Language Learning Theory and Pedagogical Practice: Teaching Students the English They Need to Work in Hotels

Joseph S. Cravotta, III

This paper explores language learning theory and practical educational applications. It discusses a technique which educators may use to provide learners with a simple framework for better understanding the usage of polite speech while speaking English professionally at a hotel and in other situations related to the international tourism and service industry. In order to master service English, learners must also master English pronunciation. Comprehensible and clear pronunciation is critical for people who aspire to work in the international tourism and service industry. Given the fact that the international tourism and service industries are major sources of employment and income in Japan, becoming better at expressing oneself in proper, polite, formal, and clearly pronounced English is crucial. More and more Japanese people are also using English abroad for business, education, and tourism making the need for understanding polite speech even more significant. In addition, many people who travel to Japan for either business or tourism are also using English as their second language, (L 2) therefore, using proper, polite, well pronounced English will improve communication between nonnative speakers of English. Within an international context, and as increasing numbers of people who travel around the world use English to communicate, polite, properly pronounced language usage will aid comprehension and increase understanding. The process of becoming more aware of polite speech benefits tourism service industry workers as well as people who travel abroad.

In order for students to better learn about international manners and intercultural politeness, a non-teacher centered, student-fronted, collaborative setting is appropriate. Raising student awareness through using established situational and functional approaches and exploring several new variations and adaptations is most beneficial. Teaching English for professional purposes often neglects interpersonal discourse, therefore, educators should also utilize communicative tasks which give learners the chance to take part in meaningful exchange. By approaching learning in a humanistic, reflective fashion, even lower level students, through an interactive process, will gain a greater understanding of more polite language usage and communication skills.

Interactive Communication

Communication is an interactive process of negotiating meaning that involves productive and receptive techniques. (Brown, 1994; Burns and Joyce, 1997) The form and meaning of the discourse must be based on the context in which communication occurs, the interlocutors themselves, their overall experiences, the setting in which the interaction is taking place, and the objective for speaking. Communication is often extemporaneous, interminable, and evolving. It should be noted, however, that communication is not always unpredictable. Situational and functional utterances which often tend to recur in certain pro-

fessional discourse situations (e.g., checking into a hotel, or making a reservation), can be quantified and documented. (Burns and Joyce, 1997) For example, when a hotel clerk uses a formulaic expression such as "Welcome to the York Hotel. May I help you?" the subsequent expected discourse sequence would include a functional statement of need, a response to the need, an exchange of information, an offer of gratitude, an acknowledgment of the appreciation, and a leave-taking exchange. Considering this, communication for specific professional purposes, such as the tourism industry, requires that learners know not only how to produce specific points of language such as grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary (linguistic competence), but also that they understand when, why, and in what ways language is appropriate to produce (sociolinguistic competence). Indeed, all levels of communicative competence, as outlined by Canale and Swain (1980) need to be addressed and understood. Beyond grammatical and sociolinguistic competence, discourse and strategic competence will be fortified by having learners take part in integrated, structured, task-based activities.

Verbal intercultural communication for specific purposes should be differentiated from written communication which also has its own skills, forms, and conventions. (Burns and Joyce, 1997; Carter and McCarthy, 1995; Cohen, 1996) Outside the classroom, listening is used twice as often as speaking, which in turn is used twice as much as reading and writing. (Rivers, 1981) Due to the fact that the majority of communication within the international tourism and service industry takes place orally and aurally (especially for people traveling abroad), presenting oneself in a proper, well-spoken, polite manner will create a path toward better mutual understanding. Further, as this technique will incorporate work force readiness skills into EFL instruction, practice time needs to be devoted to such speaking skills as reporting, negotiating, clarifying, and problem solving. (Grognet, 1997)

Language Acquisition Theory and the Importance of Pronunciation

Learning a foreign language was once believed to only mean learning grammar, syntax, and vocabulary which then enabled one to translate the target language into an individual's native language. In order to achieve this simplistic goal, the traditional and long favored grammar-translation (Larsen-Freeman, 1986) method was adopted. This method was long recognized as the best method for fulfilling the goals of language learning without paying much attention to communication or pronunciation. The grammar-translation method, however, has been replaced by several other more effective, communicative methods to date as the trends of the world and the needs of various people changed and developed. (Brown, 1994) With the introduction of communicative language teaching in the early 1970's (Brown, 1994) and with the advent of the age of international communication and exchange; the learning of a foreign language has opened up another dimension of language which is currently viewed as a tool for more communicative use and intercultural exchange. In Japan, the teaching of pronunciation and other communicative speaking skills is essential in order to provide learners with the ability to effectively communicate with people from various countries from around the world. Competent foreign language ability is necessary for people who aspire to work in the international tourism and service industry. Mastering English has largely been regarded as a significant and a highly valued skill among people who desire to work in hotels or other tourism related professions. The fact is, however, that many Japanese learners cannot even attain what is considered to be a basic level of daily conversation in English after they have completed six years of English study in junior and senior high school. Mandatory English teaching in public schools, therefore, has been blamed for the low English proficiency of the majority of students. Among English skills taught in school, one of the most neglected and poorly taught

