predicate one term is to contradict another. It exists between pairs like perfect and imperfect, single and married, or dead and alive. If we were to falsify one by inserting not before it we would automatically assert the truth of the other.

5. Antonymy. Lyons reserves the term 'antonym' for relations like that between young and old. The difference between these and the previous category lies in the fact that to say not young is not necessarily to say old. There is a gradation from young to old. In fact terms like young and old, big and small or few and many do not represent abso-

lute values as one is inclined to think. To use one of the terms is to imply a comparison with some norm - young means relatively young. By an apparent paradox, use of the comparative forms is not at all incompatible with simultaneous use of the antonym:

She is young but she is older than her sister.

To be older she does not have to be old. It is also usual for one of each pair to be unmarked in certain contexts. To ask:

How old is he?

implies nothing of the speaker's expectations whereas:

How young is he?

anticipates that the individual referred to is to be classified as young.

As with synonyms relations of antonymy need not apply in all contexts. There are a number of possible antonyms of dry, although probably none except wet has as wide a range of use. In contrast to dry air we would prefer damp air rather than wet or moist air. In contrast to dry lips we probably prefer moist lips.

6. Converseness. In this case the predication of one term inevitably implies the other. It is illustrated by pairs like parent and child, buy and sell, or employee and employer.

This structural approach to meaning, which provides an alternative to the more traditional analysis in terms of denotations and connotation, does not in any way deny that items of language may relate to concrete features of the real world, but it does suggest that the meaning of an item can only be satisfactorily defined in terms of its relations with other words. If intralinguistic relations are really as important as this suggests, it is unlikely that meaning can be adequately learned through associations of words with visual and physical context. These ostensive procedures, while they may be necessary, will not prove sufficient."

IMPLICATIONS OF LINGUISTIC THEORY FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

- GENERAL

There is not now, nor can there ever be, a "linguistic method" of foreign language teaching. Application of the

results of contemporary linguistic knowledge alone, says Julia S. Falk¹³, cannot provide all the insights and information necessary for successful foreign instruction.

She continues by saying that a linguistic description of a language will indicate which forms should be learnt and advise on how learning is best achieved. This is an area in which language teachers must turn to studies by psychologists on factors such as attention and memory span. Psychology may also be able to provide some insight into the necessity of grammatical explanations for adult students or the most effective ratio between actual language usage and descriptions of usage, grammar and pronunciation.

There are also limitations inherent in the present limits of the discipline. Modern linguistics is the study of the nature of language and the linguistic competence of the people who use a particular language. How linguistic competence is actually put to use in the production or interpretation of speech or writing is a matter that currently lies beyond our understanding.

Actual language performance is the goal of most foreign language learners, but linguistics has little to say about performance itself.

We should not forget that performance does presuppose competence, and, in this sense, linguists can make a contribution by describing some of the knowledge that foreign language learners must acquire. Another limitation, says Falk, is the fact that many linguists are only beginning to concern themselves with units of language larger than the sentence, but the kind of normal language performance sought

by the learner involves not just individual sentences, but monologues, dialogues, conversations, paragraphs, chapters, and books.

Yet, in spite of the limits of most modern linguistic research, some contribution is possible here, for one could neither understand nor produce sequences of sentences unless one also knew how to produce single sentences.

A grammatical description of the sentences of a language, therefore, is an account of part of the knowledge that underlies the ability to engage in the normal use of language.

John W. Oller, Jr.³⁵, in his article 'Transformational Grammar, Pragmatics, and Language Teaching', after discussing the main assumptions of transformational theory, says of its applicability to language teaching: "It hardly seems

surprising that transformationalists (Chomsky, 1966) have concluded that their theory is not applicable to language teaching in any obvious and definite way. This admission seems to me to be correct and above reproach. The American philosopher and poet George Santyana has said. 'It is a great advantage for a system of philosophy to be substantially true.'

This seems to me to be the substantial truth of transformational theory: It is not applicable to language teaching."

Here we can quote Chomsky's⁵ own words on the subject:

"I am, frankly, rather sceptical about the significance, for the teaching of languages, of such insights and understanding as have been attained in linguistics and psychology. Surely the teacher of language would do well to keep informed of progress and discussion in these fields, and the efforts of linguists and psychologists to approach the problems of language teaching from a principled point of view are extremely worthwhile, from an intellectual as well as social point of view. Still, it is difficult to believe that ei-

ther linguistics or psychology has achieved a level of theoretical understanding that might enable it to support a 'technology' of language teaching.

Both fields have made significant progress in recent decades, and, furthermore, both draw on centuries of careful thought and study. These disciplines are, at present, in a state of flux and agitation. What seemed to be well-established doctrine a few years ago may now be the subject of extensive debate".

William F. Mackey³² in his article 'Applied Linguistics', after discussing all the 'pros' and 'cons' with regard to Linguistics and its applicability to language teaching, comes to the following conclusion:

"Contemporary claims that Applied Linguistics can solve all the problems of language teaching is as unfounded as the claims that applied psychology can solve them. For the problems of language teaching are central neither to psychology nor linguistics. Neither science is equipped to solve the problems of language teaching.

It is likely that language teaching will continue to be a child of fashion in linguistics and psychology until the time it becomes an autonomous discipline which uses these related sciences instead of being used by them.

To become autonomous it will, like any science, have to weave its own net, so as to fish out from the oceans of human experience and natural phenomena only the elements it needs, and, ignoring the rest, be able to say with the ichthyologist Sir Arthur Eddington, 'What my net can't catch isn't fish.'

On the other hand, S. Pit Corder⁷ in his article 'Linguistics and the Language Teaching Syllabus' has different opinions about the applicability of linguistic knowledge to language teaching:

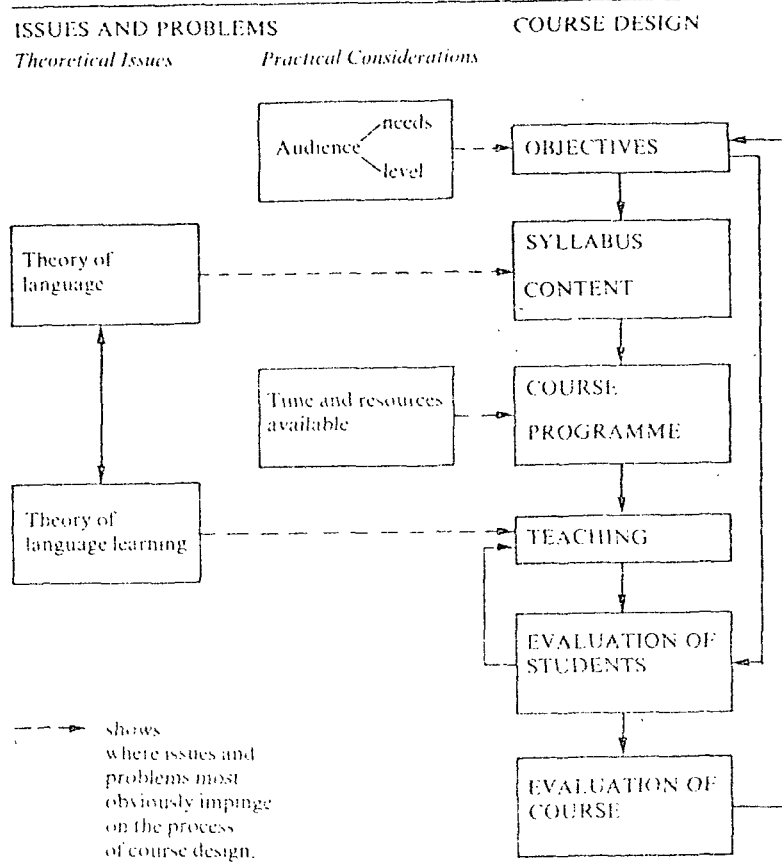
"Linguistic knowledge, that is, knowledge about language in general and about a specific language, and consequently the ability to talk, about it, has always been fundamental to language teaching. It has been, to a considerable extent, taken for granted, since it has always formed part of the normal education of an educated man in advanced societies. It is not possible to imagine that any systematic preparation of materials for teaching could be undertaken without it, unless we restrict what we mean by language teaching simply to the activities of the teachers with the textbook in his hand.

It is suggested that the considerable development in linguistic studies in this century provides the means to do this work better and to understand better what others have done, by offering more rigorously defined categories and more detailed and complete descriptions of the operation of a language and its varieties. Linguistics is now developing techniques to provide a scheme of descriptions which goes beneath the surface form of language and enables us to gain an insight into what a person must 'know' in order to speak a language."

This indirect relationship is made clear in the model of syllabus designs presented in Candlin, Kirkwood and Moore⁴, 1978. All of these writers are, with varying degrees of emphasis, making a similar statement that linguistics is relevant to language teaching, but only indirectly.

Language teaching can in no way depend on linguistic theory for answers to its problems.

Figure 1: A model of course design



According to this diagram, linguistic theory is but one of a number of factors influencing course design.

If this is indeed so, then it seems unlikely that any one semantic theory will provide the key to the teaching of lexis, and in particular false cognates.

RELEVANCE OF SEMANTIC THEORY TO VOCABULARY TEACHING

If we tried to apply a particular semantic theory to

language teaching we would certainly face a complexity of problems inherent to the subject proposed. For instance, if we wanted to apply the Bloomfieldian theory of meaning to language teaching, we would come across limitations in that theory because meaning cannot be wholly definable in physical terms.

We should say that part of meaning can be taught using the Bloomfieldian theory, as far as it deals with concret situations, for example, it is possible to teach the meaning of 'push' if it is presented in a meaningful context where someone is asked to push a car or a door, etc. and the action is completed thus showing the relation between speech and the practical events that precede and follow it.

But how to handle an abstract situation in physical terms if we are to define precisely words like love or hate?

From this limitation we can infer that the Bloomfieldian theory of meaning applied to language teaching is not capable by itself of accounting for all the complexities involved in the teaching of meaning. On the other hand the Bloomfieldian theory challenged the old way of teaching meaning through mere translation.

