

Thesis Title

An investigation of the perspectives on language proficiency of teachers, learners and supervisors within Workplace English Language and Literacy classes (*AMES, NSW*) and teacher practices relating to spoken and written language development within these classes.

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Abstract

This research has investigated two related questions: i) the way adult English as a second language teachers, workplace supervisors and English language learners talk about language proficiency in the workplace and what their expectations of language improvement are, and ii) how teachers teach English as a second language in workplace classes, and how their practices are grounded in current or traditional language acquisition theories or language development models and therefore how they foreground some aspects of language more than others.

The 'problem' in the research was to explore the extent to which second language teachers, workplace supervisors and English language learners 'spoke the same language about language'. If there were differences in perceptions about language across the groups and if teachers themselves approached language differently from each other, to what extent might their practices satisfy learners and workplace supervisors in an educational climate of increased accountability?

Four workplace English language and literacy classes were observed, recorded and analysed. The conversational data in the classes was used to illustrate what teachers were saying about language, what language proficiency models their metalanguage derived from and how this related to what they had said they believed about language and language learning. Teachers beliefs about language were surveyed in a separate research questionnaire and their course reports and classroom materials were also used to establish their theoretical underpinnings.

Twenty-four workplace supervisors of the learners concerned were observed and recorded during teacher/supervisor meetings or sent questionnaires to ascertain their views on the learners and what they expected in terms of language performance and improvement from the learners. Thirty one learners from the four classes were interviewed or sent questionnaires about their views of their own language proficiency.

The findings of the research indicated that as a result of certain factors, including professional training, previous language education background and possibly cultural expectations, English as a second language teachers, workplace supervisors and learners did not share the same concepts, understanding and expectations of the language abilities of non-English speaking workers in the workplace.

Comparisons of the four teachers' practices indicated a range of teaching approaches which were all noticeably linked to their organisational and theoretical training and incorporated aspects of several current and traditional pedagogical practices. All four teachers were able to articulate their approaches to language learning and beliefs about what are the significant components of communication which were consistently and obviously reflected in their practice.

The satisfying of stakeholder needs - learners and supervisors - by teacher practices was found not to be an issue because of the complexity of the expectations as well as the group behaviour of adult learners in workplace classes. However a framework for supplementing the theoretical and practical 'biases' by teachers was proposed to close any gaps which may result from idiosyncratic approaches.

Recommendations are made that teachers be assisted to understand their practice through action research, increase their theoretical knowledge in language proficiency and assessment and translate their professional expertise into an intelligible format for workplace stakeholders.

1 INTRODUCTION, TOPIC, AIMS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the context, the main topic of the study, the aims of the research and the research questions which framed it.

The study was undertaken at a time of rapid and substantial change in industry and education and at the confluence of these two sectors. The introduction of skills training into workplaces and the impact of market forces into education, have meant that aspects formerly restricted to one sector now impinge on the other. For example, assessment once the province of education and quality assurance once the concern of industry, now span both sectors. Industry has become a learning site, and education has become a marketable commodity. In the light of the recent *National Training Reform Agenda* (National Training Board 1992) initiatives however, and the new focus on workplace competencies, including language competencies, or vocational proficiency levels, accountability to learners and employers is increased and workplace language classrooms thus offer themselves as worthwhile contexts to investigate.

Inevitably, stakeholders in both have been affected and this research is about English language teachers, workplace English language learners and employers and the interpretations of new pedagogical and industrial issues from their perspectives.

1.2 Topic

The research is concerned with the assessment of the English language proficiency of non-English speaking employees in their workplace contexts. The particular aim of the research is to analyse, in depth, some of the contextual complexities surrounding the process of language development and language proficiency assessment. These include the current industrial climate, the impact of historical factors on educational practices and the relationship of these to the practices and perspectives of some of the key participants in the language development and assessment process: teachers, supervisors and learners.

The research questions systematically explore the framework within which the development and assessment of language proficiency takes place. The classroom, the workplace and the background of each stakeholder offer some insights into and

understanding of the way language and people operate in workplaces and educational institutions, frequently without critical or reflective observation. The research systematically observes and comments upon how and why these behaviours develop and how the disparate needs and approaches of the stakeholders in language development and language assessment may best be served.

1.3 Approach

The exploration of participant perspectives is achieved through collecting, observing, recording, transcribing and analysing transcripts and teaching materials of typical events in this process. The data includes the following:

- spoken interaction between teachers and learners in the classroom lessons
- written classroom materials used in the lessons
- course proposals and course evaluations written by the teachers as part of their course design practices
- written questionnaires used to elicit teacher perspectives on language proficiency
- spoken interviews with teachers on their perspectives on the lesson transcripts
- spoken interaction between teachers and workplace supervisors at meetings held to obtain supervisor perspectives on their needs in relation to the workplace classes
- written questionnaires used to elicit supervisor perspectives on their perspectives of the language proficiency levels of employees in the workplace classes
- spoken interviews with learners
- written questionnaire used to elicit learner perspectives on their language proficiency
- course records held as part of the data base on learners

In the classrooms, an analysis is made of the practices which teachers use to assist learners to gain control of spoken and written language 'genres' of the workplace. These practices are interpreted through the spoken interaction between the teachers and the learners by looking at the 'metalinguage' teachers use to talk about language and language learning and the actual language they use to direct language learning.

The practices are also interpreted through the classroom materials which support the lessons observed. The metalinguage and the classroom materials are related to the comments made by teachers on their questionnaires, ie how they 'said' they interpreted language proficiency. The course proposals and course evaluations written by the

teachers are used again to interpret the relationship between what teachers say they do, and what they actually do as shown in the classroom transcripts. A final interview with teachers is briefly analysed to obtain the teachers' views on the lesson transcripts. All this data is then related to theoretical paradigms which have informed these teachers, through organisational and pedagogical input, ie through policy or through their own study in the field of Teaching English as a Second Language.

In supervisor meetings, held between teachers and workplace supervisors to ascertain supervisor perspectives on the language needs of learners an analysis is made of the conceptualisation of English language proficiency by supervisors and teachers, ie what do supervisors 'say' about the language proficiency of non-English speakers. This is done by examining the comments and statements of supervisors about the learners and the outcomes sought by them as a result of the language classes. Written questionnaires given to supervisors by the teachers in some of the supervisor meetings as well as written questionnaires given to some supervisors by the researcher on their perceptions of the language development needs of learners are also analysed to establish their viewpoint.

In interviews, via questionnaires and through discussions with learners, an analysis is made of how learners 'talk about' and express their needs relating to language proficiency. This is done by examining the statements learners make about how they perceive their own strengths and weaknesses in English, what they say about the aspects they would like to improve most, exploring what feedback they receive from native speakers and how they express their language development needs. This data, is interpreted through the previous language learning experiences of the learners as outlined by them or their course records and informed by international trends in English as a foreign language teaching.

The above analyses, set against the background of current industry trends and historical developments in language assessment theory, frame the interpretive parameters for this study, as they are called upon to explain and justify the findings and support some of the recommendations.

1.4 Research Aims

The study aims therefore to increase understanding of what is effectively taking place in workplace classrooms, and how the assessment and development of spoken language abilities by teachers relates to those expected by employers and learners. This is becoming increasingly relevant as teachers in the workplace face new pressures to

deliver effective programs in a climate of accountability and wider educational changes. These changes include the language theory and assessment developments as well as new workplace skills assessment both of which are encapsulated in the competency-based training movement.

Equally as new roles are forged for workplace teachers where they are called upon to advise on corporate communication operations, there is arguably a role for drawing on the knowledge of employers to enhance the picture of language provision and assessment in the workplace. For education and workplaces to work more effectively together, space has to be sought for the views of each in the provision of service to the other.

Although less obviously 'expert' in the sense of being further removed from the language learning situation and less familiar with linguistic terminology, test users who interact with the target group (such as staff in tertiary institutions or employers) can similarly be presumed likely to have some idea of the language demands which will be made on the testee and thus to be able to provide useable information for test developers. (Brindley, 1991:149).

As part of increasing understanding in relation to assessment it is timely therefore, while assessment is 'on the agenda' to explore whether educators and industry are 'talking the same language' or 'talking the same metalanguage' in relation to language proficiency in the workplace.

A summary of aims is as follows:

- To examine and compare the different perspectives of workplace English language teachers, supervisors and non-English speaking migrants on English language proficiency in four workplace situations.
- To place these perspectives in an historical educational framework and identify similarities and differences in need and understanding between different stakeholder groups involved in the process of language development and language assessment in the workplace
- To analyse and interpret the spoken and written discourse in and surrounding workplace language classes and reveal the relationship between the methodologies of spoken and written language development and perspectives on spoken and written language proficiency of teachers, learners and workplace supervisors

- To assess the extent to which teacher practices meet learner and supervisor expectations and to identify the varying roles of teachers as language experts in addressing a range of needs through comprehensive provision mechanisms
- To present findings from the above research that have methodological and curriculum implications for spoken and written language development and language assessment practices in workplace English language and literacy classes

1.5 Research Questions

1. What are some of the features that distinguish supervisor, teacher and learner perspectives on spoken and written language abilities in the workplace?

This question includes an analysis of the construction of language proficiency as an educational phenomenon and the necessary subjectivity associated with language proficiency as object of assessment by non-educationalists. This question also aims to identify the historical and pedagogical factors which may impact on differences in the perspectives of stakeholders on English language communication in the workplace.

2. What are some of the practices/approaches used in workplace English language and literacy classrooms to develop spoken and written language skills and communicative abilities within the classroom, and in workplace contexts?

This question aims to identify the methodologies used by four teachers in workplace language and literacy classrooms and situate these methodologies within theoretical frameworks of language teaching and educational practice within *AMES* and within wider trends in language teaching and language assessment.

3. What does a comparison of the methodological development of spoken and written language proficiency and the perspectives of teachers, learners and workplace supervisors reveal about the satisfaction of stakeholder needs?

This question examines whether and to what extent the methodological practices driven or underpinned by teachers' beliefs about language proficiency and the role

of language in the workplace context meet the expectations of learners and employers.

4. What are the curriculum implications that emerge from an analysis of the relationship between classroom practices and stakeholder perspectives and theories about the nature and assessment of spoken and written language proficiency? These include 'general' proficiency as measured by the *ASLPR* (1984), 'communicative competence' as outlined by Canale and Swain (1980), Canale (1983), 'communicative language ability' (Bachman, 1990) and more recent developments in theories of language and instruments used to measure language proficiency based on systemic functional grammar such as the competency-based English language framework in *AMES (NSW), The Certificate in Spoken and Written English* (Hagan, Hood, Jackson, Jones, Joyce & Manidis, 1992) and *The English in the Workplace Competencies Framework* (Baylis & Thomas, 1992).

This question explores the role of existing and developing theoretical approaches to language proficiency and language proficiency assessment including currently used assessment procedures and instruments and debates the introduction of the workplace competency-based model as a way of addressing the complexity of stakeholder needs in observable outcomes.

2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF STUDY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will situate the study in its educational and industrial context. Current trends in industry are outlined first. These include a description of the framework of the *National Training Reform Agenda* (National Training Board 1992) and the increasing role of assessment in general and competency-based assessment in particular. The relationship between English language provision through Workplace English Language and Literacy classes and the wider objectives of the *National Training Reform Agenda* are discussed.

Historical developments in English language assessment are presented next. A table outlines the various stages of theoretical practice since the beginning of the century and this is related to current developments in language education and industry.