skills is pronunciation. What has been taught in school to date regarding pronunciation seems very conceptual in that the International Phonetic Association (IPA) alphabets have been taught as abstract symbols and ideas. In other words, much focus has been placed on the imitation and comprehension of English and little focus has been given to the creation and production of communicative exchange. Further, there is a lack of clear, communicative purpose in the lessons.

Exploring Language Learning Theories

The theory of a constructionist perspective on nonnative phonology cited from Ard (1990) and the concept of interlanguage will first be introduced. It is rather difficult to explicitly describe the phenomenon of learning polite, service expressions in a foreign language. Good service English in a foreign language is highly valued and many students would like to be able to speak with native like ability or near native like skill. Speech is a product of interactive communication, thus, it is supposed to be mutually intelligible to both the speaker and the listener. The minimum requirement may be mutual intelligibility and comprehension, but this is easier said than done. One point in describing speech may be that if a learner correctly perceives a sound uttered by a speaker, then by inference, the learner may have recognized the specific sound, and that if a listener correctly perceives a sound uttered by a learner, again by inference, the learner may have produced the specific and desired phoneme. (Ard, 1990) Proper pronunciation is a key factor in becoming able to master effective service English for working at a hotel. An alternative model of examining nonnative phonology is the constructionist perspective on nonnative phonology proposed by Ard. (1990) Ard contends that nonnative phonological representation must be constructed. He also points out that representation constructed by a nonnative learner may be different from one constructed by a native speaker of the language. (Ard, 1990) This model entails three representational levels that are relevant for the acquisition of phonology:

a) underlying representations hypothesized by the learner;
b) phonetic representations perceived by the learner; and
c) the learner's pronunciation. (Ard, 1990)

The implication may be that at level a, through instruction, the learner hypothesizes and constructs in her or his mind an abstract phonological system close to actual pronunciation. At level b, by receiving input, the learner tests out this hypothesis. Finally, at level c, the learner produces sounds based on her or his hypothesis. This model also deals with the two notions of rule and representation and treats representation as more important in that the correctness of a posited rule cannot be decided without correct representation. This model rejects the discussion of phonological representations on nonnative phonology only in terms of phonemes as it places significant and primary emphasis on rules. However, this does not mean that phonemes are totally abandoned while considering this model. Phonemes need to be addressed as part of a paradigm for teaching pronunciation to learners of English as a second language along with their underlying concepts, notions, distinctive features, and phonological rules. The abstract nature of phonological representations should be understood in detail as well because words are not often pronounced exactly the same every time they are spoken. (Ard, 1990) The hypothesized concept of interlanguage will be introduced and examined in order to elucidate what the term really means and how Ard's model is related to this notion.

Interlanguage and Language Acquisition

The concept of interlanguage, first discussed by Selinker, (1972) is very similar to Ard's model. The common notions shared by the two is attributable to their similarly constructive natures. Like Ard's model, interlanguage may also indicate a set of abstract representations a learner constructs in her or

his mind. Interlanguage, unlike Ard's model, may be viewed as a more comprehensive model, comprising of not only phonological aspects but also of the entire range of the linguistic concepts of the target language. Since Selinker first coined the term, alternative terms have been proposed to refer to the same notion. According to Ellis, (1985) Nemser (1971) uses the term approximative systems, and Corder (1971) uses the term idiosyncratic dialects and transitional competence. Lightbown and Spada (1993), however, suggest that it is the learner's knowledge developing. Interlanguage may have characteristics of the learner's native language, characteristics of the target language, and some characteristics which seem to be very general and tend to occur in all or most interlanguage systems. Interlanguages are systematic, but they are also dynamic, continually evolving as learners receive more input and revise their hypotheses about the target language.