We shall consider now another theory, the componential theory of meaning proposed by Katz and Fodor, with regard to its applicability to language teaching. This theory is far more limited than the Bloomfieldian one because Katz and Fodor's main argument is against a complete theory of settings (i.e. context), thus their theory deals more with sense relations.

Since they leave out context, meaning is dealt with only abstractly.

It is just possible that Katz and Fodor's theory can be applied to language teaching in order to teach sentences which are ambiguous, such as 'The bill is large'. But it is far better to disambiguate such sentences by applying the word 'bill' in a meaningful context than by just making one extension which would bring out only one meaning of the word. There seems to be a contradiction in their theory, as Palmer explained (section 2.2.3.5 § iii), that 'sense', according to their view, ultimately involves the whole of human knowledge.

A more plausible theory of meaning is the social one, in which Firth proposes studying meaning in terms of situation, use and context. Here we are concerned with the field of performance, thus meaning can be more easily handled. We are certain of one fact, that whether meaning should be studied in terms of linguistic competence or of performance is a subject of linguistic investigation, but meaning in language teaching has to be handled behaviouristically - i.e. we have to teach learners to use words. If we decide to apply Firth's theory of context of situation to the teaching of meaning, we shall feel happier with that theory than with the others mentioned so far, because it takes into consideration the fact that, for Firth, context of situation was part of the linguist's apparatus in the same way as are the grammatical categories that he uses. It was best used as 'a suitable schematic construct' to apply to language events and he therefore suggested the

following categories:

- A. The relevant features of the participants: persons, personalities
 - (i) The verbal action of the participants.
 - (ii) The non-verbal action of the participants.
- B. The relevant objects.
- C. The effects of the verbal action.

Palmer³⁸, commenting on Firth, says that for Firth all kinds of linguistic description, the phonology, the grammar, etc, as well as the context of situation, were statements of meaning.

It must be remembered too that Firth believed we would never capture the whole of meaning.

With regard to Halliday's view of meaning in terms of collocation, deeper insights into the subject would be necessary if we wanted to apply this theory to language teaching. It would not always be easy for the learner to deduce the meaning of a word solely from his experience of its occurrence in the vicinity of other words.

Applying this theory alone to vocabulary teaching would mean that a vast number of contexts would have to be presented to the learner, a very timewasting process.

Furthermore, if we started associating one word with another word, and this last one with other words, we would have an association without end.

Undoubtedly collocation is part of a word's meaning, and should not be neglected, but it does not offer an easy solution to the teacher.

Maybe we could apply Halliday's theory to reading, where the learner could be trained to observe collocations of a word with other words in different written contexts.

A.F. Cowie⁸ in his article 'Vocabulary Exercises Within An Individualised Study Programme' discusses some variables which seem to be relevant to the learner wishing to achieve a native-like control of collocations:

"1 - The first variable has to do with acceptability, whether, that is, a given collocation is regarded by native speakers as forming part of the language. With regard to acceptability, a three-fold distinction must be drawn between:

a - those collocations which have achieved acceptance by many speakers (but which may not all be explainable in terms of general principles of co-occurrence - see 2). Examples of such collocations are electric convulsion (i.e. one which suggests that it has been caused by an electric shock.) and electric reaction (as well, of course, as electric cooker and electric shaver);

b - those collocations which are potentially acceptable by virtue of conforming to principle of co-occurrence, but which for some reason have not yet achieved 'institutional' status (Leech, 1974). An example, quoted by Brown, is electric behaviour;

c - and thirdly, those which are unacceptable in the sense that the incompatibility of the words of which they are composed (eg electric blush) make them meaningless, and unlikely to occur.

2 - Within the category of acceptable (those which have gained institutional status), a distinction should be drawn between those collocations which can be explained in terms of more general principles of co-occurrence and those which are entirely idiosyncratic. Thus, among the adjective collocates of the idiom keep a - eye on somebody, close, sharp, careful, watchful conform to a general rule that the appropriate adjective expresses vigilance.

However, the choice of weather (as in keep weather eye on somebody) can be explained by no such principle.

3 - Thirdly, a distinction can be drawn, again within the wider category of acceptable collocations, between those which are

commonly or 'habitually' in use (ie preferred over others which may be equally apt) and those which are not. This cuts across the distinction already drawn between collocation formed (or not formed) according to 'regular' principles. The third distinction is important since an awareness of which in a range of acceptable collocations is the most commonly chosen is characteristic of native usage (Wilkins 1972).

A familiar example of preferred choice is that of act in the collocation put on an act (cf. put on a façade, show, accent, manner). Such a categorization can inform one's judgement of what is more or less crucial to the foreign student. Thus, within the category of acceptable to unacceptable, it is clear that the fully acceptable must be learnt (according to general principles of co-occurrence, if relevant), though it is less certain whether the learner should be allowed (or encouraged) to produce potentially acceptable collocations. In her materials, Brown provides for the production of both. It is probably fair to say, however, that her exercises suffer from a failure to separate collocations which are merely potential (eg refresh the vegetables) from those which are fully acceptable but relatively little used."

Taking these views regarding distribution to their extreme, we have Harris's theory, that collocation not merely contributes to meaning, but is meaning. Here again we have a theory which concerns sense relations, ie, a theory in the field of linguistic competence, too abstract to be applied to language teaching. The main objection to this theory has been stated in (section 2.2.3.5. § V); "words have different distribution BECAUSE they have different meanings."

On the other hand, Lado²⁷ thinks distribution has some relevance.

"The distribution of words is important to us because at any given moment in the history of a language the speakers of that language carry with them the habit of the restrictions. There are grammatical restrictions so that in English, for example, water may be a noun as

in a glass of water, a verb as in water the garden, a noun adjunct as in water meter, but not an adjective without some previous adjustment in form, e.g., watery substance.

The fact that words may show different geographic distribution, falling in or out of a dialect area, is important. And, as already indicated, distribution in the various social-class levels also has to be considered because of the secondary meanings such distribution conveys.

Statements of raw frequency alone leave these matters unresolved.

Thorndike's list gives ain't among the 2,000 most frequent words in English, but the list does not say if ain't is typical of Standard English or of the speech representing certain other dialects.

Words are not only restricted geographically and socially; they are often restricted as to styles of speaking and writing. For example, many words found in poetry will not be found in ordinary conversation or in ordinary prose, and vice versa." (Ling. Across Cultures pp.79/80).

The influence of style on vocabulary is important, and will be pursued in a later section.

Palmer³⁸, again commenting on distribution, says that statement of meaning in terms of distribution has the same kind of attraction as statement of meaning in terms of sense in that both deal with observable features of language with intra-linguistic relations, instead of the more nebulous association of language with the non-linguistic world of experience. pp.93.

Lyon's "Structural Theory of Semantics", which proposes the definition of meaning in terms of sense relations, holds more promise for the language teacher, as it offers a basis for grouping words that find support from intuition.

Wilkins⁴⁸ commenting on Lyons' theory, says that

"Whenever the learner is in contact with spoken and written utterances, he is exposed to the intralinguistic relations, but it

might be possible to go further than simple exposure by constructing materials to exploit notions like synonymy, hyponymy and antonymy.

Practice is divided. There are ardent advocates and equally ardent opponents of using L₂ synonyms and antonyms as a way of teaching meaning. The counter-argument is usually that in the absence of 'true synonyms' it is misleading to use them at all. Yet the structural interpretation of meaning might lead us to precisely the opposite conclusion."

And in the restricted use of synonyms he says it is recognized that there may be a substitute for a word in a given context. . The synonymy will be with one or more of the semantic features that the word has, but not with all of them. For each context in which the word is used there may be a different synonym, because it is a different synonym, antonyms and hyponyms that a word has may well be the only way that the full meaningfulness of a word can be brought out. pp.131/2.

iii) WHICH THEORY IS MOST USEFUL TO LANGUAGE TEACHING?

The answer to this question must be the following: no theory has the whole answer.

Each theory, as we have observed, emphasizes only one aspect of meaning, no matter how meaning may be defined.

Teachers should avoid swinging from one extreme of opinion to the other, suspending any opinion they may have as to the superiority of one theory over another.

They must look at meaning in all its aspects, and therefore select from theoretical research whatever seems most

relevant to their particular needs.

Lets us look at some major teaching methods which are still widely used, to see how vocabulary is taught.

1. The Direct Method (the most widely known and the one that has caused the most controversy). Concret meanings are taught through object lessons:

abstract ones through the associations of ideas, says Mackey³³.

For example if ^{we} want to teach the meaning of the word tree we would rely on a picture or a drawing of a tree. Props are also used to help students understand what is said. If we want to teach the word short through the direct method we would associate it with its opposite tall, then we would rely on a picture of two men, for example a Mr Littleman and a Mr. Lengthy, saying how tall each one is, etc.

2. The Grammar-Translation Method

This is simply a combination of the activities of grammar and translation. The grammar is an outline of formal grammar. The vocabulary depends on the texts selected. The teaching begins with rules, isolated vocabulary items, paradigms and translation. Vocabulary is divided into lists of words to be memorized, alongside their translation equivalents.

3. The Audio-Lingual Method

This method is concerned with the formation of habits, and is based on behaviourist learning theory. To the advocates of this theory the very core of successful language learning is the acquisition of non-thoughtful response.

The emphasis of this method is on speech, not writing. There is much imitation and repetition, with special attention to phonology and morphology. Speaking and listening are the most important skills, and reading and writing are usually considered secondary goals.

Also characteristic of the audio-lingual method is the use of patterns drills in teaching syntax.

Pattern drills are oral exercises in which a particular grammatical structure is presented.

For example, in teaching English as a foreign language, one might use the pattern drill below to teach the fact that 'a' is used before only singular count nouns.

The teacher provides the stimulus, the students respond.

Teacher: We see a friend.

Students: We see a friend.

Teacher: apples.

Students: We see apples

Teacher: book

Students: We see a book etc.