Finally, an overview of language assessment practices in the *Adult Migrant English Service* is outlined, to illustrate how the international and national trends in language assessment have impacted on the teaching practices of the teachers in this study.

The subsequent section of this chapter will concentrate on the statement of the issues and the significance of the study.

2.2 Industrial Context

What is the principal factor in the current industrial context that impinged on this research? It is essentially *The National Training Reform Agenda* which is seeing the confluence of industry and education through the introduction of practices in each that might better suit the increased demand for a highly skilled, more productive workforce in an increasingly competitive global marketplace.

The growth of a global economy and the development of new technologies have precipitated major economic changes in Australia over the past twenty years. Australia's foreign debt and cost of living have increased dramatically as local industries have been unable to compete effectively on overseas markets because of outdated work practices and management structures. Australia has also seen the reduction of overseas markets for primary produce, a major export commodity for many years. Manufacturing industries replacing the primary product exports increasingly

require a more skilled workforce to cope with the proliferation of new technological developments.

Workplace restructuring and multiskilling initiatives are being introduced to enable Australian companies to develop internationally competitive industries and cope with new technologies. These initiatives in industries across Australia over the past few years include the relocation and restructuring of departments, the reorganisation of work practices and the restructuring of work skills. Existing work conditions and practices defined in 'awards', were seen to be limiting the development of multiskilled workers. Acquiring skills and competencies in new areas and having current skills upgraded to use new technologies are being seen as ways to increase flexibility in the workplace. New award restructuring guidelines would permit career progression to be based on skills levels and allow workers and managers to operate more creatively and flexibly than in previous work organisation structures. Such earlier structures, where single and repetitive workplace tasks were assigned to individuals, were characteristic of production practices in the earlier part of this century until recently in Australia. These practices were developed by an American industrial engineer, Frederick Winslow Taylor in the 1880s and 1890s and further refined by Henry Ford early this century, and became known as 'Taylorism' (Mawer, 1991).

The National Training Reform Agenda (National Training Board, 1992) whose key elements are flexible and interlinked industrial and educational practices is being introduced. The core of the reform is national, public and private sector retraining, which is being implemented through the 'Training Guarantee Act.' The Act has a levy which requires all companies with an annual payroll of more than \$200000 to spend 1% of their income on training and/or retraining their workforce. To structure the training and competency levels which define industry skills, the government has introduced bodies and measures to standardise the delivery and measurement of competencies and industry standards for the skills of all workers in Australia..

These national competency-based training initiatives align with the *Australian Standards Framework*, (National Training Board, 1991), a description of levels of occupational skill for each worker in the country. National and state bodies are aiming at ensuring that training curricula and workplace competencies are uniform and based on the outcomes of learning, ie. describing and measuring what people can do. Central to describing explicitly what people can do and measuring this, is the practice of criterion-referenced competency assessment. If these clear descriptions of what people can do are produced and workplaces formulate the requirements for particular jobs, and workers achieve these defined competency levels, their movement between industries,

enterprises and occupations is facilitated. This cross-recognition of competencies and skills (credit transfer) would benefit both workers and workplaces as key skills are recognised within and across industries.

Consultative mechanisms and 'total quality management' procedures (Deming, 1986) are also being set in place in Australian industries to complement the changes in workplace skills recognition and facilitate more flexible workplace structures. These procedures allow company and factory operations to utilise the expertise of all workers by drawing on input from workers on how things could be done to increase efficiency and productivity. Such mechanisms include consultative networks, quality circle meetings and the documentation of procedures aimed at more efficiency, increased productivity and worker autonomy.

Inherent in all the award restructuring and technological changes, such as new technology, retraining, standard operating procedures and skills and consultation with workers, is the increasing role of spoken and written language skills. Language and literacy tasks now needed include workers having to read new job descriptions, competency standard descriptions, standard operating procedures, flow charts, training manuals, computer printouts, agendas and minutes, complete surveys and read and write reports (Joyce, Scheeres and Slade, 1993). Additional spoken language skills are required to participate in problem solving groups, quality circle meetings and consultative committees and include the language to solve problems, negotiate, initiate and participate effectively in team discussions, argue for and against a proposition and clarify or explain issues (ibid.). Employees, especially those from non-English speaking background, therefore require increasingly higher levels of spoken and written language skills.

The Workplace English Language and Literacy program of the *Adult Migrant English Program* is a vital provider in this arena with a clear mission to develop language skills for work, and enable speakers of languages other than English to partake in mainstream retraining and restructuring. This program is now funded through three government departments, reflecting its wide-reaching involvement in terms of client base, and its growing role in the wider restructuring agenda. These departments are:

- (a) the Federal *Department of Immigration Local Government and Ethnic Affairs*,
- (b) the State *Department of Industrial Relations, Employment, Training and Further Education*
- (c) and the Federal *Department of Employment Education and Training* .
(Department of Employment, Education and Training, 1992).

The language abilities developed in *WELL* classes are thus an integral part of the retraining and restructuring agenda and are aimed primarily at assisting all workers, including English speakers, to achieve language skills to fulfil industry competency standards, through training, and to manage new workplace communication demands. However, as workplace and vocational training programs are being described in competency-based formats, against which performance can be measured, the Workplace English Language and Literacy Program is faced with the issue of teaching, describing and assessing language in competency-based terms as well. The impact of the industrial context on language teaching in the workplace is likely therefore to be manifested both at a curriculum level, in terms of content taught and at a methodological level in terms of teaching and assessment practices.

A central theme to this study is the interdependency of practice and historical influences, whether industrial or educational. The study participants, it will be argued are all products of, and reflect, particular historical and educational paradigms in their expectations and professional practice. In order to provide a frame for the beliefs and practices of teachers, learners and employers who are informed by the educational and social trends which surround them, the historical development of language testing, as an international phenomenon, as well as the history of language proficiency theory and language theory and assessment within *AMES* will be covered at this point.

2.3 Historical development of language assessment

The history of documented evidence on language assessment stretches from the late nineteenth century until the modern day, Spolsky (1992). These trends are outlined in the tables on the following pages, with the corresponding curriculum developments and the assessment approaches developed since then. The table includes current approaches including those based on systemic functional grammar which has grown out of the work of Halliday (1978). What is significant about the information in the table is the current relevance of many of the earlier assessment practices which still impact today in language teaching and language assessment. So while neat categorisations give the appearance of distinct time frames for each of these developments this is not the case at all and at any one time there are overlaps in practice as in theory.

Table 1

Historical table of the development of language testing

Phase	Theory of language and language testing/types of tests	Oracy Implications and developments	Literacy Implications and developments	Methodological Implications	Names of researchers, test developers/critics
Pre-Scientific language testing Era/Trend (Pre 1930s), Spolsky (1985, 1992), Weir (1990)	<p>Judgement-based tests., Spolsky (1992)</p> <p>Language testing characterised by a lack of concern for statistical matters, objectivity or reliability. (ibid.)</p> <p>One relied on the judgement of an experienced teacher. No training, no specifications, no guidelines for testers.</p> <p>Language teachers owned language testing. If you were good enough to teach language you were good enough to judge it. (ibid.)</p>	<p>Very few oral tests</p>	<p>Open-ended written examinations, passages for translation into or from the foreign language, free composition in it and selected items of grammatical textual or cultural interest, Spolsky (1992)</p>		<p>Teachers</p>
Psychometric-Structuralist Era/Trend 1930-1970 (Scientific era) (Beginnings of standardised testing), Spolsky (1985, 1992), Weir (1990)	<p>'Discrete-item' tests.</p> <p>The focus was on the components of proficiency, eg syntax, lexis, aspects of functions, particular skills, strategies in isolation from how these elements interact in communication.</p> <p>Grammatical items were tested discretely, without interference from other items, eg... multiple choice, one word answers..</p> <p>Testers were psychologists (psychometricians) who used objective measures, statistical techniques, used short - item, multiple choice, objective tests, eg GREAT Test, MLA Foreign Lang Tests, TOEFL.</p>	<p>Oracy was not tested per se, as discrete item tests were all written ones.</p> <p>Spoken language had no 'grammar' that could be assessed and in fact spoken language was deemed to be 'ungrammatical' Halliday (1978)</p> <p>Some spoken language developments under audio-lingual approach, but still heavily segmented, structural approach.</p>	<p>Tests were written but were limited to passive written skills of reading and listening.</p> <p>Knowledge of written language was atomistic, where words, tenses, conjunctions were learnt taxonomically and assessed as such, eg. as rules.</p> <p>Written tests of vocabulary, reading and grammar.</p> <p>Whole texts were not produced, no consideration of audience, purpose, sociolinguistic appropriateness etc.</p>	<p>Grammar-translation approach. Emphasis on written mode rather than spoken mode, students become literate but unable to communicate fluently in the spoken mode.</p> <p>Language learning was an intellectual not a behavioural phenomenon, Hammond, Wickert, Burns, Joyce & Miller (1992)</p> <p>Audio-lingual and direct method approach - language segmented on the basis of grammatical structures, sequenced from easiest to most difficult, (ibid.)</p> <p>Structured/situation approach, sequencing of grammatical structures, <i>Situational English</i>, (1966)</p> <p>Written language was taught at word level.</p>	<p>Lado (1950) marked the second half of this period by adding linguistic principles to the testing of language, focus on contrastive analysis hypothesis.</p> <p>Oller (1979) rejected this approach saying of language 'the whole was greater than the sum of its parts'</p> <p>Savignon (1972) found that grammatical competence was not by itself a good predictor of communicative skills.</p> <p>System-given meanings needed to be replaced by context-specific meaning of an utterance Kelly (1978).</p> <p>Hymes (1972) reacted to this approach, introduced notion of 'communicative competence' (based on Chomsky's idea (ie. psycholinguistic). This was a two dimensional model of 'linguistic' and 'sociolinguistic' competence, Weir (1990)</p> <p>Carroll (1961) introduces notion of 'communicative effect'.</p> <p>Oller (1967 & 1979) argued that these integrative tests could measure ability to integrate disparate language skills in ways which more closely approximated the actual process of language use.</p> <p>Alderson (1978a) criticised the cloze tests.</p> <p>Vollmer 1979, Bachman and Palmer 1981 argued in favour of a divisibility hypothesis, not a unitary one</p> <p>Weir and Ormiston (1978) showed that cloze tests correlated only mildly with tests of written production</p> <p>Morrow (1979) argued that these tests did not show convincing proof of a learner actually using the language to read, write speak or listen in ways corresponding to real life</p>
The Psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic era/trend 1960- 1970s (Beginnings of notion of underlying 'competence' and influence of sociolinguistics)	<p>Semi-direct or indirect tests were introduced.</p> <p>The focus was on testing contextualised language behaviour where learners rely on the context of the passage, eg. cloze, dictation.</p> <p>Learners could rely on a unitary ability by relying on GLP (general language proficiency), ie. the grammar of expectancy</p>	<p>No oral tests under this period except for developments in audio-lingual approach. As for psychometric-structuralist era.</p> <p>Spoken language was later assessed in a context, but spoken forms were very 'written', eg. synoptic, full sentences, no features of spoken language such as hesitations, redundancies etc., <i>Side by Side</i> (1981)</p>	<p>Clozes and dictations were seen as measures of literacy skills. No authentic tasks were assessed, no written texts produced, Brindley & Singh (1982)</p> <p>Language norms which are followed are those of the examiner (or author of the text) not the student.</p> <p>Written language was taught at word and sentence level.</p> <p>Spoken language taught in written mode, drilled etc.</p>	<p>Language taught as less taxonomic structure, more dynamic, creative, functional system.</p> <p>Students were taught to handle indirect assessment tasks rather than coping with more realistic tasks,</p>	
Communicative Language Testing 1970s - present, Weir (1990)	<p>Direct tests.</p> <p>The focus was on directly testing learners' ability to carry out activities, eg. oral proficiency interview.</p> <p>Communicative language testing would be concerned with what the learner knows about the form of the language and how to use it in contexts of use (competence) and how the learner can actually demonstrate this in a meaningful (ie. authentic) communicative situation (performance), Canale and Swain (1980)</p> <p>Examples of tests are the TEEP (Test in English for Educational Purposes, Eng.), IELTS (International English Language Testing System), ASLPR</p>	<p>OPI created a focus on oral language in use.</p> <p>Still not many other contexts and tests used to asses spoken language</p> <p>OPI was later recognised as a limited context, Bachman (1986), van Lier (1989)</p>	<p>Written proficiency assessment was neglected during this 'communicative' paradigm., Kightley (1989), Joyce and Burns (1991)</p> <p>Focus was on 'process', ie. communicating, not form, language experience stories, no clear social purpose, no audience (except for self), Hood and Kightley (1991).</p> <p>In some instances, the beginnings of assessing authentic writing took place, learners wrote more authentic texts.</p>	<p>Communicative functions were taught, sociolinguistic contexts including register and language variation (based on Firthian tradition) and speech act theory.</p> <p>Initial focus on functions rather than on structures - functional-notional approach, one structure-represented one function (apologising, requesting).</p> <p>Lists of functions, Munby (1978) replaced lists of structures as the organising principle for language teaching curricula.</p> <p>Emphasis placed on learners' goals and needs and language lessons organised around communicative activities, information gap, role plays etc. (largely spoken), Richards (1990), Nunan (1989)</p>	<p>Hymes (1972)</p> <p>Brindley (1979) developed the AMES O.P. Scale</p> <p>Ingram (1979) developed the ASLPR (1984 DIEA)</p> <p>Canale and Swain (1980) first developed a model of communicative language use, incorporating grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence</p> <p>Canale (1983) added discourse competence to the model</p> <p>Bachman (1989) further developed this model.</p> <p>Liz Hamp Lyons developed the Michigan essay writing assessment schemes</p> <p>Douglas (1986) and Bachman (1986) criticised the tasks designed in these tests where the weighting was still on testing grammatical competence and where the context of the task (eg. OPI) was not accounted for.</p>
Socio-Cultural Language theory and its influences on language testing - late 1980s - present	<p>Direct tests.</p> <p>The focus is on directly testing the learner's ability to use language appropriate to a given context.</p> <p>Language ability, both spoken and written is seen as being context dependent and learners draw on knowledge and appropriate linguistic features to manage texts, Mathiessen, Slade and Macken (1990).</p> <p>Language use is prescribed by the register variables of field, tenor and mode, Halliday (1978)).</p>	<p>Oral tests in a range of different contexts, where discourse domain, content, status, register factors and social purpose of oral interactions may be assessed, Hagan, Hood, Jackson, Joyce, Jones & Manidis (1992)</p> <p>Texts are authentic.</p> <p>This includes the incorporation of natural features of spoken language such as hesitation, repetition, etc.</p>	<p>Written tests in a range of different contexts, where discourse, content, audience factors and social purpose of texts are beginning to be assessed, Hagan et al. (1992), Baylis and Thomas (1992)</p> <p>Written texts are authentic.</p>	<p>Oral and written language are taught in ways where the features of each are beginning to be made explicit.</p> <p>Recognition of language features in each mode and contextual factors are beginning to be taught explicitly.</p>	<p>Based on the language theory of Halliday, (1978, 1991) new developments in language testing include the work of Mathiessen, Slade, and Macken (1990), Hood (1989), Navara, (1992) .</p> <p>On-going developments along communicative testing is being carried out by Shohamy, (1992, 1992), Brindley (1993), Bachman (1990) , Weir (1990)</p>