Ellis (1985) cites the work of Nemser (1971) about various notions concerning constructed interlanguage. If interlanguage is accepted to be constructed, issues about how is it constructed need to be addressed and understood in more detail. Brown (1994) points out that interlanguage is sometimes likened to a pidgin language. Interlanguage is a way to communicate using a shortened or simplified form other languages. (Holm, 1988) The implication is that interlanguages and pidgin languages can be formed when two or more languages are brought together to form a unique language, possessing aspects of both of the languages involved. (Brown, 1994) An interlanguage is considered a natural language, (Ellis, 1985) like other languages in the world, in that it may develop in its own right as hypothesis formation takes place. Hypothesis formation is how the learner builds a base on her or his previous knowledge of her or his first language (L 1), the new information of her or his second language (L 2), and how the learner formulates a new context for communication through this interlanguage. The second language learner also tests out her or his hypothesis based on perceived input and she or he shapes or corrects the hypothesis. A hypothesis being tested out or corrected may take over some part of the existing linguistic system and it is reshaped as part of the whole system. It is this hypothesis formation that Ard's model and interlanguage have most in common. Ellis (1985) explains and discusses the major traits of interlanguage. Interlanguage is permeable, dynamic, and, systematic. The implication is that rules are not concrete and are open to change. Interlanguage does not consist of various bits and pieces of language but the facts and phenomena of the target language.

Brown (1994) provides the following four stages along which interlanguage may develop. The first of the four stages is a stage of random errors where the learner does not fully realize there is a system in the target language. This is a stage which is significantly characterized by guessing and random experimenting. The next stage, termed an emergent stage, is when the learner begins to recognize a system and learn some basic rules. In this stage, however, most of the rules internalized by the learner are rather idiosyncratic and unstable and she or he is still unable to correct errors even when they are pointed out by an educator. The third stage is a systematic stage in which rules become more consistent and are approaching the correct system of the target language. Learning how to correct errors when they are pointed out may be the most salient characteristic of this stage. This is the point that is rather different from the second stage. The system ultimately cements in the final stage called a stabilization stage. In the final stage, learners are able to correct themselves and very few errors are produced. The second language learner has acquired the system and understands it and is able to use it effectively without losing intended meaning of utterances. Unlike other natural languages in the world, interlanguage exhibits a unique stage that could possibly take place after or during any of the four stages. Ellis (1985) and Brown (1994) consider a phenomenon that is referred to as fossilization. Fossilization takes place when incorrect linguistic forms are permanently incorporated into a learner's second language competence. The development of a second language learner's interlanguage system may prevent the ability to correct fos-

silized errors. Ellis (1985) and Brown (1994) also point out how a clear manifestation of this phenomenon can be found in the foreign sounding accents of many second language learners. The purpose of the specific teaching methods and materials presented later in this paper is to overcome these dilemmas.

Ard's model and interlanguage have been examined to give a general account of how learners of a second language develop an interlanguage system during their acquisition of a target language. This section primarily deals with SLA theory, but two questions also need to be addressed: what is learning? and what is teaching? Many researchers have provided different answers. Teaching and learning have a symbiotic relationship and are integral. (Brown, 1994) Indeed, learning has to precede teaching. In the behaviorist view, learning is considered habit formation. (Ellis, 1985) According to Brown, (1994) habits can be formed when appropriate stimulus-response conditioning and rewards are given.

An alternative theory is that learning is related to the cognitive process. (Brown, 1994) Learning is not only a machine like process. It also necessitates cognitive operation by the learner. As opposed to rote learning, this is called meaningful learning. The learner relates meaning to the knowledge, information, or subject matter to be learned. This type of learning may be useful in the acquisition of knowledge and long-term memory. Ellis (1985) indicates how a mentalistic view of learning may take place through the process of simplification, which occurs when a learner tries to easily understand the learning process itself. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the learner operates on her or his cognitive systems to foster simplification. This simplification process may, in fact, be the heart of language acquisition for both first languages and second languages. It is not easy to distinguish or manipulate these two types of learning when the process progresses because both of them are utilized unconsciously. Both types of learning are mutually interrelated in that the former is called upon in some cases and the latter is effective in other cases. Therefore, both types of learning are beneficial and are a useful part of learning and teaching English to people who aspire to work in the international tourism and service industry.

In order to explain the concept of learning, Brown (1994) lists the components of the definition, breaking it down into subparts:

a) learning is acquisition or getting.
b) learning is the retention of information or skills.
c) retention implies storage systems, memory, and cognitive organization.
d) learning involves active, conscious focus on and acting upon events outside or inside the organism.
e) learning is relatively permanent but subject to forgetting.
f) learning involves some form of practice, perhaps reinforced practice.
g) learning is a change in behavior.