Vocabulary is kept to a minimum in the early stages, and in the more extreme versions of the method is only practised in meaningless patterns drills. No attempt is made to teach meaning in any depth.

A broader approach to the teaching of meaning is incorporated in the Audio-Global method, a definition whose philosophy has been formulated by Jean Cureau, as reporter of a working group:

"The audio-visual structuro-global methodology implies... a global approach to language

starting from the perception of speech in situation which can be considered as a total system of communication and expression. According to this view the assimilation of this globally received speech is done gradually and in successive stages... It takes into account those factors that help spontaneous participation and creativeness by means of independent and controlled speech. This approach also includes the primacy of the spoken word and recognizes the importance of rhythm, intonation, stress, time, pause, mime, gestures, positions and movements.

At the present time the fundamental support for this approach is audio-visual." (author's italics)

They describe meaning in a foreign-language-learning situation thus:

"Comprehension will involve the recognition of certain lexical and structural elements of the second language. Many authors still see the only way from the signifier of the second language to its significate is by means of the signifier and significate of the first or mother language.

For them the process of comprehension looks like this:

Signifier 2nd lang. ---> Signifier 1st Lang.

Significate 2nd Lang. <--- Significate 1st Lang.

We would understand real comprehension as an activity that should take place solely within ^{the} second language insofar as this is possible, and avoid the interpolation of the signifier and significate. The way we have tried in "All's Well" to keep a direct relationship between signifier and significate is through the effective use of pictures and sound (situations, silent films, listening exercises and dialogues) and also through a wide use of idiomatic phrases in the first part of the course which persuades the student to loosen his grip on the automatic movement from second to

·first language.

For us the process of comprehension can be expressed thus:

Significer 2nd Lang.

↓

Significate 2nd Lang. (From: All's Well I -
Teacher's Book)¹¹

The importance of the cultural background in language teaching is also stressed by Wilga Rivers:⁴¹

"The meanings which the words of a language have for the native speaker can be learned only in a matrix of allusions to the culture of the people who speak that language." She quotes two passages by Politzer (1961). 'Teaching French: An Introduction to Applied Linguistics! (Boston).

"Unless we understand the cultural situation in which an utterance is made, we may miss its full implication or meaning. The tie of language study with culture is not an 'option' to be discussed in terms of the preferences of the individual teacher, but actually a practical necessity."

"If we teach language without teaching at the same time the culture in which it operates, we are teaching meaningless symbols or symbols to which the student attaches the wrong meaning.

(This quotation is from "Report of the Fifth Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Teaching", pp. 100-101, as quoted in Brooks (1960), p.86.

Rivers also cites Nida, E.A. (in *Moderns Foreign Languages and the Academically Student*, N.Y. 1960).

"The student should come to realize that language is the essential expression of a people's behavior and outlook;

the medium in which and by which they think about and react to life...

The student should acquire understanding and appreciation of another people's way of life, institutions, literature, and civilization."

Even Chomsky has come to weaken his view (Aspects) that all meaning is present in Deep Structure, i.e. is a matter of competence, definable in terms of semantic features. He has since admitted the contribution of the context of utterance and pragmatics to the meaning of a sentence (ref - 1972).

Huddleston²⁴ states: "Chomsky proposes that instead of having all the rules of semantic interpretation operate on deep structure, some should take the surface structure as input."

And "What is common to the meaning of 'Bill gave the map to someone' 'Bill did something' 'Something happened', will be handled by the old type of semantic rule operating on the deep structure, which is the same for all three: the meaning differences relating to presupposition and focus, on the other hand, will be determined by the new type of rule that takes account of surface constituent structures and stress." (p.251).

In conclusion, we could say that the importance of the context of a word, whether linguistic or extra-linguistic or both, is the common factor which unites all the major semantic theories reviewed, and that if language teachers are to pay any attention at all to theory, they should not ignore this element.

2.3 DELIMITATION OF THE PROBLEM

We shall restrict our research to a selection of the Portuguese/English false cognates which seem to cause greatest difficulty.

2.4 OBJECTIVES

- Compile a list of common false cognates in English and Portuguese;
- Conduct elicitation tests using a homogeneous group of upper-intermediate Brazilian learners of English, in order to make a further selection of problem pairs to be taught and tested in the main experiment;
- Analyze results of above tests in order to discover what factors pair of false cognates found difficult or easy to learn have in common;
- Establish, by means of an experiment, which of two commonly used teaching methods is most effective in correcting confusion between false cognates.

2.5 THE HYPOTHESIS

Confusion caused by false cognates is corrected more efficiently by a teaching method which presents the words

in context than by teaching them in isolation.

3. THE METHODOLOGY

3.1 The Population

Two main reasons led us to choose the place where the pilot-research was carried out.

- a. The homogeneity of the students;
- b. Their relative fluency in English.

In view of these two preliminary considerations, which were essential for our research, we decided to choose "Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Inglesa" of Curitiba as the place where our research should be carried out.

The experiment was conducted with all ten fifth-year classes, a total of a hundred students.

3.2 MEANS

The means applied in order to collect the data of the population mentioned was the following:

1 - A standard English-Portuguese multiple choice test containing altogether fifty-five cognates, of which fifty were common false cognates and five pure cognates. Each cognate had four alternatives written in Portuguese and only one alternative was correct. The test was checked by a native speaker of English.

2 - Another standard English-Portuguese test containing twenty sentences written in English with one false cognate in each of them. Each sentence had four alternatives

written in Portuguese and only one alternative was correct. The first test was applied with the following purpose: to discover which cognates the students knew and which they did not.

3.3a. THE COLLECTION OF DATA

Before applying the tests at the Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Inglesa, they were pre-tested with a first-year group on the undergraduate course in Portuguese and English of the Federal University of Paraná, in order to verify their accuracy and practicability.

The cognates used in the tests were chosen arbitrarily, though we tried to choose the commonest ones with high frequency in everyday conversation.

Two dictionaries were read:

'Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language-Second College Edition - World-1970⁴⁵ and

'The Heritage Illustrated Dictionary of the English Language. International Edition, McGraw-Hill-1975²².

A selection of Portuguese/English false cognates was then compiled on two criteria - i) formal similarity, and ii) personal experience of their confusibility (as learner and teacher for many years). As our review of theories of meaning led us to hypothesize that an eclectic approach would be of most relevance to foreign-language teaching, it was felt that collocation might be an important concept to investigate. We believed at this stage that pairs of cognates

which shared a high proportion of contexts would induce overgeneralization more readily than pairs which occurred in a low number of common contexts.

We proceeded to analyze the results of this first test by correlating the percentage of errors for each item with an estimate of their contextual similarity. In view of the discouraging results achieved, we hypothesized that another variable might be operating, and on the basis of intuition we proposed that the frequency with which items appear in normal General English courses was a relevant factor. By giving both these variables, contextual similarity and infrequency of occurrence, equal weighting, we achieved the positive correlations described below, which encouraged us to go ahead with testing our main hypothesis regarding the teaching of lexis in context.

The method used to analyze the pairs was as follows;

We broke down the general concept of "contextual similarity" (i.e. the likelihood of two words occurring in similar environments in relative languages) into five components, assigning each an arbitrary, intuition-based, weighting

a) Part of Speech - applying the formal criteria set out by Crystal (1967)¹⁰, we estimated that the fact that two words shared the same syntactic category accounted for 20% of their contextual similarity.

b) Syntagmatic Relationship - by this we are referring to subcategories of Parts of Speech, e.g. whether nouns can occur with the indefinite article or plural morpheme (i.e. are countable or non-countable); whether adjectives can be intensified, take comparatives, occur in attributive and predicative po-

sition; whether verbs can be followed by an object or not, and what types of complement construction are possible, e.g. infinitive, gerund, finite clause; whether adverbs modify the verb or the whole sentence, i.e. are adjuncts or disjuncts (Refer to Quirk)⁴⁰. We gave this component a weighting of 20%, but allowed it to be divisible in half.

The remaining three components are semantic. It was here that we had to rely most on intuition, in the absence of formal criteria, but nevertheless it was possible to arrive at a division into three degrees of "closeness" of meaning, each worth 20%, and acceptable to the native speaker who checked our analysis.

There was little doubt as to the values to be given to the pairs, though this intuitive approach is not easy to translate into clear, verbal terms. While it is obviously not a scientific approach, it nevertheless reflects "native speaker intuition", and thus satisfies one of Chomsky's main criteria for a model of analysis.

To the sum of these values we added a percentage for estimated frequency of occurrence of the English word in the first five years of a general English course (once more admittedly arbitrary, but based on long experience of classroom teaching), and divided the total by two to give our final percentage, which was correlated with the figure for errors.

In the case of words with clearly distinct meanings we did the following: if we considered one of the meanings to have such low frequency as to be irrelevant to the problem of interference, we ignored it. In other cases,

we estimated the relative frequency of each meaning in the classroom; e.g. the word 'assistir', meaning 'attend' occurs in Portuguese 90% of the times and meaning 'help' occurs only 10% of the times.

With the first meaning the words 'assist' and 'assistir' share only 40% of contextual similarity while with the second meaning both words share 100% of contextual similarity.

The final average between the two is as follows: 90% of occurrence from 40% of contextual similarity is equal to 36% and 10% of occurrence from 100% of contextual similarity is equal to 10%, and adding the two percentages we have the final result: 46% of contextual similarity.