Language testing has always followed linguistic theories of the time (Shohamy, 1991:115). The trends outlined above show a progression of phases which are characterised by corresponding theories, practices and assessment instruments. The earliest evidence, ie the pre-scientific, shows teachers as the arbiters of 'good taste' in assessing writing Spolsky (1992). After this period language was seen and taught as a decontextualised phenomenon. These views are exemplified in the psychometric-structuralist era dating from the 1930s onwards (ibid.) characterised by discrete-item tests where components of proficiency such as vocabulary and tenses were tested discretely and not in context. In this period of language testing, form dominated over meaning, and the concern was with the specific.

Subsequent trends, ie the psycholinguistic-sociolinguistic, (ibid.) which predominated from the 1960s, saw the very early beginnings of the challenges to the semi-direct or indirect tests on the grounds that these tests did not show convincing proof of learners using language in ways that correspond to real life [Morrow (1979) in Weir (1990)]. Hymes (1972) (ibid.) introduced the notion of 'sociolinguistic' and 'linguistic' competence thereby extending the notion of linguistic competence proposed by Chomsky [1965] in Ellis (1985). Language assessment began to develop a concern for *language in use*. This concern with use, encouraged the arrival of the 'communicative' era in language testing where there was a growing concern with the context of the task. The pendulum however swung so far in the direction of use, meaning dominated over form to such an extent, that how meaning was achieved through form became almost irrelevant. Assessment theory which came out of this period of language testing, such as the proficiency movement, was now concerned with the generalisability of results across contexts.

The position taken by Cummins (1979) in Ellis (1985) in his concept of the two domains of CALP (cognitive, academic language processing) and BICS (basic interpersonal communicative skills) suggested a new phase of language testing theory, a post-integrative phase, where concern was for both the generalisable and the specific. This linked in closely to the movement away from 'the purely communicative', where the focus was solely on the exchange of meaning with minimal emphasis on form, to the recognition that form (ie. the appropriate choices of vocabulary and grammar) was essential if texts were in fact to carry meaning within a given context.

More recent developments have moved in the direction of recognising context as the predominant factor in assessing the appropriacy (especially sociolinguistic appropriacy) of utterances.

The evidence from language testing research is generally consistent with the hypothesis that language proficiency consists of several distinct abilities that are either related to each other or that are related to a higher order, general ability. (Carroll, 1983, Oller 1983). Many language testing researchers are thus focusing their efforts on identifying the component abilities of language proficiency and are now for the most part working within an expanded framework of communicative language ability, of which the major distinguishing characteristic is its recognition of the importance of context beyond the sentence level to the appropriate use of language. This context includes both the discourse of which individual sentences are part and the sociolinguistic situation which governs, to a large extent, the nature of that discourse, in both form and function (Bachman, 1988:155).

Systemic functional models of language such as Halliday's model of Register and Language (1978), or Martin's model of Language, Register and Genre (1984) provide a new conceptualisation of what it means to know and use a language and a very powerful argument for consideration of purposes and contexts of language use in a way that is more explicit than former models of language proficiency (Matthiessen, Slade and Macken, 1990). This is because of the link which systemic functional grammar makes between lexico-grammatical choices and meaning in contexts of situation, which are socially and culturally determined. These new developments in language assessment, provide a basis for combining 'form' with 'meaning' as 'language form' is analysed within contexts to show how 'meaning' is achieved.

In the area of communicative language testing, we are now concerned with assessing language performance, not in terms of a unitary measure of proficiency applicable to all contexts of use, but in relation to specified contexts of use (Hood:1989).

The blending of different methods and theories of language proficiency and language assessment has created a large selection of contradictory classroom and testing material. What is significant about the historical developments and some of the contradictory theoretical and practical approaches, in relation to this study, is that current workplace language and literacy teaching and assessment practices still incorporate aspects of all of these trends. Mixed into the cocktail of approaches is the new influence of competency-based training and assessment into workplace skills.

Competency-based language testing utilises a cut-score or 'desired performance' description of an individual's language performance against defined behavioural criteria, rather than descriptions of performance at different levels which may represent varying degrees of mastery, Brindley (1991). Competency-based language learning and assessment practices and approaches have already been tried in some countries.

These include the Mainstream English Language Teaching Program in America (US Department of Health and Human Services 1985) cited in Brindley (1989) and more recently in Australia, Mawer (1992) but the new developments in language theory, ie influences from systemic functional grammar, have now impacted on these descriptions as mentioned above.

This study aims to analyse the implications of these different theoretical and methodological approaches for learners, employers and teachers. Classroom practices are now also subject to the influences of fairly dominant wider workplace, social and educational changes. The tensions created by differences in approaches to language and literacy teaching as well as tensions brought about by new influences such as competency-based training are outlined under the statement of the issues below.

Teachers in the *Workplace Language and Literacy Program (English in the Workplace)* are required to be the change agents in the process of teaching and assessing language according to competency-based formats, but they themselves, while influenced by the historical developments outlined above, are also products of the institutional framework of the *Adult Migrant English Service*, with its own history of teaching and assessment practices.

These practices were the subject of a study commissioned by the *AMEP Research Co-ordinating Committee (ARCC)* in response to the Committee of Review of the *AMEP's* findings (1985) that the *ASLPR Scale* did not provide the type of 'fine grained' information on learners' achievements in language over a course of instruction, Brindley (1989:1). The study set out to identify and document kinds of information on learning progress required by stakeholders in the AMEP as well as assessment methods used by teachers.

The findings of the ARCC study and the parallel curriculum development, known as *Learner Pathways*, Colman (1990) and the subsequent development of the competency-based framework, Manidis and Jones (1992) and Hagan, Hood, Jackson, Joyce and Manidis (1993) within the *Adult Migrant English Service* are outlined below. These developments in AMES over the past decade, including the wider historical developments in language and literacy theory frame the pedagogical background of the teachers in this study. In several ways their practices reflect very explicitly, organisational policies and priorities. What were these policies, models and priorities?

2.4 Assessment models in the AMEP

To fully understand current developments in the *Adult Migrant English Service* it is necessary to cover the inception of 'assessment' instruments and practices in the organisation as well as gloss the major curriculum development over the past two decades.

The service since the 1970s has moved through several major course design and methodological changes, precipitated and supported by wider trends in language learning and language testing theory. Up until the 1970s, teachers followed a sequential, structurally-based course design model which was influenced by behaviourist psychology and structuralist linguistics, Ingram (1981). Communicative approaches to curriculum development began to be adopted from the late 1970s across the *AMEP* (Hammond, Wickert, Burns, Joyce and Miller, 1992). This resulted in the 1980s as a period of transition characterised by 'ad hoc' selections from functional/notional syllabuses, process models, communicative language teaching and the individualised curriculum.