Firth (1994) points out the following four essential notions which will allow effective learning to take place:

1) motivation,
2) explanation,
3) practice, and
4) feedback.

Although she talks of how to develop self-correcting and self-monitoring strategies, her theory seems to be applicable to learning in general. First, a learner has to be motivated to learn. In a classroom situation, it should depend in part on the teacher, but, to a large extent, on the learners. Second, a learner needs to receive a description and a demonstration of the materials involved. Third, a learner is also expected to practice. Although practice does not make perfect, no learner can learn anything without practice. Practice in highly qualitative and quantitative exercises is imperative for successful learning. Fourth, a learner should receive feedback to correct or confirm what is being taught. Considering this theory, the teaching materials introduced in this pa-

per are designed to focus on all of these factors.

Brown (1994) gives a concise definition of teaching as being the facilitation of learning. In this sense learning precedes teaching. As a facilitator, how does an educator improve her or his teaching? Brown (1994) suggests the following procedures. First, the educator has to understand and take into consideration entry behavior or what learners already know. This process will determine the class level and content. Second, the explicit goals will need to be specified so that learners can be guided toward them more effectively. Next, the teacher will decide which methodology and approach to use. Classroom orientation and atmosphere will be determined by the methodology and pedagogical approach. Finally, the educator will be expected to encourage learners to maintain and reinforce what they are learning. Ellis (1985) also postulates and sets out various roles in the classroom for educators. A teacher will need to make her or his instruction facilitative to stimulate learning. An effective teacher will also need to promote consciousness raising. This is related to motivation and educators should let learners know what they are learning and why they are learning it. An educator should be a source of input. A language teacher may be the only and very important source of beneficial input in some cases. Another role for a teacher is to be a source of reinforcement. Firth (1994) suggests that successful learning requires feedback from a teacher and the feedback needs to be reinforced. Teachers should provide positive reinforcement for learners making progress and exhibiting effort. In classroom situations, discipline should be minimized and praise should be given as much as possible. Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research has recently made tremendous progress, and SLA research owes a lot to the study of children's first language acquisition (FLA). First language acquisition research has played an inevitable and invaluable role in SLA research. Without considering FLA theory, SLA theory can not be clearly initiated. (Ellis, 1985)

First Language Acquisition Theories

The observations of how a child eventually acquires her or his first language will be examined from three different approaches. Behaviorists view a child's FLA as a matter of imitation and habit formation as she or he is learning. (Lightbown and Spada, 1993) A child has a tabula rasa, a kind of linguistic blank slate, at birth and only imitates what she or he hears until habits are formed. Publicly observable responses are the base of most behaviorist research. The child learns language through practice as her or his tabula rasa is being filled in. (Brown, 1994) This does not mean that the child tries to memorize everything she or he hears, but rather she or he selects what to imitate based on what she or he is currently learning and the child's immediate communication needs or physical desires. There is significant research which substantiates these notions. (Lightbown and Spada, 1993)

The behaviorist view has difficulty in explaining the complexity and creativity of FLA, therefore, innatists contend that a child is endowed with an innate system which enables her or him to acquire a first language from a set of appropriate samples and in an appropriate, supportive environment. (Lightbown and Spada, 1993) The mentalistic positions elucidate what happens inside a child when language acquisition takes place. In the innatist view, a child is born with an imaginary little black box, a language acquisition device (LAD). (Brown, 1994) The child is biologically preprogrammed to learn and acquire the language they are exposed to from birth. Therefore, a child's FLA is viewed as the same type of natural human behavior as walking or breathing. (Lightbown and Spada, 1993) The assumption of the existence and function of a LAD helps explicate the complicated nature of language which, children are able to acquire without making great conscious efforts. (Brown, 1994) This theory also accounts for the creativity which enables a child to understand and produce much more than the input she or he has heard or seen. It also accounts for the ability to understand