RESULTS OF ANALYSIS

	PART OF SPEECH	SYNTAGMATIC RELATIONSHIP		GENERAL MEANING	MORE SPECIFIC MEANING	MOST SPECIFIC MEANING	CONTEXTUAL SIMILARITY	INFREQUENCY	TOTAL PERCENTAGE	PERCENTAGE OF ERRORS
		PAR	COM							
assist 1) assistir 1 assistir assistir 2							46%	90%	68%	33%
attend 1 2) atender attend 2 atender							94%	0%	42%	33%
discuss 3) discutir 1 discuss discutir 2							90%	0%	45%	28%
enervate 4) enervar 1 enervate enervar 2							82%	100%	91%	99%
realize 1 5) realizar realize 1 realizar							37%	0%	18,5%	48%
accommodated 6) acomodado 1 accommodated acomodado 2							19%	100%	59,5%	61%
pretend 7) pretender							50%	0%	25%	42%
push 8) puxar							80%	0%	40%	13%
procure 9) procurar							70%	100%	85%	91%
10) presently presentemente							80%	80%	80%	85%
11) actual atual							70%	30%	50%	65%
constipated 12) constipado							80%	100%	90%	70%

	PART OF SPEECH	SYNTAGMATIC RELATIONSHIP		GENERAL MEANING	MORE SPECIFIC MEANING	MOST SPECIFIC MEANING	CONTEXTUAL SIMILARITY	INFREQUENCY	TOTAL PERCENTAGE	PERCENTAGE OF ERRORS
		PAR	COM							
13) Convicted* convicto										
14) demoralized desmoralizado							80%	100%	90%	96%
15) distracted distráido							70%	100%	85%	100%
16) educated educado							80%	0%	40%	45%
17) exquisite esquisito							80%	100%	90%	97%
18) formidable formidável							80%	20%	50%	89%
19) factual* factual										
20) genial genial							80%	100%	90%	92%
21) morose moroso							60%	100%	80%	81%
22) ordinary ordinário							80%	0%	40%	6%
23) sensible sensível							80%	0%	40%	75%
24) stupid estúpido							80%	0%	40%	42%
25) apparatus aparato							20%	100%	60%	93%
26) arbiter árbitro							80%	100%	90%	80%
27) asylum asilo							80%	100%	90%	90%
28) baton batom							60%	100%	80%	65%
29) cap capa							60%	0%	30%	32%

	PART OF SPEECH	SYNTAGMATIC RELATIONSHIP		GENERAL MEANING	MORE SPECIFIC MEANING	MOST SPECIFIC MEANING	CONTEXTUAL SIMILARITY	INFREQUENCY	TOTAL PERCENTAGE	PERCENTAGE OF ERRORS
		PAR	COM							
30) cafeteria cafeteira	X	X	X	X	X		60%	50%	55%	92%
31) cigar cigarro	X	X	X	X	X		80%	0%	40%	49%
32) collar colar	X	X	X	X	X		80%	0%	40%	48%
33) commodity comididade	X						20%	100%	60%	98%
34) data data	X	X	X	X	X		60%	70%	65%	66%
35) disgust desgosto	X	X	X	X	X		70%	100%	85%	87%
36) editor editor	X	X	X	X	X		80%	0%	40%	80%
37) fabric fábrica	X	X	X	X	X		30%	100%	65%	79%
38) face face	X	X	X	X	X		80%	0%	40%	37%
39) journal jornal	X	X	X	X	X		80%	40%	60%	54%
40) lecture leitura	X	X	X	X	X		80%	0%	40%	23%
41) library livraria	X	X	X	X	X		80%	0%	40%	47%
42) lunch lanche	X	X	X	X	X		70%	0%	35%	33%
43) malice malícia	X	X	X	X	X		80%	100%	90%	89%
44) media mídia	X	X	X	X	X		30%	90%	60%	81%
45) notice notícia	X	X	X	X	X		80%	0%	40%	21%
46) sanatorium sanatório	X	X	X	X	X		80%	100%	90%	94%
47) sack saco	X	X	X	X	X		80%	80%	80%	87%
48) syllabus sílabas	X	X	X	X	X		40%	100%	70%	95%
49) venture ventura	X	X	X	X	X		40%	100%	70%	86%

N.B. 'Par' = partial
 'com' = complete

Other words could have been cited such as:

- absolutely. (not)
- arrange
- canal (chanel)
- chorus (choir)
- corpus (corpse, corps, body)
- egregious
- garden
- injury
- joy
- medicine
- prejudice
- programme
- retire
- safe
- solicit
- stock
- towel (tablecloth)
- vase (vessel) etc.

*Convicted, factual

After the tests were corrected we realized that the words 'convicted' and 'factual' were not good examples for false cognates, so we decided to suppress them.

A breakdown of the analysis, pair by pair, is now presented, in order to justify assessments of contextual similarity. This analysis should be read in conjunction with the tables on pp62-79.

1.

2) Syntagmatic relationship

1.1.1.1.1

assist
assistir (1)

assist
assistir (2)

	∅	Finite Complement	Infinitive	Object
assist	-	-	-	+
assistir (1)	-	-	-	+
assist	-	-	-	+
assistir (2)	-	-	-	+

ASSISTIR 1 (Attend) and ASSIST share only sections 1 and 2. ASSISTIR 2 (Help) and ASSIST share all the sections, as their meaning is identical.

2.

2) attend (1)
atender

attend (2)
atender

	∅	F.C.	Inf.	Obj.
attend (1)	-	-	-	+
atender	-	-	-	+
attend (2)	-	-	-	+
atender	-	-	-	+

ATTEND 2 (be present) and ATENDER share only sections 1 and 2.

ATTEND 1 (give one's attention) and atender share all the sections, as their meaning is identical.

3.

2) discuss
discutir (1)

discuss
discutir (2)

	∅	Fin.Com.	Inf.	Object
discuss	-	-	-	+
discutir (1)	-	-	-	+
discuss	-	-	-	+
discutir (2)	-	-	-	+

DISCUSS and DISCUTIR 1 share all the sections;

3) both involve interpersonal verbal transactions;

4) both imply exchange of personal viewpoints;

5) both imply, or are neutral concerning harmony.

DISCUSS and DISCUTIR 2 share characteristics 3 and 4 of DISCUTIR 1, differing only concerning harmony, the opposite of which is implied.

N.B. The symbol "∅" means that the meaning of the verb is complete without any item following it in the sentence - i.e. that the verb is truly intransitive, without even an implied or ellipted object.

4.

- 2) enervate
enervar (1)
- enervate
enervar (2)

	∅	Finite Comp.	Infinitive	Object
enervate	-	-	-	+
enervar (1)	-	-	-	+
enervate	-	-	-	+
enervar (2)	-	-	-	+

ENERVAR 1 (debilitate) and ENERVATE share all the sections
ENERVAR 2 (irritate) is broadly similar to ENERVATE but refers to an adverse mental effect rather than physical.

5. 2)

- realize (1)
realizar
- realize (2)
realizar

	∅	Fin. Compl	Infinit.	Object
realize (1)	-	+	-	+
realizar	-	-	-	+
realize (2)	-	-	-	+
realizar	-	-	-	+

REALIZE 1 (understand correctly) share only 30% of contextual similarity.

REALIZE 2 (make real) and REALIZAR share all the sections.

6.

- 2) acomodated
acomodado (1)
- accommodated
acomodado (2)

	Atributive	Predicative	Intensifier	Comparison
acomodated	-	+	-	-
acomodado (1)	+	+	+	+
accommodated	-	+	-	-
acomodado (2)	+	+	+	+

ACOMODADO 1 (lazy) and ACCOMMODATED share only 30% of con-

textual similarity.

ACOMODADO 2 (lodge) and ACCOMMODATED share all the sections.

7.

- 2) pretend
pretender

	Ø	Object	Infin.	Finite Comp.
pretend	+	-	+	+
pretender	-	-	+	-

- 3) Both share meaning of INTENTION;
 4) PRETEND (to intend to make others believe the proposition)
 PRETENDER (to intend to perform the proposition),
 5) PRETEND intend to make others believe that a state of affairs is true up to and/or at present time.
 PRETENDER intend to perform an action, or to make a state of affairs true, in the future.

8.

- 2) push
puxar

	Ø	Object	Infin.	Fin.Comp.
push	-	+	-	-
puxar	-	+	-	-

- 3) both imply a physical activity;
 4) both have the meaning of causing another object to move;
 5) PUSH exert pressure or force against
 PUXAR draw towards the agent.

9.

2)

procure
procurar

	Ø	Object.	Infin.	Finite Comp.
procure	-	+	-	-
procurar	-	+	+	-

3) Physical/mental effort;

4) Attempt to obtain/locate an object;

5) successful accomplishment of search.

10.

2)

presently
presentemente

	Adjunct	Disjunct
presently	+	-
presentemente	+	-

3) Both refer to time;

4) Both adverbials locate the action of the verb on the time scale rather than indicate its frequency, and are non-past;

5) PRESENTLY = does not include the present moment.

PRESENTEMENTE = includes the present moment.

N.B. An additional source of confusion in this case is the fact that in Am.E. "PRESENTLY" normally means "NOW", and this use is even becoming noticeable in Br.E, particularly in journalistic style. The native speaker who we consulted violently opposes this trend, however.

11.

2)

actual

atual

	Attributive	Predicative	Intensific.	Comparison
actual	+	-	-	-
atual	+	+	+	+

3) Both imply relevance;

4) Both imply relevance to time of utterance;

5) ACTUAL = topical relevance (psychological).

ATUAL = temporal relevance.

12.

2)

constipated

constipado

	Attributive	Predicative	Intensific.	Comparison
constipated	+	+	+	+
constipado	+	+	+	+

3) Both refer to a human physical condition;

4) Both imply obstruction of a passage;

5) CONSTIPATED = obstruction of bowels.

CONSTIPADO = obstruction of nose.

13.

2)

demoralized

desmoralizado

	Attrib.	Predic.	Intensific.	Comparison
demoralized	+	+	+	+
desmoralizado	+	+	+	+

3) Both refer to a mental condition;

4) Both refer to moral debility;

5) The viewpoint differs:

DEMORALIZED = subject's private feelings

DESMORALIZADO = others, regarding the subject.

14.

2)

distracted

distraido

Attrib.	Predic.	Inf.	Compar.
-	+	+	+
+	+	+	+

3) Both words refer to mental states;

4) Both refer to interference to normal thought;

5) DISTRACTED = temporary

DISTRAIDO = permanent/habitual

15.