Course Design Changes in the NSW AMES

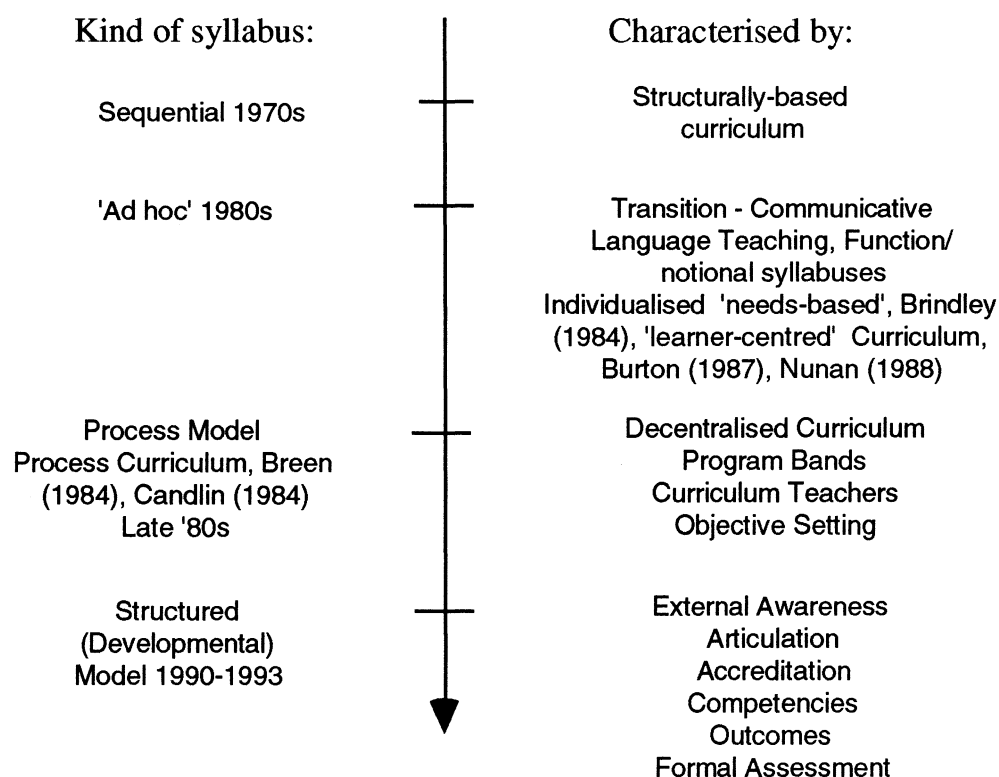


Diagram 1. Course Design Changes in *NSW AMES* (Hood and Manidis 1992).

The late 1980s saw the introduction of the 'process model' which was characterised by a 'decentralised' ie regional curriculum and which saw the introduction of objective setting as part of the course design process. The nineteen-nineties is characterised by external awareness, articulation, accreditation, a focus on outcomes, competencies and assessment.

This curriculum time-line in the *NSW AMES* is represented graphically above.

Each change has been supported by the introduction of assessment instruments corresponding to national and international developments and trends.

The first introduction of assessment instruments was in 1977, when *The AMES Syllabus Development Committee* was formed by teachers who were concerned about existing teaching methodologies and materials which they felt were not relevant to migrants' real communicative needs. This committee intended to draw up specifications for a number of syllabuses relating to all English language teaching programs.

A lack of standardisation of student levels also made it difficult for teachers to design needs-based courses. So as a precursor to their syllabus design plans, the Syllabus Development Committee set out to examine the question of student proficiency levels, and how these might be measured.

The 'proficiency movement', as it was known, had become popular in language and educational providers in the U.S.A. and Europe in the late 1950s, and the Committee examined several of the existing *Oral Rating Scales* that the U.S. Military and Council of Europe were using to test overseas military personnel in foreign languages.

These included:

- *U.S. Foreign Service Institute Absolute Language Proficiency Ratings*
- *Australian Language Proficiency Rating Scales* (First Draft version, Ingram, 1979)
- *I.B.M. Europe Performance Level Descriptions*
- *U.S. Defence Language Institute Definitions of Degrees of Language Skill*
- *Proposals for Level Definitions* by D. Wilkins (1977), Manidis (1991).

After studying these instruments and their relevant target groups and purposes, the Committee developed the *AMES (NSW) Oral Proficiency Scale*, deciding not to use

the existing Australian instrument, the *ASLPR* scale, which was based on the *Foreign Service Institute* rating scale. This was for two reasons:

- most of the scales examined related to a reasonably homogeneous, educated student population with clearly definable language learning needs. The *AMES* student population was heterogeneous with varied needs and required a rating scale that incorporated a wider range of behavioural descriptions based on general social and interactional criteria.
- most of the scales it was felt, (including the *ASLPR*), did not discriminate finely enough at the lower levels of proficiency, where most of the students in *AMES (NSW)* were located. The *FSI* scales weighted accuracy and 'standard' speech quite significantly, which would have eliminated most *AMES* students from their lower levels of proficiency.

Based on the Wilkins (1977) scale, the *AMES (NSW) O.P. Scale* was developed, defining seven levels of proficiency.

For well over a decade, therefore the *Adult Migrant English Service* organised class groupings on the basis of placing learners in groups with similar language levels. This procedure was linked very strongly to general language and literacy trends as well as wider assessment practices, derived from the communicative paradigm and outlined in the historical table above.

One of the major purposes of this initial assessment procedure was to make placement decisions for learners based on pedagogical factors related to maximising language learning potential, ie as a placement test.

A placement test is designed to sort new students into teaching groups, so that they can start a course at approximately the same level as the other students in the class. It is concerned with the student's present standing, and so relates to general ability rather than specific points of learning (Harrison 1983:4).

To supplement the use of the *Oral Proficiency Scale* in the organisation the Syllabus Development Committee developed several other initial assessment resources, also designed to test language proficiency for placement purposes. These included:

- A Listening Vocabulary Test for very low-level students. (No writing required). Students heard items twice (isolated English words - no article)

and would mark pictures (15) corresponding to the word. This test was intended as a proficiency/ placement test for centres with large numbers of low level learners with low literacy levels

- The *AMES (NSW) Dictation*, of which four were available. A short passage was read aloud at normal speed in its entirety, then broken up into shorter segments, each of which would be read twice. The whole passage was read through again. Marks were assigned to specific words or segments. These marks were converted to a proficiency level by means of a conversion table that would situate learners in a rough band of general language proficiency, (Brindley and Singh, 1982).

- The *AMES (NSW) Cloze Test* which comprised passages of English in which every nth word would be deleted. The student was required to fill in the blank with the appropriate English word. Two cloze tests were available, one short 11-item for very low-level students and a longer 44-item passage for students who completed the first passage with ease. Like the dictations the cloze tests measured overall proficiency to facilitate placement decisions.

By the mid 1980s, with the organisation's adoption of a 'communicative, 'needs-based', and 'learner centred' approach to language teaching and learning for adult migrants [Brindley (1984), Burton (1987) and Nunan (1988)], negotiation with learners was necessary in order to establish learning programs. The learner as an active participant in the learning process would require access to comprehensive information about course provision and options, in order to identify and select appropriate and relevant learning arrangements. Along with the procedure of the oral proficiency interview, it was desirable to discuss options with the learner about his or her chosen focus of study. The initial interview thus included information-giving and 'counselling' with the assessment of language levels.

One of the primary features of this communicative approach was the focus on oral language assessment and not literacy assessment (Joyce and Burns, 1991). This imbalance reflected the special relationship between oracy and literacy and their respective places in the development of language testing. So, although proficiency assessment for placement and referral was well established, these assessment practices focused almost solely on oral proficiency and not on literacy assessment.

Several studies throughout the 1980s, identified that literacy teaching and assessment in the NSW AMES was being seriously neglected (Ingram, 1980), (Kessler, 1984 a., 1984 b.), (Hood and Solomon, 1985) and (Kightley, 1989). Not even the reading and writing proficiency scale, developed as part of the *ASLPR*, was used in *AMES NSW*.

According to Navara (1991) one of the first attempts in AMES NSW to incorporate a more systematic and appropriate consideration of literacy needs into the initial assessment and referral process was the development of the *Reading and Writing Assessment Kit* (Hood & Solomon, 1988). This kit aimed to encourage the incorporation of other factors, or placement criteria, into the initial assessment, such as:

- a learner's previous education
- his or her previous literacy experiences and
- his or her language learning goals and aspirations.

However, the introduction of the kit did not dramatically improve the incorporation of literacy into the curriculum. Further work by Burns (1990) provided supporting evidence for the on-going bias towards oral language assessment and development within the communicative paradigm in *AMES*, with the corresponding neglect of literacy teaching. The opportunity to redress this imbalance came with the funding and focus on literacy of the International Year of Literacy in 1990.

A major project initiative of the International Year of Literacy was to develop a literacy assessment tool for placement and referral that could be used alongside the existing oral proficiency scale and which sought to incorporate the literacy needs of learners in a more coherent, direct way. The *Literacy Assessment Resource for Placement and Referral*, (Navara, 1991) was the outcome of this project and the instrument is currently used to assess literacy proficiency throughout the organisation. The existence of this instrument enabled the organisation to model sequential learning programs for learners based on their oracy and literacy rates as well as focus areas of study. This curriculum initiative was called the *Learner Pathways* model.

It was formalised in the organisation in 1989 to combine the previous practices of assessing oral proficiency, systematise the incorporation of literacy assessment, and incorporate learner needs into the placement process (Colman, 1989). The following aspects of learners were considered:

- what their oral and written language level was (Stage)
- what their learning pace was {based on educational background} (Band)
- and what life and language goals they were aiming to achieve (Focus).

Learners were expected to progress through the language learning process by learning content areas (syllabus) that were relevant to their language learning goals. Progress relating to levels of knowledge and skill in the use of English language was measured through assessment and reporting of this progress enabled decision-makers in the educational process, ie the learners, teachers, program managers, employers and funding bodies to monitor and evaluate the program of learning.

At the same time as these initiatives, educational practices in the *Adult Migrant English Service* continued to be influenced by other trends in assessment as outlined in the historical table above. The progressive era of the eighties in Australian education and the absence of systematic assessment measures, other than oral and more recently literacy proficiency, saw most courses in the organisation being provided in a non-credited, informal system, where specific course achievements or learning outcomes were not measured in formal ways.

Progress was only ever informally relayed to learners, and funding bodies relied on those measures of proficiency detailed above, which provided only a very rough idea of progress. As a precursor to wider educational changes including increased accountability, these measures of proficiency were seen by the Committee of Review of the *AMEP* (1986) as not providing the 'fine grained' information that was needed for the 'calculation of gain scores' (Committee of Review, 1986:59). The Committee sought to broaden and tighten the assessment procedures used in the service.

Following the review a study was commissioned by the *AMEP* Research Co-ordinating Committee (ARCC) to identify and document assessment practices in *AMES*. The findings of the study are outlined in a book entitled *Assessing Achievement in the Learner-Centred Curriculum*, (Brindley, 1989). One of the major benefits of the study was the description of a three-tier model of assessment in the *AMEP* which was proposed by Brindley (1989), where different types of assessment practices were recommended according to the evaluative purposes required by different stakeholders in the language learning arena. This model can be summarised as follows:

Type 1 Assessment	Type 2 Assessment	Type 3 Assessment
<p>A formal standardised proficiency test (<i>NSW Oral Proficiency Rating Scale and Literacy Assessment Resource</i>) with explicit criteria; used for selection or placement at course entry and at course exit; used by teachers, learners, and other parties, ie. general public, educational institutions and funding bodies for system-wide accountability.</p>	<p>Semi-formal or standardised tests of proficiency-related objectives describing what learners can do, with explicit criteria as part of a given course; used to diagnose, monitor and motivate learner achievement; used by teachers, learners and third parties (where criteria are known).</p>	<p>Informal measures of achievement of knowledge and enabling skills ('structural' not communicative) as part of a given course, usually with implicit criteria; used for diagnosis and motivation; used by teachers and learners.</p>

Diagram 2. Assessment practices of three types in the *AMEP* (Brindley, 1989).