and produce novel utterances which she or he has never heard or seen before. (Cowper, 1992) In addition, by proposing the notion of a critical period for language acquisition, (Brown, 1994; Ellis, 1985; and Lightbown and Spada, 1993) innatists seem to solve the riddle of how children can acquire their first language in a natural way without much effort (Brown, 1994) while adults can neither learn nor acquire their second language easily. A critical period is set biologically and suggests that up to a certain age, language may be acquired effortlessly. (Brown, 1994) This critical period is usually considered to be the first eight to ten years of life. After this period, the LAD begins to atrophy and it becomes difficult to learn another language. The assumption of a critical period hypothesis (CPH) is supported by some evidence of reports of accidental, traumatic loss of language ability. (Lightbown and Spada, 1993) Another point innatists make is the proposal of the universality of languages and the proposal of a universal grammar. The theory is that universal grammar (UG) comprises of principles and parameters (Cowper, 1992) and it is made up of properties which seem to belong to all human languages. Thus, UG is able to assume that communicative, complex language acquisition is a species specific ability (Brown, 1994) Universal grammar also implies that all human beings acquire their first language in almost the same way. (Lightbown and Spada, 1993) A child learns samples of their native language and is able to set the parameters in line with the discerned data. (Cowper, 1992) Innatists have succeeded in explaining a child's immense capacity (Brown, 1994) for acquiring complex systems of the language while adult language learners are seemingly unable to do so. (Lightbown and Spada, 1993) FLA, therefore, is noted for being systematic in hypothesis formation. This is unlike the aforementioned habit formation of the behaviorist position. A child will not collect all of the odds and ends of linguistic data naturally available to her or him, but will build a hypothesis, test it out, and correct it on a trial and error basis. This is before the child incorporates it into her or his consistent linguistic system. Once a child starts to accumulate hypotheses, she or he will be able to generate (in the innatist sense) an infinite number of novel sentences with a finite number of rules. Indeed, a child is not viewed not as a passive receiver of the data available to her or him. Children learning their first language are considered to be active generators of the language. Another point to consider is whether innatists fail to account for the numerous functions and various meanings of language. (Brown, 1994) Although innatists adopt mentalistic positions, interactionists point out that the main focus is on forming utterances at the sentence level. (Brown, 1994) Interactionists point out that the interaction between two or more interlocutors and the meaning at the discourse level is more significant. A child learns meaning from interaction within their environment. (Brown, 1994) As she or he receives modified interaction or input from others, the child will develop a cognitive capacity and will learn the various functions of language. The innatist position plays a dominant role in FLA theory, however, this does not mean that it diminishes the role of the other two approaches. The three approaches are not mutually exclusive. The three positions may be placed together by considering the fact that each of them illuminates a different aspect of first language acquisition (Lightbown and Spada, 1993)

Second language Acquisition Theories

The theories concerning first language acquisition are useful while contemplating second language acquisition. Indeed, all of these theories need to be considered while creating educational tasks and teaching materials. Behaviorism points out that SLA habit formation is similar to FLA. Behaviorists contend that bad or wrong habits have to be avoided. They support a contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH). (Ellis, 1985) The implication suggests that contrasting the native language with the target language will make it easier to detect the differences between them. These differences may be the source of errors. It further suggests that differences will lead to more difficulty in acquiring the target language, while

similarities will make the target language easier to learn. (Lightbown and Spada, 1993) Empirical research, however, shows conflicting results. These findings lead researchers to reevaluate the types of errors which L 2 learners make. The innatist view of language acquisition assumes that SLA may also result from hypothesis formation similar to FLA. Errors should no longer be considered bad or wrong habits. On the contrary, they can reveal the development of the internal system of learning the target language. Errors play a crucial role in error analysis, (Ellis, 1985) which measures the advancement of L 2 learners. Errors are predicted before they occur by behaviorists but are analyzed later by innatists. (Brown, 1994) Innatists support the notion of the universality of all natural languages. SLA may be considered to be the same type of process as FLA. FLA is achieved through hypothesis formation and can be viewed as a process of creating language. SLA may also be described as a process of recreation. (Ellis, 1985)

In learning a second language, the learner may recreate and form her or his own linguistic systems. The continuum of systems consists of various styles which the learner calls upon in accordance with a particular situation. One implication of the various systems may be that at an individual word level some learners can pronounce target words correctly or in a native-like manner since they can focus their attention only on pronunciation. In a vernacular style or at the sentence or discourse level, however, many learners may not be able to do the same thing because they have to pay attention to many other things, such as sentence structure and meaning. Therefore, learners need to improve their pronunciation at all levels of speech. Their pronunciation, over time, will become natural and fluent because they do not have to attend to their speech constantly. Natural and fluent speech is necessary for people working in the international tourism and service industry. Universal characteristics are supported by such studies as morpheme acquisition, negation and question formation. (Lightbown and Spada, 1993)