2)

educated

educado

Attrib.	Predic.	Int.	Compar.
+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+

3) Both refer to mental states;

4) Both refer to a high-level of socially-valued knowledge;

5) EDUCATED = knowledge of how to behave socially.

EDUCADO = knowledge of intellectual type

16.

2)

exquisite
esquisito

Attrib.	Pred.	Int.	Comp.
+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+

3) Both mean unusual;

4) Both include a value judgement;

5) EXQUISITE = favourable

ESQUISITO = unfavourable

17.

2)

formidable
formidável

Attrib.	Pred.	Int.	Comp.
+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+

3) Both express judgement of quality;

4) Both carry the idea of power;

5) FORMIDABLE = has connotations of fear.

FORMIDÁVEL = has connotations of approval

18.

2)

genial
genial

Attrib.	Pred.	Intens.	Comp.
+	+	-	+
+	+	-	+

3) Both refer to human qualities:

4) Both constitute favourable judgements;

5) GENIAL = mental

GENIAL = social

19.

2)

morose
 moroso

Attrib.	Predic.	Intens.	Compar.
+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+

3) Both reflect discouragement;

4) MOROSE = sad

MOROSO = slow

20.

2)

ordinary
 ordinário
 (relating to
 people)

Attrib.	Predic.	Intens.	Compar.
+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+

3) Refer to status compared among others;

4) Refer to lack of high status;

5) Portuguese carries highly negative value judgement lacking in English.

21.

2)

sensible
 sensível

Attrib.	Predic.	Intens.	Compar.
+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+

3) Both involve the mind;

- 4) Both share the meaning "awareness of environment";
 5) SENSIBLE = favourable value judgement.
 SENSÍVEL = implies emotional vulnerability.

22.

2)

stupid
 estúpido

Attribut.	Predic.	Intensif.	Compar.
+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+

- 3) Both involve human behaviour;
 4) Both express condemnation;
 5) STUPID = refers to mental condition.
 ESTÚPIDO = refers to social behaviour.

23.

2)

apparatus
 aparato

Count	Non-count
+	-
-	+

APPARATUS = a set of instruments, machines that work together for a particular purpose; or a system.

APARATO = pomp grandeur.

24.

2)

arbiter
 arbitro
 (sport)

	Count	Non-count
+	+	-
+	-	-

- 3) Both are appointed to a superior position over others;
- 4) Both are to decide disputed issues;
- 5) ARBITER = is used in diplomacy, social strife, etc.
 ARBITRO = is used in sport

25.

2)

asylum
 asilo
 (Institution)

	Count	Non-count
+	+	-
+	-	-

- 3) Both are institutions;
- 4) Both institutions take care of people;
- 5) ASYLUM = an institution for the care of the mentally ill (now becoming rare).
 ASILO = an institution for care of the aged, the poor.

26.

2)

baton
 batom

	Count	Non-count
+	+	-
+	-	-

- 3) Both are objects similar in shape (i.e. cylindrical);
- 4) They differ in size and material;
- 5) They differ in function.

27.

2)

cap
capa

	Count	Non-count
cap	+	-
capa	+	-

- 3) Both refer to objects of personal wear;
- 4) They differ totally in form;
- 5) They are worn on different parts of the body.

28.

2)

cafeteria
cafeteira

	Count	Non-count
cafeteria	+	-
cafeteira	+	-

- 3) Both are related to coffee;
- 5) CAFETERIA = a kind of restaurant
CAFETEIRA = a coffee-pot.

29.

2)

cigar
cigarro

	Count	Non-count
cigar	+	-
cigarro	+	-

- 3) Both are from the same source, i.e., tobacco leaves;
- 4) Both are for smoking and are similar in shape;
- 5) They differ in size and in the treatment of the tobacco (and, for non-smokers in the smell of the smoke'.)

30.

2)

collar

colar

	Count	Non-count
collar	+	-
colar	+	-

- 3) Both refer to object of personal wear;
- 4) Both are used around one's neck;
- 5) COLLAR = is part of a garment.

COLAR = is an adornment worn on a string or chain.

31

2)

commodity

comodidade

	Count	Non-count
commodity	+	-
comodidade	-	+

The two words have no common semantic ground.

COMMODITY = an article of trade or commerce. esp. a farm or mineral product.

COMODIDADE = convenience

32.

2)

data

data

	Count	Non-count
data	+	-
data	+	-

DATA can either be singular or plural, but the current tendency is for it to be singular

3) Both refer to factual information;

Data = facts, information.

Data = the day of the year

33.

2)

disgust

desgosto

	Count	Non-count
disgust	-	+
desgosto	+	+

3) Both imply emotional reaction;

4) Both express strong aversion;

5) They vary with regard to intensity, English being stronger and more likely to carry physical implications of nausea.

34.

2)

editor

editor

	Count	Non-count
editor	+	-
editor	+	-

3) Both refer to professions concerning the printed word;

4) Both refer to people of high authority;

5) EDITOR = one who edits.

EDITOR = one whose business is to publish

35.

2)

	Count	Non-Count
fabric	+	+
fábrica	+	-

They have no semantic similarity, FABRIC meaning CLOTH while FÁBRICA means FACTORY.

36.

2)

	Count	Non-Count
face	+	-
face	+	-

3) Both refer to a part of the body;

4) Both refer to the front of the head;

5) FACE = all of it

FACE = half of the lower part, the cheek.

37.

2)

	Count	Non-count
journal	+	-
jornal	+	-

3) Both are composed of written words;

4) Both are slim publications produced at regular intervals;

5) JOURNAL = not normally daily, and aimed at a specialized public.

JORNAL = aimed at the widest public, usually daily.

38.

2)

	Count	Non-count
lecture	+	-
leitura	+	-

3) Both have to do with verbal communication;

4) Both can be in the spoken form;

5) LECTURE = a speech or lesson delivered by its author.

LEITURA = the act or practice of reading.

39.

2)

	Count	Non-count
library	+	-
livraria	+	-

3) Both are usually public places;

4) Both contain books;

5) LIBRARY = building where books may be borrowed.

LIVRARIA = place where books are only sold

40.

2)

	Count	Non-count
lunch	+	+
lanche	+	-

3) Both refer to meals;

4) Both are taken during the day, and are not the principal meal of the day;

5) LUNCH = mid-day meal.

LANCHE = any light snack.

41.

2)

	Count	Non-count
malice	-	+
malícia	-	+

3) Both involve the mind;

4) Both imply negative social attitudes;

5) MALICE = desire to harm others

MALÍCIA = deliberate misinterpretation.

42.

2)

	Count	Non-count
média	+	-
mêdia	+	-

They do not have total similarity of syntagmatic relationships, as the English word is plural and the Portuguese word is singular.

There is no semantic similarity.

43.

2)

	Count	Non-count
notice	+	-
notícia	+	-

3) Communication;

4) Public, formal

5) NOTICE = a warning about something to happen.

NOTÍCIA = new information.

(We are only considering the countable form of "notice". We consider the non-count form as a separate lexeme).

44.

2)

	Count	Non-count
sanatorium	+	-
sanatório	+	-

3) Both are institutions;

4) Both care for sick people;

5) SANATORIUM = for people who are physically sick.

SANATÓRIO = for people who are mentally sick.

45.

2)

	Count	Non-count
sack	+	-
saco	+	-

- 3) Both are containers;
 4) Both are the same shape;
 5) SACK = a big bag, usually of cloth; a 'bag' is usually a small one.
 SACO = any such container.

46.

2)

	Count	Non-count
syllabus	+	-
sílaba	+	-

There is no semantic common ground: SYLLABUS = an arrangement of subjects for study.

SÍLABA = a speech segment.

47.

2)

	Count	Non-count
venture	+	-
ventura	+	-

There is no semantic common ground: VENTURE = an undertaking that is dangerous or daring.

VENTURA = happiness

3.4a STATISTICAL ANALYSES OF THE RESULTS
OF THE FIRST TEST APPLIED TO GROUPS
'A' AND 'B'

The first test applied was The Median Test critical ratio = 2,01 at the level of significance of 5% (the terminology used here is that employed by Guilford¹⁶).

As $RC < t$ critical ratio or $0,06 < 2,01$, one can say that groups 'A' and 'B' are homogeneous in the first test.

Refer to Figure 1.

The second test applied was The Test of Correlation of the variables:

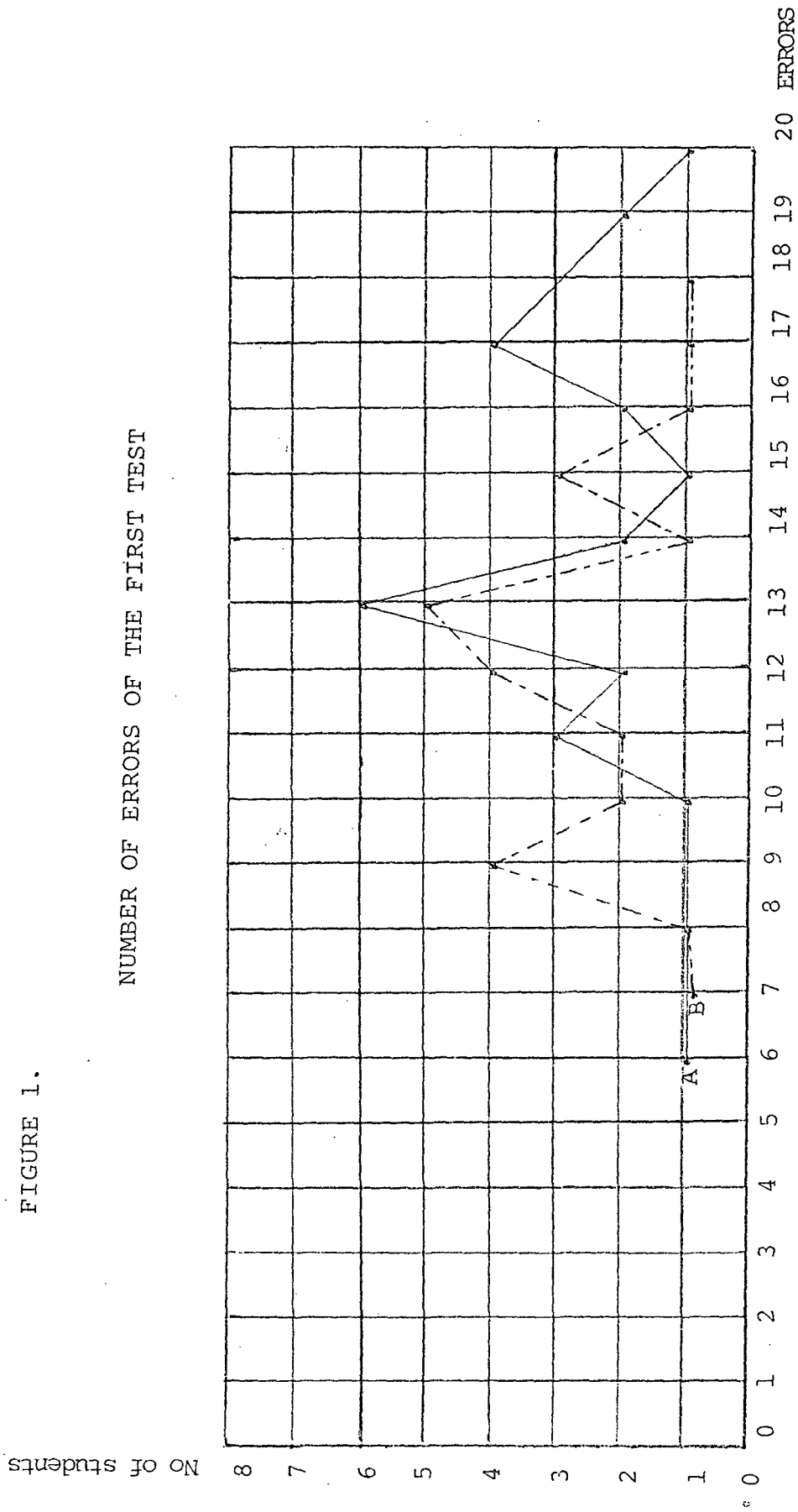
SIMILARITY/ERRORS

As the critical value of r_s , coefficient of correlation of SPEARMAN at the level of significance of 1% is inferior to the r_s computed ($0,605 < 0,64$) one can assert that there is correlation between the two variables.

Refer to Fig. 2.

FIGURE 1.

NUMBER OF ERRORS OF THE FIRST TEST

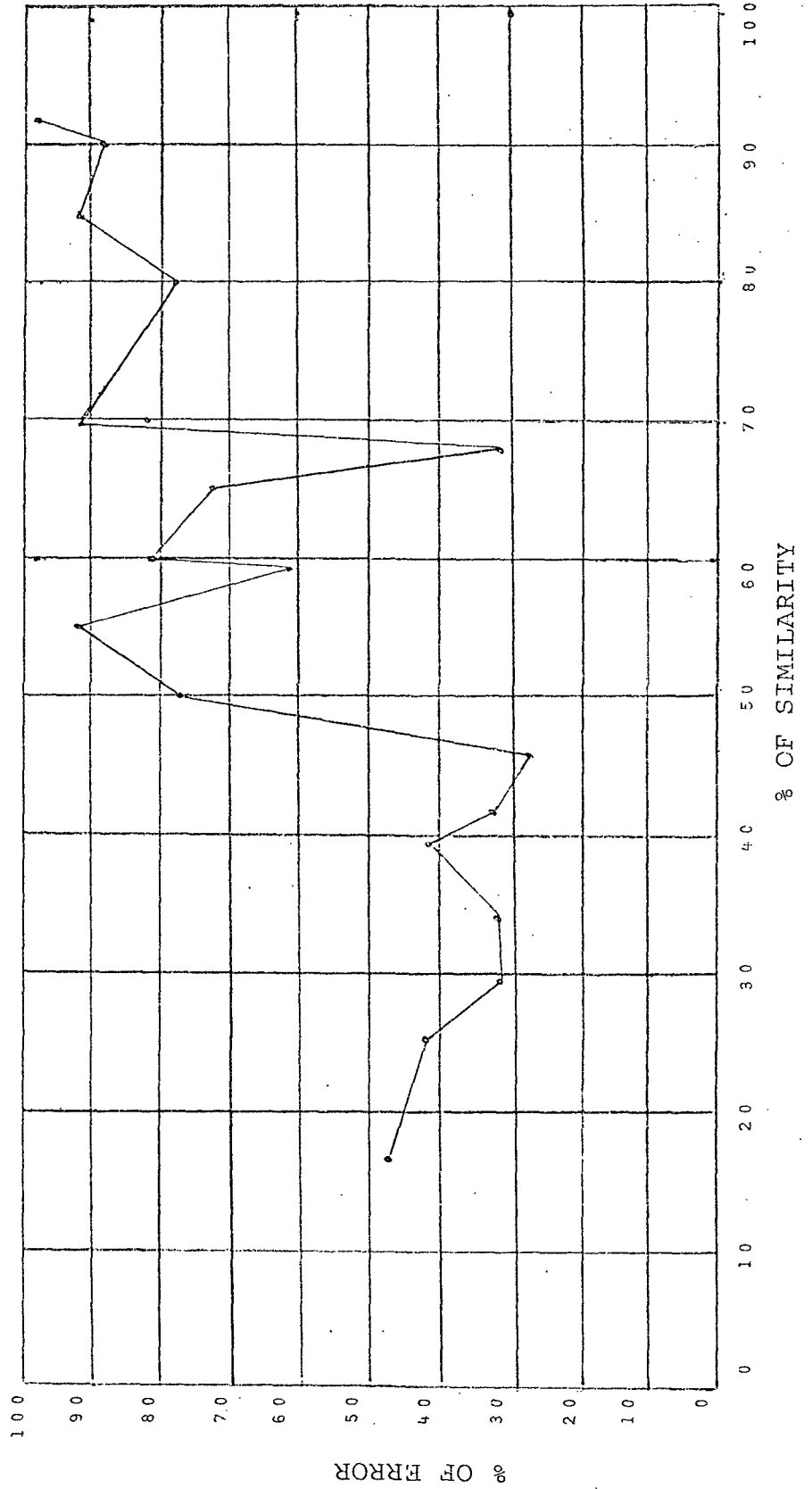


Line 'A' refers to the 1st group;

Line 'B' refers to the 2nd group.

PERCENTUAL DISTRIBUTION BETWEEN THE VARIABLES
SIMILARITY AND ERROR IN THE 1st TEST

FIGURE 2



In the light of the results shown above, we have come to the following conclusion: that errors involving confusion of false cognates show a tendency to increase in proportion to contextual similarities + infrequency of words. This conclusion led us to set up our main hypothesis that "confusion caused by false cognates is corrected more efficiently by a teaching method which presents the words in context than by teaching them in isolation."

3.3b THE COLLECTION OF DATA

We chose thirty cognates out of those 49 presented in section 3.3a. This further selection was made on the basis of estimated frequency in everyday use.

We then proceeded to apply two different methods of teaching false cognates. Once the homogeneity of the students was proved, we divided the ten classes into two groups which we shall call 'A' and 'B' respectively.

Group 'A' were given a sheet containing thirty false cognates out of those 49 in the first test. Each cognate had a dictionary definition (taken or adapted from Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, 1978³⁰) beside it.

The cognates and their respective definitions are listed below:

VOCABULARY - FALSE COGNATES

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE STUDENT: Study the following words carefully until you are sure of their meaning.

- 1) editor = man in charge of a newspaper
- 2) sensible = having or showing good judgement
- 3) actual = real, not imaginary
- 4) fabric = cloth
- 5) presently = later, soon
- 6) venture = something which is risky or dangerous to do
- 7) apparatus = instrument, mechanism
- 8) formidable = very difficult, intimidating
- 9) media = means of communication
- 10) baton = stick used by the conductor of an orchestra
- 11) data = information
- 12) educated = someone with good academic knowledge
- 13) push = press against, opposite of "pull"
- 14) pretend = make oneself appear to be something or to be doing something
- 15) disgust = very unpleasant feeling
- 16) distracted = unable to concentrate because of noise, etc.
- 17) syllabus = programme for an academic course
- 18) realize = understand
- 19) library = place where you borrow books or study
- 20) discuss = have a conversation
- 21) ordinary = common
- 22) lecture = a talk giving information
- 23) morose = silent and bad tempered
- 24) face = front part of the head containing the eyes, nose & mouth
- 25) collar = part of a coat, dress, shirt etc, which fits around the neck

- 26) cigar = roll of dried tobacco leaves used for smoking
- 27) cap = type of hat
- 28) attend = to be present
- 29) stupid = foolish, not intelligent
- 30) lunch = midday meal

N.B. The meanings given here are the same as the meanings applied in a context for group 'B'.

The students of group 'A' were given two sessions of fifteen minutes each in order to study the cognates and their meanings. After each session the students gave the sheets back to the teacher. The students while reading the sheets were not allowed to talk to one another, to look in dictionaries or even talk to the teacher, neither were the students given any information concerning the true purpose of the exercise. They were asked only to read the sheet carefully as many times as possible.

Group 'B' received two different sheets containing the same twenty common false cognates out of those thirty given to group 'A'. They were also given two sessions of fifteen minutes each in order to study the sentences and be sure of their meaning.

Each cognate was applied in two different special contexts where the meaning could be grasped by the students and no dictionary definitions were given. The other procedures were the same as for the first group.

The words applied in a special context can be found below:

VOCABULARY - FALSE COGNATES

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE STUDENT: Study the following sentences carefully until you are sure of their meaning.