This organisation of language proficiency into three types, successfully managed to incorporate all the historical developments in language assessment thus far. For this reason this framework has been used in the data analysis of this research study to categorise the perspectives of teachers, learners and employers.

These types of assessment related to the 'different kinds' of proficiency as outlined by Spolsky (1985). He described a notion of general language proficiency (ie. underlying ability, type 1), functional proficiency, which could be termed in relation to the completion of specific tasks (type 2), and structural proficiency, ie. the ability to know the rules of language (type 3).

Brindley (1989) outlined how each of these types of assessment is used by different stakeholders for varying purposes. Type 1 assessment represented measures of overall proficiency in relation to the National Program. Proficiency is measured using standardised rating scales (*AMES NSW Oral Proficiency Rating Scale and Literacy Assessment Resource for Placement and Referral*). Teachers and program managers use this information for placement purposes, while funding bodies might refer to these aggregated gains to evaluate the overall effectiveness of programs.

The scores achieved on this 'global curriculum level', although sometimes relayed to learners informally, do not provide them with enough information on 'what they can do' in English. This is because the assessment instrument indicates a level of 'proficiency' (ie. a 'theoretical construct' of language ability) either numerically or by a Stage, ie. 'Beginner' in the case of literacy level. These numbers or stages are in turn attached to lengthy criterion-referenced descriptors, and are generally inaccessible to

most learners. Equally, proficiency ratings because of their broad categorical structure, do not indicate specific learning outcomes.

Type 2 assessment represents the achievement of particular communicative objectives as part of a given course or module of instruction. This type of assessment measures mastery of specified objectives that teachers and learners negotiate at the beginning of each course. This type 2 assessment is more learner-friendly than type 1, as explicit criteria relating to communicative goals, enable learners to see ‘what they can do’ in English.

Type 3 assessment involves the assessing of particular objectives relating to knowledge and enabling skills, but not to the achievement or completion of tasks or texts. Assessment of this kind is not formalised, it may or may not have explicit criteria and is mainly concerned with continuous, informal feedback to learners on their progress in structural knowledge and enabling skills.

While type 1 and type 3 assessment practices are well established in *AMES*, Brindley (1989) identified that it was the type 2 assessment practices that required development in the organisation. Clearly a more standardised mechanism for measuring proficiency-related objectives tied to real world tasks and measured according to criterion-referenced descriptors would be more useful to both learners and teachers. These descriptive measures could also provide information to third parties such as employers, who might be interested in a fuller picture of what learners were in fact achieving as a result of learning programs in the *NSW AMES*.

Specifying precisely and measurably what learners can do at class progression stage ie type 2 assessment practices, provided the springboard for development of the competency-based framework for the *AMES*. This proposed model of curriculum sequencing, would combine type 1 and type 2 assessment, to enable learner progression to be measured in terms of ‘proficiency’ as well as in terms of text-level achievement which describes ‘what learners can do’, ie. in terms of demonstrable text-level language competencies.

Statements of generic language competencies were then developed in *AMES* (Manidis and Jones, 1992) which corresponded in theory with the wider workplace and *National Training Reform Agenda* competencies, ie following guidelines for training curricula and assessment practices as defined by the competency-based training and assessment movement.

These competencies take written and spoken language texts as opposed to ‘tasks’ as the skills base of a linguistic competency. This is in contrast to the work of Mawer (1992) and the MELT Competences (1985), (Brindley, 1989), where task completion rather than generic texts form the basis of assessment.

It seemed appropriate therefore, that the assessment of an individual's language skills should be in terms of the extent to which they can mobilise their communicative resources to achieve those work-related, nonlinguistic goals, ie task completion, and the successful management of the communication interaction over-ride concerns about language accuracy (Mawer 1992:3).

This distinction is a significant one in terms of this study as the findings of the present study highlight the variety of approaches to language teaching which is generated by different understandings of 'task completion' where linguistic factors (or linguistic accuracy) play a secondary role, or where some linguistic factors dominate at the expense of others in the completion of tasks. In text-based approaches to teaching where linguistic factors play a primary role - where the situation is not reduced to a vehicle for the language, but where the language is the embodiment of the context and the situation itself (Slade, 1986) it is necessary for teachers to address primarily all the linguistic factors which contribute to the realisation of meaning, including the successful management of the communication interaction which implicitly requires at least a certain amount of linguistic accuracy.

These competencies were also criterion-referenced as recommended by Brindley (1989). Generic competencies were selected across content focus areas, ordered to complement the *Learner Pathways* framework, and structured to include three categories of language development:

- (a) oracy
- (b) reading and writing skills
- (c) learning to learn skills and community-based information skills.

The competencies are encapsulated in *The Certificate in Spoken and Written English* which provides a sequential course of language development which can be used as an accredited course according to guidelines developed by the VEETAC Working Party on the Recognition of Training and outlined in their brochure entitled *The National Framework for the Recognition of Training*. (1993). The model is shown below.

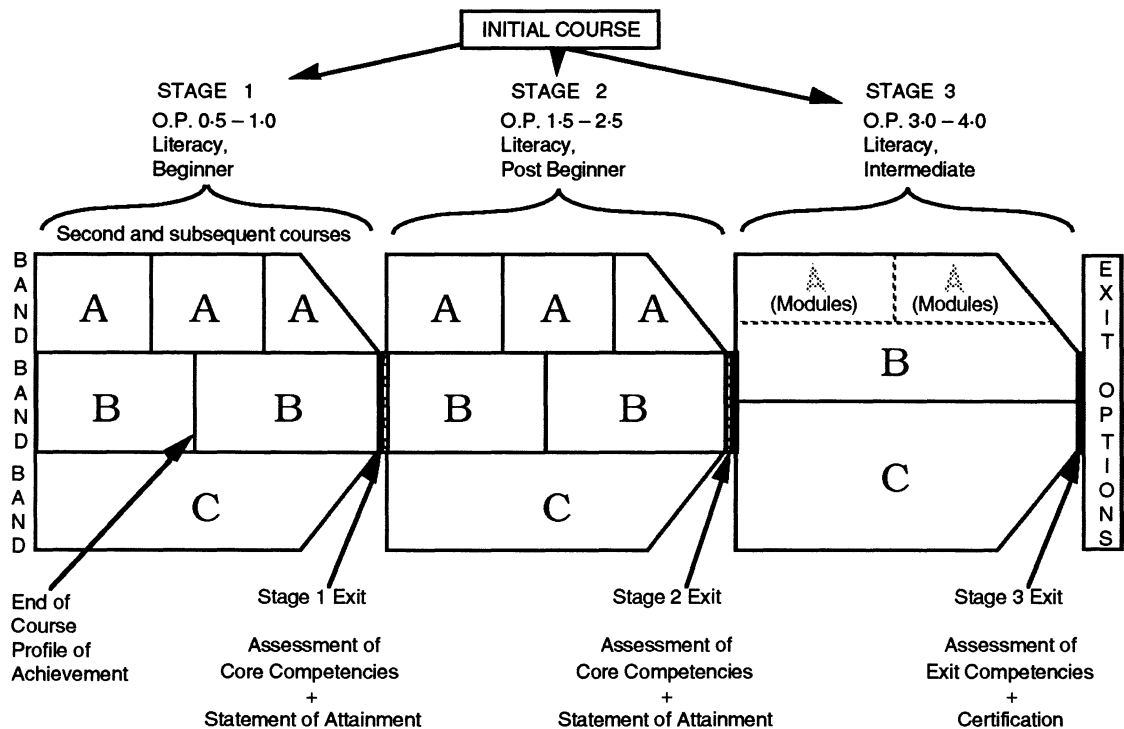


Diagram 3. Proposed model of curriculum sequencing in Learner Pathways (Manidis, 1992:11).

The development of both *The Literacy Assessment Resource for Placement and Referral* (Navara, 1992) and *The Certificate in Spoken and Written English: Description of Competencies, Stages 1, 2, & 3*, (Hagan, Hood, Jackson, Jones, Joyce, Manidis, 1992) and *The English in the Workplace Competency Framework*, (Baylis and Thomas, 1992) thus all resulted from the demands of the *Learner Pathways* curriculum initiative and trends in the wider training reform agenda.

These changes in organisational policies and procedures have impacted on teachers as well. While *AMES* has never adopted overtly any one 'particular approach' to language teaching, implicitly, approaches to language teaching have been shaped by the assessment instruments used at any one time as seen above. This is because of the automatic link between language proficiency and language proficiency as object of assessment. Considering the developments in the wider industrial context and language theory, the historical trends of language assessment and curriculum initiatives in the *Adult Migrant English Service* it becomes increasingly clear that a period of rapid and substantial change for workplace teachers has arrived.

2.5 Statement of the issues

The issues identified as the focus of this research are those precipitated by the period of changes in and exchanges between industry and education and within education itself. As mentioned before, the introduction of skills training into workplaces and the entry of market forces into education, have meant that aspects formerly restricted to one sector now impinge on the other. Assessment, once the concern of education, and quality assurance, once firmly in the domain of industry, are now key elements in both sectors in formal rather than informal ways.

Key participants in this changing industrial-educational scene are workplace teachers, workers and employers who now meet in a new climate. Quality educational provision and the introduction of quality assurance procedures in teaching have become increasingly important for providers like *AMES (NSW)*. Similarly, in industry, the assessment of skills, including language skills, has become the focus of all restructuring workplaces. This nexus is outlined as follows:

First, for better or for worse, we are all caught up in a political and educational conjuncture in which skills are being described at high levels of generality in order to define both the content objectives of curricula, on the one hand, and the skills requirements of jobs, on the other. More and more, educators need to justify their existence in terms of assessable content outcomes, vouch for these outcomes through formal certification, and thus demonstrate quite explicitly the relevance of their educational programs to the potential employers of their students. Alongside this, there is also an increasing emphasis on national consistency in assessment and in mechanisms for credit transfer (Cope, 1992).

The first issue is that addressed by research question one; what are the stakeholder perspectives in workplace language and literacy education today? For practitioners, learners and workplace supervisors, the historical development of language teaching and assessment and current trends in competency-based approaches, have created a myriad of opposing elements which impact on teaching and assessment expectations and practices. Each stakeholder has been subject to these influences as they are exposed to the current trends and cross fertilisation of industry and education. However the developments in teaching may be more obvious to teachers than to other stakeholders as they are the ones required to adapt suddenly to these pressures of external accountability after a period of relative 'progressivism' in education from the 1960s onwards characterised by minimal formal outcomes (Matthiessen, Slade and Macken, 1990).

Assessment itself is a phenomenon engendered firstly by the naming of subjective criteria, ie what is assessed is always decided on by choice, consciously or unconsciously. These criteria are then idiosyncratically applied to the phenomenon in question. Language assessment is no exception. Assessment literature is replete with instances of the role of subjectivity in assessment and the idiosyncratic criteria that different individuals bring to the assessment of language proficiency

For the domain of proficiency is outside the classroom, not inside. We can (perhaps) leave achievement testing to the teachers and professional testers, but once we aspire to measure proficiency, it becomes a question of vox populi, vox dei (Barnwell, 1987:39).

Subjective judgements on 'proficiency' are exacerbated by different levels of theoretical understanding of the phenomenon in question as outlined below.