Behaviorists postulate that CAH should predict errors early so that neither language transfer nor interference would be able to occur since it is believed that both may prevent L 2 development. The roles of both transfer and interference should be taken into consideration again. These phenomena are no longer looked upon as negative, but rather as inevitable and effective if they are carefully attended to. According to Ellis, (1985) both transfer and interference can be utilized as strategies which L 2 learners should draw upon. This is due to the fact that the first language is the only previously learned linguistic knowledge for learners of a second language. (Brown, 1994) For successful second language acquisition to take place, transfer should be welcomed as a process for developing interlanguage and interference must be avoided because it may lead to fossilization. Ellis (1985) goes on to say that interference is a strategy that learners resort to in order to make up for any insufficiency in their second language ability. When learners are not given enough information or data, they may turn to their Ll knowledge. Transfer and/or interference may take place at this time. Thus, interference should be avoided by providing learners with sufficient information concerning the system of the target language so that they do not need to resort to their Ll knowledge. In this way, people who would like to work in the international tourism and service industry need to be taught how to formulate and deliver polite, service English expressions explicitly. Researchers have discovered interesting consequences concerning transfer and interference. Contrary to CAH, which predicts that linguistic differences may cause errors in SLA, some research findings indicate that linguistic similarities may result in more problems for L 2 learners. Brown (1994) The principle at work is common in human learning. Interference can actually be greater when items being studied are more similar to existing items than when items are entirely new and unrelated to existing items.

Krashen (1977, 1981, 1982, and 1985) proposes a host of theories about SLA. Each of these theories deserve some pedagogical consideration. Krashen contends that the input to which learners are ex-

posed must be at a level which is a little bit higher than their current level of competence. If the current level is assumed to be i the input has to be at an i＋1. The input which learners are to receive must be neither too difficult nor too easy. Designing activities and language learning tasks for people who would like to speak English politely and professionally must not be too difficult or too easy. The tasks should challenge the learner and provide an opportunity to improve speaking skills.

Speaking Skills, Formulaic Expressions, and Intercultural Respect

A speaker's skills and speech habits have an impact on the success of any exchange. (Van Duzer, 1997) Speakers must be able to anticipate and then produce the expected patterns of specific responses. They must also manage discrete elements such as turn-taking, rephrasing, or providing feedback. (Burns & Joyce, 1997) For example, after the previously mentioned hotel clerk initiates the exchange with "Welcome to the York Hotel. May I help you?" the other participant, the person approaching the front desk of the hotel, should be prepared to respond with a proper formulaic expression which clearly and politely states her or his desires and intentions. The guest of the hotel may speak with less formality, however. Speaking with friendly politeness will foster better human relations and increase intercultural understanding as it provides an indication of mutual respect. Using activities which integrate and clearly differentiate between these two types of language styles will implicitly increase communication skills.

Established Methods and New Variations

It is beneficial to understand the established methodologies and approaches which form the base for this framework. The framework encompasses: the activation of schema and background knowledge; improving discourse competence; improving pronunciation; implicitly increasing understanding of two levels of politeness — formal and friendly; and communicative discussions based on the topic. Finally, learners reflect on their individual experiences as a means of improving professional interpersonal communication. This framework builds upon and joins several familiar, established methodologies in order to allow learners to deepen and develop their skills while providing an opportunity for meaningful interaction. English for specific purposes is often only presented from a situational approach. Acquiring the necessary expressions and vocabulary one might need in various situations while traveling abroad or while working in the service industry is one task. Functional notions have also been considered, and prepare students by teaching them how to clearly express various desires and needs. Joined together communicatively, situational-functional activities offer learners one basic way to acquire target language skills and necessary proficiency. Applying these principals in a task-based, collaborative setting, and joining these types of activities with other interpersonal communicative tasks will further allow students to improve their ability to speak clearly and effectively.

Polite, intercultural communication techniques should be taught in a variety of ways and approaches depending on the level of the class and the particular goals of the curriculum. Teachers are encouraged to adopt a communicative, collaborative approach which will best benefit their individual class' needs. Students are encouraged to take an active role in this approach and need to contribute to the class in several ways. While in the process of presenting communicative tasks, educators should explain the potential functions of the discourse produced in the task and the real context(s) in which they usually occur. Further, teachers should provide realistic opportunities for interactive practice and build upon previous instruction as necessary. (Burns & Joyce, 1997)

Situational and functional dialogues are often used as speaking activities in language classrooms. Educators also need to select activities from a variety of types of tasks. Brown (1994) lists six possible task categories: Imitative-drills in which the learner sim-

ply repeats a phrase or structure (e.g., “May I help you?” or “I have a reservation. My name is Pat James. I would like to check in.”) for clarity and accuracy; intensive-drills or repetitions focusing on specific linguistic, phonological, or grammatical points, such as minimal pairs or repeated repetition of a series of formulaic expressions; responsive-short replies to questions or statements of need, such as a series of answers to formulaic expression questions; transactional-dialogues conducted for the purpose of information exchange, such as information gathering situations, role plays, or debates; interpersonal-conversations which establish or maintain social relationships, such as personal interviews, friendly conversations, or role plays; and extensive-extended monologues such as short speeches, oral reports, or oral summaries. These tasks are not necessarily sequential and may be used independently or they may be integrated with one another, depending on learners' needs. The tasks involved in this technique will address all of these issues in some way.