- 1) An editor is always busy writing the main articles for newspapers and magazines.
- 2) A sensible father would not give his son a motorbike.
- 3) The radio announced that the president had been killed but the actual details are not yet known.
- 4) A great variety of fabric for making trousers, shirts or dresses can be found at most of our stores.
- 5) The plane from São Paulo is not here yet but will be landing presently, probably in about ten minutes.
- 6) He lost all his money in a foolish business venture.
- 7) Only an expert can repair the damaged apparatus of a computer.
- 8) Coritiba are facing a formidable adversary in their match on Sunday against Flamengo.
- 9) People no longer can live without modern mass media; this can be seen by the great number of televisions, radios and newspapers which are sold every year.
- 10) Ray Conniff has a special way of waving the baton in front of his orchestra.
- 11) One can't plan a computer programme without the appropriate data.
- 12) If you want to be educated you will have to attend a good school or at least read good books.
- 13) The maid always pushed the baby carriage through the park.

- 14) The children were pretending they were cowboys and indians.
- 15) Whenever she saw horrible insects such as flies, cockroaches, etc she was filled with disgust.
- 16) He was feeling so distracted because of his problems that he could not concentrate on his book.
- 17) It is a long syllabus for those who intend to apply for the Cambridge certificate.
- 18) I kept on looking at her and then I suddenly realized who she was.
- 19) I find it difficult to study in a library because of all the students walking round.
- 20) The women enjoyed discussing their problems so much that they agreed to meet again next day.
- 21) Pamela is an ordinary girl, she likes pop music, good books, she likes to go out with friends, in short, she does everything a teenager is supposed to like.
- 22) Three hundred students will attend Dr. Whitcomb's lecture about modern science and man.
- 23) When he is depressed he looks very morose.
- 24) I could see her entire face when she suddenly looked out of the window.
- 25) She was angry because there was lipstick on the collar of her husband's shirt.
- 26) Winston Churchill always had a cigar in his mouth.
- 27) All soldiers are obliged to wear caps and none of them can take the cap off their heads.
- 28) A diligent student, besides studying all his subjects, also attends all the classes.

- 29) It was very stupid of you to leave the money on the table.
- 30) The queen invited the president to have lunch at Buckingham Palace.

VOCABULARY - FALSE COGNATES

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE STUDENT: Study the following sentences carefully until you are sure of their meaning.

- 1) The editor worked late writing the main article for next morning's newspaper.
- 2) Any sensible person would never drive his car at more than 80 kilometers per hour.
- 3) Many people were killed on the roads last week-end but the police do not know the actual figure.
- 4) "What about that yellow fabric? It would be perfect for making a dress".
- 5) "Take it easy Maggie, I have already called the doctor, he will be here presently.
- 6) It's really a venture to climb a mountain without the adequate equipment. The risk of losing one's life is very great.
- 7) The apparatus of a watch is very complicated for anyone who is not a watchmaker.
- 8) The Second World War was formidable because it took place all over the world and its frightening events are still felt even today.

- 9) Newspapers, television and radio are important mass media.
- 10) Paul Mauriat raised his baton to begin the concert.
- 11) After analysing the questionnaires we put the data into a computer.
- 12) "After studying so many years at Oxford University you can't say that Roger is not an educated man."
- 13) When we ran out of petrol (gasoline) we all had to get out and push the car.
- 14) He pretended to be asleep when his mother called him, but in fact he was awake.
- 15) The food at the hotel had such an unpleasant smell that it filled him with disgust.
- 16) Ever since his financial difficulties began he has been looking very distracted as if he does not know where he is.
- 17) The syllabus prepared by the headmaster of the school had to be followed by all the teachers.
- 18) Many people do not realize that if you drive fast you use more petrol.
- 19) We are going to the public library to borrow some books.
- 20) We discussed what to do and where we should go.
- 21) An ordinary car like our "Fusca" is cheaper than a "Mustang", though both are considered good cars.
- 22) Lecture about UFO's (unidentified flying objects) are quite common in many universities nowadays.
- 23) He gave me a morose look so I asked him why he was so sad.
- 24) The bandit had an ugly face with a big scar on one of

the cheeks.

- 25) An undershirt (T-shirt) usually has no collar.
- 26) The cigars made in Havana are famous.
- 27) When I was in Africa I wore a cap in order to protect my head against the strong sunrays.
- 28) Mildred has to attend six English lessons a week.
- 29) If she weren't so stupid she would have passed that history examination.
- 30) In Brazil we usually have lunch at twelve o'clock.

After the second session the second standard test was presented to both groups.

In order to measure learning we had to devise a test which was neutral with regard to the two teaching methods.

Both groups were given ten minutes to complete the test (which is described in section 3.2).

The second test is as follows:

VOCABULARY TEST - FALSE COGNATES

NAME: _____ CLASS: _____

This test consists of a sentence and four answer choices. Read the sentence carefully and then select the ONE PHRASE which seems to correspond to the sentence presented.

- 1) THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY TELEGRAPH IS A SIXTY-YEAR-OLD MAN

() O editor do Daily Telegraph é um homem de sessenta anos.

- () O diretor responsável do Daily Telegraph é um homem de sessenta anos
- () O diretor de arte do Daily Telegraph é um homem de sessenta anos
- () O redator do Daily Telegraph é um homem de sessenta anos.

2) ROSALYN IS A VERY SENSIBLE GIRL

- () Rosalyn é uma menina muito ajuizada
- () Rosalyn é uma menina muito sensível
- () Rosalyn é uma menina sensacional
- () Rosalyn é uma menina muito prematura

3) THE ACTUAL DEBT OF THAT GROUP IS AROUND \$40 BILLION

- () O atual débito daquele grupo é em torno de \$ 40 bilhões
- () A receita real daquele grupo é em torno de \$ 40 bilhões
- () O débito real daquele grupo é em torno de \$ 40 bilhões
- () A atual remessa de lucros daquele grupo é em torno de \$ 40 bilhões

4) THEY POINTED AT THE FABRIC

- () Apontaram para a fábrica
- () Apontaram para o tecido
- () Apontaram para a fábrica de tecido
- () Apontaram para o fabricante

5) She is arriving presently

- () Ela vai chegar daqui a pouco
- () Ela está chegando presentemente
- () Ela chegará imediatamente
- () Ela vai chegar neste exato momento

6) IT'S A VENTURE TO CROSS THE OCEAN ON THIS BOAT

- () É uma facilidade cruzar o oceano neste barco
- () É confortável cruzar o oceano neste barco
- () É arriscado cruzar o oceano neste barco
- () É uma felicidade cruzar o oceano neste barco

7) VERY FEW PEOPLE CAN UNDERSTAND THIS APPARATUS

- Pouquíssimas pessoas podem entender este aparato
- Pouquíssimas pessoas podem entender este mecanismo
- Pouquíssimas pessoas podem entender esta divisão
- Pouquíssimas pessoas podem entender este desfile pomposo

8) MRS. THATCHER IS A FORMIDABLE LADY

- A sra. Thatcher é uma dama atraente
- A sra. Thatcher é uma dama encantadora
- A sra. Thatcher é uma dama horrível
- A sra. Thatcher é uma dama formidável

9) HE'S INTERESTED IN THE MEDIA

- Ele está interessado na mídia
- Ele está interessado nos saldos de gols
- Ele está interessado em agradar seu professor
- Ele está interessado nos meios de comunicações

10) THERE WAS A BATON LYING ON THE TABLE

- Havia uma bengala sobre a mesa
- Havia um bastão sobre a mesa
- Havia um baton sobre a mesa
- Havia um botão sobre a mesa

11) THE DATA WAS ALTERED WITHOUT PREVIOUS NOTICE

- A data foi alterada sem prévia notícia
- Os encontros foram alterados sem prévio aviso
- Os dados foram alterados sem prévio aviso
- A reunião foi adiada sem prévia notícia

12) My brother is an educated man

- Meu irmão é um homem instruído
- Meu irmão é um homem cortês
- Meu irmão é um homem com muito 'status'
- Meu irmão é um homem cordato

13) HE PUSHED THE DOOR

- Ele empurrou a porta
- Ele puxou a porta
- Ele arrombou a porta
- Ele destravou a porta

14) SHE PRETENDED TO BE A DOCTOR

- Ela pretendia ser uma doutora
- Ela fingia ser uma doutora
- Ela relutava em ser uma doutora
- Ela matutava sobre livros para ser uma doutora

15) HE LOOKED AT HIS PLATE WITH DISGUST

- Ele olhava para seu prato com ódio
- Ele olhava para seu prato com desgosto
- Ele olhava para seu prato com nojo
- Ele olhava para seu prato com avidez para degustar o alimento

16) THE STUDENT FAILED THE EXAM BECAUSE HE WAS DISTRACTED

- O estudante foi reprovado no exame porque estava perturbado
- O estudante foi reprovado no exame porque estava distraído
- O estudante foi reprovado no exame porque foi destrutado
- O estudante foi reprovado no exame porque estava usando meios ilícitos

17) THE TEACHER EXAMINED THE SYLLABUS

- O professor examinou as sílabas
- O professor examinou o programa escolar
- O professor examinou a cartilha de alfabetização
- O professor examinou o jogo de palavras cruzadas

18) HE DIDN'T REALIZE WHAT SHE WANTED

- () Ele não imaginou o que ela queria
- () Ele não realizou o que ela queria
- () Ele não cooperou com o que ela queria
- () Ele não entendeu o que ela queria

19) SHE PASSED BY THE LIBRARY

- () Ela passou pela biblioteca
- () Ela passou pelo gabinete do secretário
- () Ela passou pela livraria
- () Ela passou pela distribuidora de livros

20) WE WERE DISCUSSING YOUR LETTER

- () Estávamos nos desentendendo por causa da sua carta
- () Estávamos trocando idéias sobre a sua carta
- () Estávamos disputando a sua carta
- () Estávamos contendendo por causa da sua carta

3.4b STATISTICAL ANALYSES OF THE RESULTS OF THE SECOND TEST APPLIED TO GROUPS 'A' AND 'B'

The third statistical test applied was the Median Test:

With 99% of reliability we can assert that method 'B' is more efficient than Method 'A'.

The test applied was the Median Test where X^2 (chi square) 9,11 being this value superior to the X^2 critical ratio = 6,64, with the degree of freedom = 1.