Not the least of these is the fact that non-teacher native speakers, learners and teachers are likely to have different understandings of the language process (Brindley 1989:121).

and each group teachers, learners and employers thereby applies different 'criteria' to the ability in question.

It is here, at the interface of what is educationally and linguistically possible, and what is viewed as achievable by employers (or non-teacher native- or second language speakers) that differences arise with expectations about language performance and development. The analysis of what the differing perspectives are is the first issue addressed by the research.

The second issue of the research, addressed under research question two, is that of situating the classroom practices of teachers in their organisational and historical contexts. To be effective as change agents in their own practice and in the workplace context, teachers may be required firstly to understand their own pedagogical paradigms and those of learners and employers, before they change practice to 'fit' the expectations of others and adopt new practices and trends such as the competency-based training and assessment movement.

As the 'expert theoreticians' in the field of language learning, particularly in contexts where they interface with non-language experts such as employers, teachers do need a deeper understanding of the perspectives and approaches held by these stakeholders as well as their own. Ingram (1981) recognised this need for teachers to be more aware of their theoretical bases, when the *ASLPR* was introduced:

One of the most serious problems confronting the use of the ASLPR is the need for teachers to re-think what language proficiency, language testing, and language teaching are about. (.....)Traditionally, such teachers have seen proficiency (if they thought of it as a goal at all) (sic!) as the ability to recall the rules and lexis that they formally taught and the ability to incorporate them (however arduously) into written sentences Ingram (1981:127).

Making explicit the theoretical paradigms within which teachers operate involves giving teachers a knowledge base on language assessment and demonstrating to them how their classroom practice is framed by trends and language theory developments since the beginnings of formal language assessment practices.

The third issue addressed by question three of the research is the extent to which the classroom practices of teachers are incompatible with or complementary to the expectations of the other stakeholders. How do these different practices fit within the framework of competency-based training and assessment? Where does their view of language fit in relation to current methodologies and assessment procedures? How do they interpret their approaches to stakeholders like employers and learners? If employers' expectations or understanding of language proficiency differ from those of teachers there could be a discord between the knowledge and skills that teachers are developing and those that employers are seeking. How will teachers determine or satisfy the perspectives and expectations of employers and learners in these workplace learning contexts? How do teachers incorporate these disparate needs into classroom practice?

This discussion leads on to the final issue addressed by research question four. What is the current applicability and relevance of the frameworks and theoretical approaches which have formed and shaped teacher practices to date? How much are teachers aware of these theoretical approaches and new ways to adapt these to current trends? If English in the workplace teachers are approaching the teaching of language skills from idiosyncratic perspectives which may or may not fulfil the needs and expectations of employers and learners then they ought to know this and be in a position to positively address it. Is making explicit the theoretical paradigms within which teachers operate the first step in reconciling tensions in teaching and best practice and adaptability? Is there a mechanism or a framework which could combine and reconcile the opposing historical influences in language teaching as well as the differing perspectives of employers and learners?

The above issues summatively mean, that for workplace English language and literacy teachers, their teaching and assessment practices may be shown to be crucial to their success as teachers. Their practices in developing oral and written language skills (specific language used and levels of competency required) within workplace contexts and the links between these practices and the needs and expectations of learners and employers and wider training agendas are inextricably linked.

2.6 Significance of the study

This study presents the different perspectives of teachers, learners and employers in relation to English language skills in the workplace and analyses them to distinguish features of difference and disparate needs. In doing this it provides tangible examples of the differing concerns about language proficiency of the stakeholder groups in English in the workplace classes.

This study, by researching the practices relating to workplace spoken and written language development in the classroom, as well as the processes relating to the assessment of spoken and written language competencies, aims to clarify and situate historically and organisationally those practices that teachers engage in to develop spoken and written language in the classroom.

This study then analyses the relationship between teacher practice, and employer and learner expectations, and discusses the implications of idiosyncratic classroom practice as a quality assurance issue and ways of bridging perceived and real gaps in service requirements and provision of learners and employers.

This study evaluates current trends in language theory and language teaching and assessment as well as more traditional approaches. It includes an evaluation of the applicability of the *English in the Workplace Competency Framework*, (Baylis & Thomas, 1992) which provides a descriptive set of generic text standards for the measurement of observable linguistic skills in workplace contexts. This evaluation takes account of the need to include the full spectrum of stakeholder expectations and current linguistic theory, while incorporating current practice, in the teaching and learning process.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has outlined three primary background factors to this study. The first is the place of English language and literacy skills and other workplace skills in the

context of the *National Training Reform Agenda*. The background to award and industry restructuring was described as well as the new role of competency-based training and assessment.

The second is the historical development of language assessment which has precedents in both educational and linguistic trends. These linguistic theories with parallel curriculum developments were outlined from the beginning of this century until the present day. Theoretical tensions arising from the different views of language ability and language theory were glossed to highlight some of the contradictory practices of teachers which have been analysed in this study.

The third is the historical development of language assessment in the *Adult Migrant English Service*, which has been subject to both these wider influences, ie the historical developments in educational research and linguistic theories of teaching and assessing, as well as the pressures of the competency-based movement of industry which is currently influencing educational practice.

The chapter then addressed the statement of the issues and the significance of the study. The primary issues are concerned with the integration of key factors across educational and industrial operations, namely assessment and quality provision and how these have impacted on workplace teachers, learners and employers. The data will show how theoretical positions and practice have been framed by background training and experiences. The conclusions make recommendations on ways to ensure quality provision, consistent with current theoretical trends in assessment, while still maintaining the pedagogical integrity of teachers.

3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON ASSESSMENT MODELS AND TEACHING PRACTICES

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will review the literature on language assessment models and teacher practices which are relevant to this study. This will be done within the framework of the four research questions, in order, and will attempt to highlight the most recent findings which support or underpin the findings of this study.

3.2 Literature relating to Research Question 1

1. What are some of the features that distinguish supervisor, teacher and learner perspectives on spoken and written language abilities in the workplace?

Research question one is essentially concerned with two primary factors of language assessment framed within a specific context. These are:

- (a) the nature of language proficiency itself and how it is operationalised as a theoretical construct (ie how it is measured as such)
- (b) the role of subjectivity in the assessment of language proficiency.

The relationship between the above elements and the three stakeholder groups: teachers, learners and supervisors in workplace English language classes is evaluated.

A great deal has been written and debated around points (a) and (b) and work has been completed in the *Adult Migrant English Service* on assessment by Brindley (1989). These will each be looked at in turn.

In addressing the nature of proficiency and the role of subjectivity in assessment we return to the question posed by Spolsky (1985),

What does it mean to know and use a language?

This question has occupied language theorists, language testers, teachers and learners for decades, if not longer, and the full answer is still elusive.

Language proficiency is a complex phenomenon, and is very little understood, despite the best efforts of many social science disciplines to attempt to elucidate it. There are many different and indeed sometimes competing models of language proficiency and we are barely at the beginning of operationalising and testing and validating those models (Alderson, 1991a:4).

The way 'proficiency' has been constructed has followed the wider trends in language and linguistic theories of the time. This relationship is outlined in chapter two in the historical table where trends and developments are presented showing how the construct of language proficiency "changes" over time depending on new interpretations by language and assessment theorists involved in language learning and language teaching. For example, traditional views, or the 'structuralist' notion of language competence, regarded language proficiency as knowing the *rules and items that make up the grammar and lexicon of a language* (Spolsky, 1985). Early theoretical work on the structure of language proposed that a unitary factor was responsible for language behaviour [(Oller 1979, 1983 cited in Bachman, 1990)]. Later studies were able to show that language ability consists of several distinct but related constructs rather than a unitary ability (ibid.).

With the emergence of the 'communicative' era in language theory, Canale (1983) proposed a framework for conceptualising 'proficiency,' which for the first time, described 'communicative performance' or a model of 'language in use' and incorporated grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competencies.

This view, with a focus on 'communication' was espoused by Savignon (1983:246) who defined 'proficiency' as the same as 'communicative competence' and by Bachman and Palmer [1983] in Bachman and Savignon 1986:382), who use the term 'communicative language ability' rather than 'proficiency'.

In contrast to the views of Savignon and Bachman, Ingram (1984) in his development of the *Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings* wished to distinguish 'proficiency' from 'communicative competence' because, he argues, the latter depends on traits other than the ability to use the language, such as intelligence, personality factors like introversion/extroversion and general knowledge (de Jong 1990:7).

The view of proficiency as outlined in the *ASLPR* is concerned with describing '*the sort of communication tasks that the learner can carry out and how they are carried out*', Ingram (1984:5). Proficiency in Ingram's sense is viewed as a 'pragmatic ascription',

or equal to 'what the learner can achieve' rather than as a 'theoretical construct representing human capacity' (Bachman, 1990:5, 251).

Richards (1985:4), who describes proficiency as the '*ability to operate in specific contexts and situations and relating to real-life tasks*' is in accordance with Ingram's view, relating the ability to what the learner can do with the language.

These more recent approaches to language proficiency define a broader view of language and language in use, by recognising the importance of context beyond the sentence level, where the dynamic interaction between the situation, the language user and the discourse can be described (Bachman & Palmer, 1982a), (Bachman & Savignon, 1986), (Bachman & Clark, 1987), (Bachman, (1988 & 1990:4)].

Being 'proficient' or appropriate in this broad view of language use would incorporate *the ability to 'mean' in the situation types, or social contexts, that are generated by the culture* (Halliday 1978:35).

The essential difference between more recent models and developing theories of assessment using systemic-functional grammar as a basis is described by Cziko (1984) as cited in Matthiessen, Slade and Macken (1990). He has made the distinction between descriptive models of competence where the 'components' of proficiency such as discourse, strategic, grammatical and sociolinguistic competence are described or listed but the relationship between these components is not made explicit and 'working' models, ie ones which strives to show the relationship between the component parts. In the case of language assessment based on a systemic functional model this would mean demonstrating how the register variables of field, (*the field of discourse: 'that which is going on'*) (ibid.), tenor (*the tenor of the relationship between the speaker and listener and their potential for interacting, including the social distance in terms of eg power and familiarity*) (ibid.) and mode (*the role played by language itself in a given context of situation*) (ibid.) relate to contexts of use.

Some 'working' models aim to measure psychometrically the 'underlying construct of proficiency' or as Bachman puts it *a theoretical construct representing human capacity* (Bachman, 1990:5 & 251). He argues elsewhere that adequate criteria can only be obtained if the components of proficiency are specified and scales are defined independent of particular contexts, that is *in terms of the relative presence or absence of the abilities that constitute the domain* rather than *in terms of actual individuals or actual performance* (Bachman, 1989a:255-6).

A working model of so-called communicative competence based upon a theory of language such as that proposed by Halliday (1978) would incorporate the interactive dimension of communication as well as the relationship between the component parts of proficiency, but necessarily these would always be context-specific. It is now argued that the systemic-functional theory of language makes explicit the inter-relationships of the components of language in relation to specified contexts of use.

Grammar expresses semantics and through semantics context of use and culture; and these higher levels are created by grammar (Matthiessen et al., 1990:152).

This working model is able to demonstrate the relationship between the component parts but by the same token these component parts are context-specific. In other words, language users will not have a general 'grammatical competence' but will have context specific 'grammatical competence(s)'. While all native speakers may share 'underlying' competences, these can only effectively be measured as they are realised in specific contexts of use. Thus the notion of 'general' proficiency in functional grammar terms is an aggregate phenomenon which makes sense only in relation to specific contexts of use, not all contexts of use.