Learner’s Tasks for Learning Hotel English

Educators should feel free to explore and adapt any of the following techniques and tasks in order to best benefit the particular needs and goals of their learners. Within this framework, lower-level learners will begin by asking and answering questions based on the topic of the lesson. These are simple, friendly, polite questions which require the students to reflect on and express their personal feelings or experiences to a partner. (see appendix 1) This warm-up task will activate schemata and initiate the cognitive thought process. The next activity (see appendix 2) presents small parts of various dialogs based on a particular travel industry situation. As learners will need to understand all of the phrases involved and match sentences together collaboratively, discourse competence will be improved. The next in-class activity (appendix 3) is a word order puzzle of a situational dialog. Learners will have to put the words in order in order to make the sentences which form the tourism industry conversation. Functions required and formulaic expressions are also explored as the learner will use the completed dialog as a model for subsequent, creative, spontaneous role plays. As learners need to put pieces of language together, the differences between the levels of politeness will become evident. Service workers speak with more formal politeness while customers or travelers speak with more friendly politeness. In this way, learners are implicitly exposed to both styles of polite, spoken language. This deeper understanding will allow for better productive skills as well as for better receptive skills. In addition, the type of language acceptable for professionals in the tourism and service industry may be more explicitly understood. (see appendix 4)

During the improvisational extended role plays learners involved in an exchange with the hotel clerk described previously must know the usual pattern that such an interaction follows and access that knowledge as the exchange progresses. Learners must also choose the correct vocabulary and syntax to describe their particular desires, rephrase or emphasize words to clarify the statement verbally if the hotel clerk does not understand, and use appropriate facial expressions or gestures to indicate satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the service. Skills and knowledge that educators may address include: producing the sounds, stress patterns, rhythmic structures, and intonation of the language; using grammatical structures accurately; selecting vocabulary that is understandable and appropriate for the topic being discussed and the setting in which the speech act occurs; applying strategies to enhance comprehensibility, such as emphasizing key words, rephrasing, or checking for listener comprehension; using gestures and body language; and paying attention to the success of the interaction and adjusting components of speech such as vocabulary, rate of speech, and complexity of grammar structures to maximize listener comprehension and involvement. (Brown, 1994) Role play, and extended creative role plays based on various situations will give learners the chance to deeply explore and better understand both the verbal and non-verbal communicative aspects of interaction in the international tourism and service industry. In

addition to providing learners with solid, communicative tasks, at every stage of the learning process teachers should monitor learners' speech production to determine what skills and knowledge they already have and what areas need development. In this way all of the outlined activities will remain fluid and provide students with practical instruction.

The final task (see appendix 5) requires learners to examine, formulate, create, ask, and answer questions based on tourism in general. This integrated activity gives students the opportunity to reflect on tourism in a meaningful, communicative, and relevant way. Students enjoy speaking about themselves and sharing personal experiences with others. As more communicative interpersonal levels of discourse may be used, better overall communicative competence may be achieved.

Beyond the Framework

In addition to the framework outlined above which combines situational and functional dialogs with communicative, interpersonal interaction and reflection, there are more classroom activities which increase skills to prepare learners for future tourism and service industry encounters. Preparation or preview activities such as showing the learners a picture of two people conversing in a hotel and asking them to brainstorm what the people might be discussing (i.e., what topics, vocabulary, typical phrases) is a valuable way to establish schemata. Presenting several video clips taken from movies provide learners with the opportunity to have visually aided listening activities which use expressions or vocabulary relevant to the situation. The learners should complete a worksheet in which they describe the details of the exchange, the specific context, the particular needs or requirements of the participants, and any phrases that seem to exemplify formal, polite language as opposed to friendly, polite language. This could also be followed up with a discussion of the various factors in the specific situations and typical phrases used in international service and tourism settings. Learners should research and understand specific information about possible interlocutors, various cultures, and the numerous settings of tourism English, such as hotels, customs, immigration, changing money etc. In pairs or small groups, students can list topics that might be discussed by the participants and any unusual requests which may be made. Students should also engage in more improvised dialogues based on the simple formulaic expressions which use formal, polite, service English. Peer evaluation using a teacher-prepared or text-prepared dialog based on the various scenarios will give learners a way to explore their own communicative competence. Students should also compare their improvised dialogues with prepared dialogs, analyzing the polite language used, differences between formal and friendly politeness, and reasons for using both. Audio or video taping of improvisational role-plays will provide a permanent record of what was actually said which will allow learners the opportunity to learn from student generated language.