-Refer to figure 3.

The fourth test applied was the Standard Deviation Test of Semi-interquatile Range:

In the dispersion test the degree of homogeneity of the groups remained unaltered

T critical ratio = 2.01

Level of significance = 5%

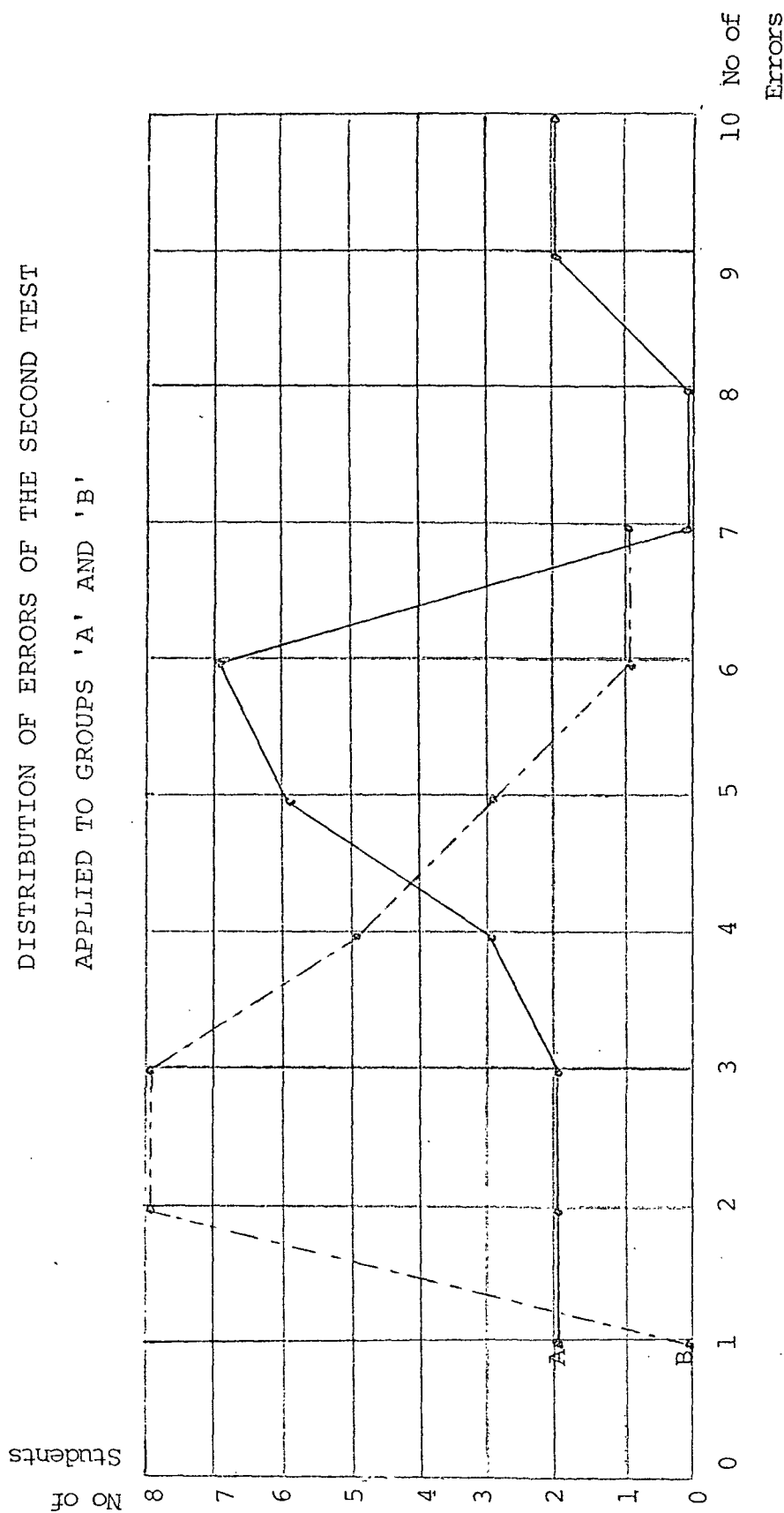
$TQ = 0,491$

$RC = 0,265$

Refer to figure 3.

FIGURE 3.

DISTRIBUTION OF ERRORS OF THE SECOND TEST
 APPLIED TO GROUPS 'A' AND 'B'



Line 'A' refers to the 1st group

Total of errors: 134

Line 'B' refers to the 2nd group

Total de errors: 88

PART II

4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

4.1 The Statistical Analysis of the Data

The statistical analysis of the data was carried out by means of the application of various tests described in sections 3.4a and 3.4b.

The tests were applied in order to find out whether two different results verified were statistically equal or whether the differences were significant.

Thus the first statistical test applied, The Median Test proved the homogeneity of group 'A' and group 'B'.

The second statistical test applied was the Test of Correlation in order to verify the degree of association between the two variables: Similarity/Errors of the first written test applied to the students. The result of the Correlation Test was positive, i.e., there was correlation between the two variables.

The third statistical test was the Median Test (Section 3.4b), which concerns the main experiment. It is the most important test of all. The results of this test were positive, thus proving the efficiency and superiority of Method "B", the method in which the words were applied in meaningful contexts.

The fourth test (Section 3.4b) was the Standard Deviation

Test of the Semi-interquatile Range. This test states that the homogeneity of groups 'A' and 'B' remained unaltered. The results obtained were not relevant to statistics since they were inferior to critical ratio = 2.01.

This result is due to the small size of the population, one of the variables discussed later.

But if we refer to figure 3 (Line B), we shall see that Method 'B' led the students to act in a more uniform way than group 'A' (Line A).

This is obvious because the number of errors of group 'A' is equal to 134 and the number of errors of group 'B' is equal to 88, the difference between the two groups is equal to 46, a significant difference for such a small population.

4.2. POSSIBLE OBJECTIONS TO THE EXPERIMENT

4.2.1 SIZE OF POPULATION

This may be the first factor presented to refute the effectiveness of the experiment.

We agree that the size of population is not large. At first we began with about one hundred students and later we ended up with fifty-two.

As we began to apply the first tests at the end of September we had a larger number of students attending the classes. There was no possibility of applying the tests before September because the tests were first pre-tested before being definitely applied at Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Inglesa of Curitiba. (S.B.C.I.).

The second tests were applied only at the end of November. Again the tests, before being applied, were pre-tested at the Federal University of Paraná, criticized by teachers, checked by native speakers of English and only then applied at S.B.C.I.

By that time the number of students had decreased. Some of the students were busy studying in order to enter university, some were absent when the test was applied and some might have quit the school.

On the other hand it would be quite difficult to get a larger homogeneous population which would be suitable for the experiment, i.e., a population with relative fluency in English and of a homogeneous level of knowledge in English, as is the population of our experiment.

4.2.2 TEST BIAS

Test bias is another variable to be considered. How efficient was the final test? Although it is not easy to measure learning effectively we tried to devise a test which would be neutral to both groups. (refer to the test at section 3.3b).

The test consisted of a sentence written in English where one false cognate was applied and four alternatives written in Portuguese, from which the student had to select ONE PHRASE which seemed to correspond to the sentence presented.

The sentence written in English where the cognate was applied gave no hint of the meaning, because this would have favoured one group or the other.

Concerning the false cognates presented in the two different methods, method 'A' presented the cognates alongside the dictionary meaning, and method 'B' presented the cognates applied in a context- neither method translated the cognates into Portuguese.

As the test answers were written in Portuguese, the test was neutral to both groups, to whom the words had been presented in English, either in isolation (group 'A') or in context (group 'B').

Furthermore the students filled out the tests immediately after the second session in the case of both groups. The students did not know anything at all about the test, which was a complete surprise to them. They had only been asked to cooperate as fully as possible with the experiment.

4.2.3 A CONTEXT PLUS A TRANSLATION METHOD

It may be argued that a context plus a translation method would be more effective than the two methods presented.

In order to find out whether such a method would work more efficiently or not, hypotheses should be raised and tested through a new experiment. Only then could such an argument be taken into consideration, although it is clearly a reasonable hypothesis in view of our results.

Despite of all the factors discussed above we can assert that our main hypothesis is still proved, regardless of the sizes of the population and task, the time factor, and test bias.

Apart from the arguments presented to dismiss possible objections, other reasons can be added to support our experiment:

a) Our experiment is only a pilot project. We have not claimed that it is rigorously scientific, but the results obtained show strong tendencies to support our hypothesis as demonstrated through the number of errors committed by both groups, their improvement in learning the cognates, and the corroboration of the statistical data after all the results were analyzed.

b) Considering that this paper has been written to obtain an M.A. degree, then the sizes of population and task can be considered adequate.

From our pilot research another experiment, could be carried out as a doctoral thesis, covering a wider population, using more and perhaps more suitable pairs of false cognates, and involving a more substantial teaching program, where much greater rigour concerning data is required and much more time to make the experiment is available.

5. CONCLUSION

This experiment was designed to test the hypothesis that foreign learners of English will have less trouble with false cognates if they are presented in meaningful contexts, than if interlingual contrasts are stressed. We raised this hypothesis after analyzing the results of a pretest which indicated that difficulty in distinguishing false cognates increases in proportion to the infrequency of the foreign language item plus the number of contextual features shared by the two items. Our hypothesis was tested by presenting 30 easily confused items to two groups of intermediate learners, using a contextual approach with one group and a non-contextual approach with the other. A neutral test was then applied to both groups, the results of which confirmed our hypothesis that context is an important component of meaning. There are obvious implications of this result for language teachers: Wide reading of different types of text, for example, are likely to be more effective in building up a sound knowledge of vocabulary than lists of translation equivalents, which encourage L_1 - L_2 transfer, or dictionary definitions, which do not tell the learner when a word is appropriate, and do not provide a network of associations to facilitate retention of the item. In conclusion, we can confirm the truth of Hjelmslev's^{2 3} claim that " in

absolute isolation no sign has any meaning".

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