Proficiency is thus 'constructed' by theorists as many different things, such as the knowledge of rules, or the tasks people can perform and the linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic means they activate to do this, as a general or specific ability, linked to personalities, (Cummins et al., 1984), or as an ability that is totally separate from these factors, (Ingram in de Jong, 1990:7).

The literature reveals that there is more agreement on what proficiency is not, than on what it is.

In this study, what is relevant from the above literature, is the realisation that each of the teachers in the study has been influenced to a greater or lesser extent by these 'competing' or 'contradictory' models, or by aspects of particular models. One word which describes a methodologically-mixed approach is '*eclectic*' as the teacher of class 1 describes her approach. These influences are identified in research question two where teacher practices are tied to particular language proficiency approaches or theories. These practices reveal the essential distinction between the development of generalised skills and knowledge and the development of text specific skills and knowledge.

The use of terminology in the literature on proficiency by different theorists is not standardised. An example of this is the use of different words such as 'proficiency', 'competence', 'strategic competence' and 'communicative language ability' to describe the same thing. For example as noted above 'proficiency' is defined as the same as 'communicative competence' by Savignon (1983:246) and the term 'communicative language ability' rather than 'proficiency' is used by Bachman and Palmer (1983) as cited in Bachman and Savignon (1986:382). A distinction is made between 'communicative competence' and 'actual communication' by Canale (1983:5), the former which is *understood as the underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for communication* and the latter *the realisation of such knowledge and skill under varying psychological and environmental conditions*. The use of the word 'actual communication' is preferred by Canale because he says the earlier term 'performance' used by Canale & Swain (1980) has created much confusion in applied linguistics since Chomsky (1965) introduced the strong and weak senses of the terms 'competence' and 'performance' into modern linguistics. The former meant the internalised grammar of the language user and the latter referred to the actual comprehension and production of language.

Then there is the problem of using the same word to mean different things. Savignon (1983) outlines 'strategic competence' as *the ability to use strategies which learners use to compensate for the imperfect knowledge of rules, or limiting factors in their application which may be caused by fatigue, distraction or inattention*. She says *'strategic competence' is analogous to the need for coping or survival strategies and may include paraphrasing, repetition, hesitation, avoidance, guessing as well as shifts in register and style to sustain communication*. Bachman (1990:107) on the other hand summarises 'strategic competence' as *the capacity that relates language competence, or knowledge of language, to the language user's knowledge structures and the features of the context in which communication takes place*. This could be interpreted by language assessment theorists of the systemic-functional grammar school as the language user's ability to *'use language as a resource for making meanings in context - both immediate context and general cultural context'* (Matthiessen, Slade and Macken, 1990:152). 'Performance' encapsulated in competencies, in *NSWAMES* terms now refers to the completion of a text-based task, and in a sense combines Chomsky's notions referred to above.

This confusion between language proficiency terminology is relevant to research question one of this study where each of the teachers interpreted linguistic concepts idiosyncratically. In some instances they qualified the meanings of proficiency

terminology and reworked the underlying model of language proficiency, see chapter five, research question two.

The above literature review covers the first part of research question one which is concerned with the nature of language proficiency itself and how it is operationalised as a theoretical construct (ie how it is defined and measured as such).

The second part of research question one concerns the role of subjectivity in the assessment of language proficiency inherent to some extent in any assessment procedure because of idiosyncratic interpretations resulting firstly from the application of different criteria and secondly different interpretations of the same criteria. *An individual learner may be assessed at a different level by different stakeholders or a learner may be assessed at the same level for very different reasons* (Barnwell, 1987:157).

Different criteria brought to an assessment situation result from different experiences, different values, different educational backgrounds and the influence of different theoretical exposure and training, which is explored in its practical manifestation in research question two. However, collective experiences and collective knowledge have effects on assessment which may result in similar judgements as suggested below:

(o)ne is tempted to make the observation that, given any reasonable set of criteria, (of proficiency) experienced teachers will be in fairly close agreement (Brindley, 1986:21).

Brindley (1991) identifies the sources of and problems associated with establishing linguistic criteria for assessment purposes which is taken up in research question four.

The seminal reference on teacher perspectives on assessment in the *Adult Migrant English Service* is outlined in the study which was commissioned by the *AMEP Research Co-ordinating Committee* following the Committee of Review of the *AMEP* in 1986. The study aimed to determine alternatives or supplementary means for reporting on language gains for learners in the organisation. Brindley (1989) who carried out the study sought to determine the kinds of information on learner achievement which were required in the organisation, document the current practices in order to identify and systematise them and draw upon other models of assessment in order to recommend useful ones for adoption by the *AMEP*.

The ARCC study has been glossed in chapter two and the major findings which are relevant to this research study are that different types of assessment which were relevant

to the purposes of different stakeholders within and without the organisation were identified. Brindley (1989) argued that the assessment practices needed essentially for different purposes by the various stakeholder groups could be provided within a framework which conceptualised the notion of 'achievement' at three levels of the organisation. These are represented diagrammatically in chapter 2, page.....

These three types of 'achievement' have been used as a framework to cluster the comments made by teachers, learners and supervisors in this study. These three types of achievement relate to the three 'kinds' of proficiency as outlined by Spolsky (1985), ie general or global proficiency, task or practical proficiency relating to the completion of real life tasks and structural or enabling proficiency which relates to the structures and rules which govern the language.

In the study carried out by Brindley (1989) he found that teachers saw the assessment of learners for initial placement into classes as the most important function, and assessment for providing learners and funding bodies (ie supervisors) with information on language learning as the second least and least important functions of assessment. This point is significant in relation to question three of this study which investigates the relationship between teacher practices and the needs of supervisors and learners. In Brindley's study (ibid.) however external assessment was seen as important in employment or work-related courses. He also found that informal methods of assessment were most commonly used by teachers and the findings of this study are consistent with his findings. Classroom observation and an analysis of teachers' course proposals indicate the on-going trend in informal methods of assessment.

Brindley (1989) found that program administrators saw the need for information on 'general' levels of proficiency as well as type two proficiency, which could convey more concrete information on what learners had learnt in particular programs of study.

Learners' perspectives on assessment (and by implication on language proficiency and teaching styles) were heavily influenced by their previous educational experience. Several studies including those by Alcorso and Kalantzis (1985), Kessler (1984a and 1984b) and Brindley (1989) support the overall desire for learners to have more formal and structured assessment procedures as most had been educated in educational systems where testing played a major role.

The conclusion to the analysis of the nature and purpose of assessment by teachers, administrators and learners is that these stakeholder groups do not share *a common perception of the nature and purpose of assessment in the AMEP* (Brindley, 1989:45).

Nor do they bring to the assessment of language ability similar criteria. Teachers brought to the assessment process in classrooms 'learning criteria' which Brindley (ibid) explains in terms of their role as teachers rather than as communicators. Native speakers on the other hand (including supervisors) tend to judge learners according to the intelligibility of the overall message, Ludwig (1982) cited in Brindley (1989) and assess them in functional terms of their ability to carry out real world tasks. These findings are partially supported by this research study, which shows how supervisors, not all of whom are native speakers, are able to talk about 'text' or 'task' level abilities of learners, but they also focus heavily on the behaviour of learners in the workplace when asked about language proficiency or communication with them.

This focus on non-linguistic elements by the supervisors is consistent with the comments below:

Assessment of persons with non-English backgrounds is difficult because of the confound (sic) existing among culture, language and thought....Because language-minority persons reflect a different social and cultural heritage from that of mainstream (American) English speakers, there is always the possibility that unrecognized differences in the backgrounds of examinees might violate assumptions about the nature of the population under assessment. The challenge faced by assessment specialists and educators is to explore and understand how cultural and linguistic factors affect assessment, rather than to deny that such influences might readily exist (Duran, 1988:573-4 cited in Bachman, 1990:272).

Learners according to Alcorso and Kalantzis (1985) were found to be concerned with goal-related, functional outcomes in relation to their language learning such as new skills and abilities like finding their way around or using interpreters. Willing (1988) found formal accuracy to be a concern of learners. In this study, a considerable number of supervisors were found to be concerned with formal accuracy as well. This is explored further in the data analysis of research question one where several supervisors mention the desirability of non-native speakers to be more 'accurate' in their communication.

The findings on research question one are outlined in chapter five in the data analysis against the background of the above literature on language proficiency per se and as the object of assessment.

3.3. Literature relating to research question two

2. What are some of the practices/approaches used in workplace English language and literacy classrooms to develop spoken and written language skills and communicative abilities within the classroom, and in workplace contexts?

Research question two is concerned with the practical manifestation in teaching of approaches informed by teacher beliefs about language proficiency through theoretical training and organisational policy. The data associated with this question describes the practices and approaches teachers are using and is framed against the background of the theoretical literature on language proficiency outlined above

The data from the teachers is used as a basis for illustrating how they select activities, design their courses, and construct meaning in the classroom as they teach learners about and how to use language in *English in the Workplace* classes. This data includes their classroom conversations, their written responses to their questionnaires, their course design proposals, their spoken interactions with supervisors and the researcher. The conversational data taken from the classroom forms the basis of research question two. The language and metalanguage used by the teacher is used as evidence of her conscious or unconscious beliefs about and references to language and what is important to know and learn about language. This use of terminology, questioning, selection of things to say or not say is correlated with theoretical approaches of language theory and language proficiency models which implicitly or explicitly are likely to have influenced teachers.

The role of metalanguage and metacognition in learning and in language learning is well documented, Baynham (1983), Wenden (1981), Brown et al.(1982), Willing (1984, 1988) and Jackson (1993). The work of Christie (1985) has looked at the role of language in the classroom as central to control over the learning task itself. She has identified a 'curriculum genre' which has specific generic features peculiar to the classroom context. She stresses the need for teachers to be aware of this 'curriculum genre', ie the nature of classroom talk and interaction, and how through this awareness they can develop the language abilities in learners which will enable them to deal with learning itself. The particular aspects of the 'curriculum genre' which are relevant to this study are the metalanguage and language of the four teachers. Both are used as evidence of the teachers' grounding in theoretical paradigms in language theory and language proficiency models.

The interdependency of theoretical training and classroom practice of teachers is supported in the literature in studies which explore the relationship between teacher practices and their underlying beliefs. Personal construct theory, or what teachers and learners believe about the processes of teaching and learning and educational constructs, ie. 'intelligence', 'proficiency', 'communicative competence', has been a growing field of research in linguistics in the past couple of years (Woods [1991] and Willing[1988]).

There is now a recognition that individuals, including teachers, and learners always bring their 'own' interpretations, understandings, beliefs, values, biases, and procedures to the teaching and learning forum, (Breen, 1990) and that this setting may in fact be controlled by the teacher's overall approach, (Van Lier, 1988). This study is concerned with highlighting aspects of the relationship between teacher beliefs which have come about through the conflicting or complementary approaches to language teaching and language learning and language assessment and which trace the history of this craft and how these may impact on service provision in new and difficult times.

Interestingly, some of the findings in the study by Brindley (1989) found discrepancies between the stated utility of assessment methods and the stated frequency of use of such methods by teachers. This indicates a certain rift between what teachers say and what they do and may be attributable to differences between the ideal and real practices of teachers, rather than discrepancies in belief systems and practices.