Extension activities outside of the classroom which require learners to visit various settings in the tourism and service industry and record the actual conversations they hear or take part in will also provide an abundance of authentic material. Reporting these findings back to the class, and then having the class discuss these interactions further allows learners the opportunity to witness and then reflect on verbal exchanges which actually occurred. By noticing the style of language used by real people who work in the tourism or service industry, learners will have a wonderful opportunity to increase their overall understanding and ability to express themselves politely in these very same situations which they may have to deal with on a professional level someday.

Conclusion

Utilizing various techniques students can explore and examine situations and functions while having the opportunity to contrast more formal, polite English with less formal, friendly English. Examined together, a deeper understanding develops which explicitly differentiates between the appropriateness of

various utterances based on the nature of the situation, culture of the participants, and the type of setting. Students need to be empowered with the ability to explore situations while experimenting with the target language. Collaboratively working toward better understanding and using polite language gives learners an opportunity to see the diversity of speech within and between cultures. Understanding the various types of politeness in English will foster better intercultural appreciation and generate more functional-notional understanding. This increased awareness will inherently foster better intercultural, interpersonal, and professional communication. Although this paper has suggested several methods and teaching materials based on various theories of language acquisition, further research needs to be done in order to continue to provide learners with a beneficial experience in the classroom.

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appendix 1:

Hotels

Ask+Answer the Questions with a Partner:

1. How old were you when you first stayed at a hotel?
2. Where were you staying?
3. Who were you with?
4. What do you remember most about that hotel?

Create and ASK One More New Question:

5._____?

appendix 2:

Matching

1. Is there a room available for two people? ___
2. How many nights will you be staying?____
3. How would you like to pay?____
4. Do you have a complimentary breakfast?____
5. This is room 352, Can I order something from room service?____

There is one extra answer!

a. At least three, maybe four.
b. By credit card.
c. Please enjoy your stay.
d. Yes ma'am / sir. What would you like?
e. Yes ma'am / sir. Would you prefer one double bed or two twin beds?
f. Yes ma'am / sir, in the dining room from 6:30 to 10:00 am.

Practice Saying these Expressions with a Partner

appendix 3:

Put the words in order to make correct sentences:

. / good / hotel / morning / the / to / welcome / York
. / hello / is / my / name / Pat James
. / a / for / have / I / reservation / tonight
. / card / fill / in / please / registration / this / would / you
? / a / do / have / pen / you
. / are / here / ma'am (sir) / you
? / how / like / pay / to / would / you
. / by / check / traveler's
. / much / thank / very / you
? / here / please / sign / would / you
. / sure
. / here / is / key / Ms. (Mr.) James / your
. / bellhop / room / take / the / to / will / you / your
. / thank / you
. / ma'am (sir) / much / thank / very / you
. / enjoy / please / stay / your

appendix 4:

Clerk: Good Morning, welcome to the York Hotel.
Guest: Hello, my name is Pat James. I have a reservation for tonight.
Clerk: Would you please fill in this registration card?
Guest: Do you have a pen?
Clerk: Here you are, ma'am (sir). How would you like to pay?
Guest: By traveler's check.
Clerk: Thank you very much. Would you please sign here?
Guest: Sure.
Clerk: Here is your key, Ms. (Mr.) James. The bellhop will take you to your room.
Guest: Thank you.
Clerk: Thank you very much, ma'am (sir). Please enjoy your stay.
Role Play Based on this Situation:

appendix 5:

Put the Words in Order to Finish the Questions: Ask your Partner: Write her/his LONG Answers
There is one extra word!
go, like, on, to, vacation, want, you
1. Where do you want to go on vacation?
fun, go, to, want, with, you
2. Who do_____?
there, to, travel, want, with, you
3. Why do_____?
do, hotel, stay, there, to, want, you
4. How long_____?
favorite, go, like, season, there, to, would, you
5. Which_____?
Create 2 More Questions and Ask Your Partner
6._____?
7._____?