A paper which is central to this underlying assumption is that of Lynch (1989) where he argues how the teacher, when selecting options for action, may draw upon 'experience-based beliefs'. He describes teachers as 'agents' in how they respond to their 'individual mental scripts' when they go about doing what they believe is advisable or necessary in the language classroom. He argues that from observation, a researcher cannot know what the teacher's motivation is for a particular classroom behaviour. He adds that only the teacher has access to that privileged information, and even then, many behaviours are unconscious.

While this study has primarily looked only at the methodologies of the teacher, it has also investigated the conceptualisation of teachers, learners and supervisors. The evidence presented in chapter five concerning the conceptualisation of language proficiency by teachers does suggest that they have superimposed their personal theories on to classroom practice which confirms the findings of Van Lier (*ibid.*) and Lynch (1989). These practices have been grounded in the theoretical histories of education, language teaching and language assessment theory as outlined in chapter two.

No literature on the actual classroom practices and classroom discourse in analysing teaching approaches based on language proficiency models of teachers in *English in the Workplace* classes in the *Adult Migrant English Service* has been found

3.4. Literature relating to research question three

3. What does a comparison of the methodological development of spoken and written language proficiency and the perspectives of teachers, learners and workplace supervisors reveal about the satisfaction of stakeholder needs?

Research question three is concerned with the relationship between the practices of teachers and the needs of supervisors and learners in *English in the Workplace* classes. The theoretical underpinning of this question relates closely to that of research question two but it explores in greater detail how differences of perspective and need may be resolved in the language classroom and indeed in other settings like supervisor meetings.

The work of Breen (1990) is of greatest relevance to the question of the social behaviours of teachers and learners or 'classroom compromise'. He has investigated the approaches taken by successful language learners and how they define or conceptualise the task of language learning.

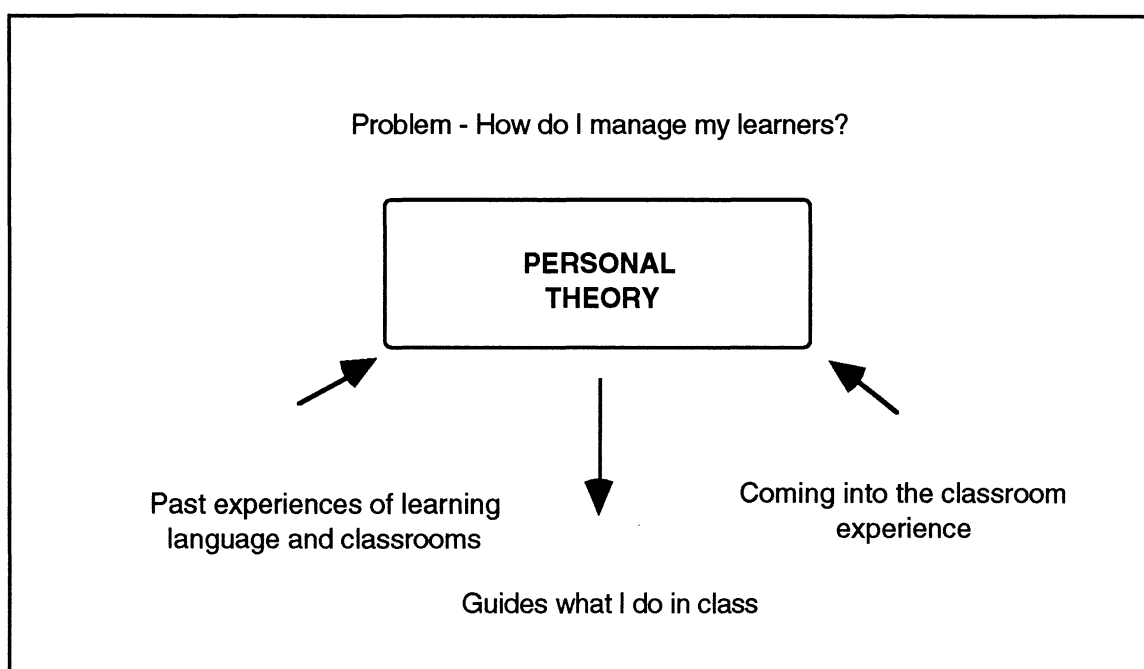


Diagram 4. Personal Theory and Classroom Behaviour (Breen, 1990).

His theory, represented diagrammatically above, proposes that learners and teachers are guided by their own personal theories about learning and that they anticipate learning

circumstances from their individual schemata. Diagrammatically this theory can be represented as follows: goes on to say that, in order for classroom learning to work all these personal theories have to be compromised to create what he calls a '*culture of compromise*' which is then manifested in *routines*. This means that there is a blending of the teacher's and the learners' personal theories which all participants in the classroom partake in on a regular basis, because of 'shared interests' Willing (1988) and which are embodied in the discourse and the procedures of the classroom.

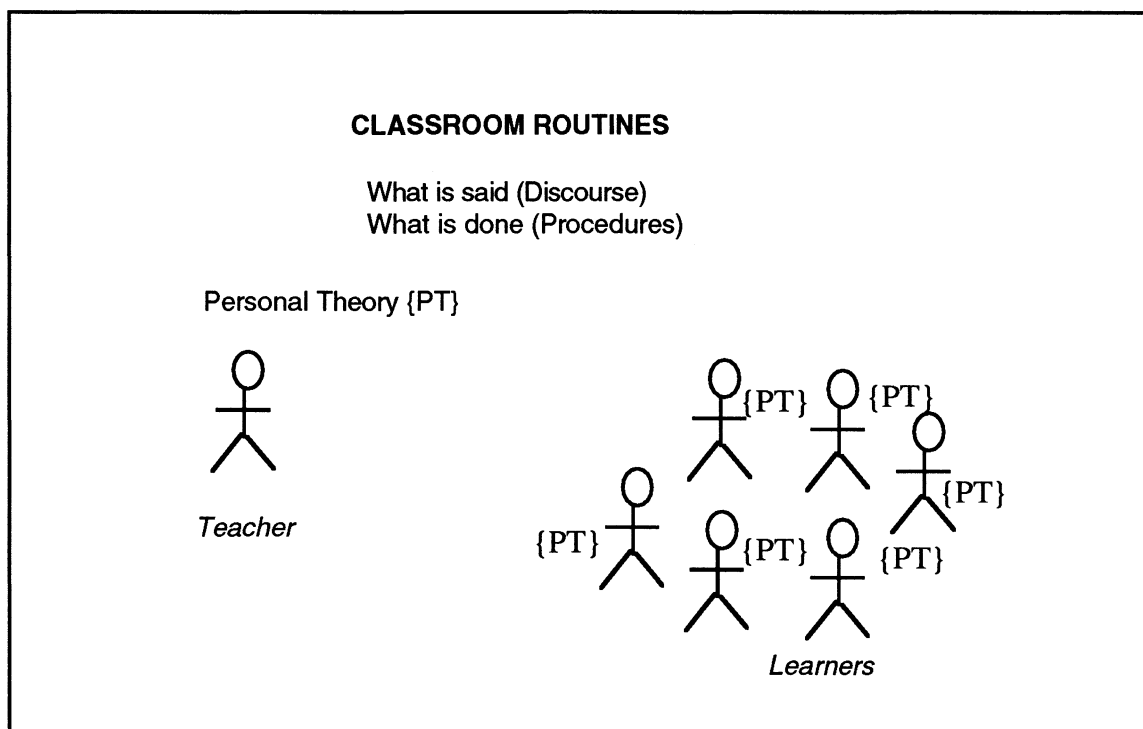


Diagram 5. Classroom Routines (Breen, 1990).

Therefore, everyone in the classroom compromises. His methodological approach to investigating the classroom is particularly relevant for this study as it fosters the investigation of the spoken interactions and the procedures in the classroom and then aims to present these back to the participants for reflection. In looking at the classroom context and considering what may be investigated he suggests recording lessons, asking learners what they do and asking learners why they do them. He goes on to say that each participant's personal theory is superimposed on everything they do in the classroom.

Breen (1990) proposes that the classroom context can be observed as represented in the following diagram:

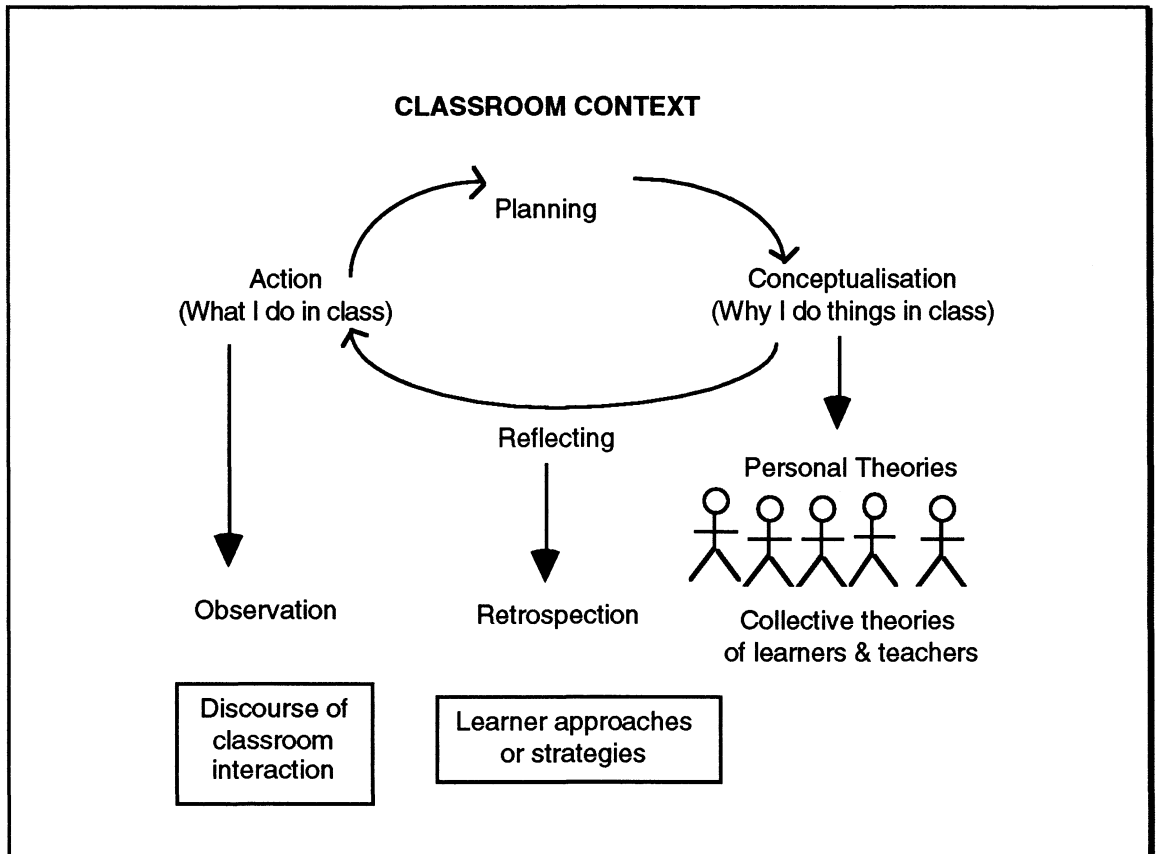


Diagram 6. Classroom Context (Breen, 1990).

Several other language educators have spoken about the benefits of raising awareness of the learning process by both teachers and learners.

...there is no reason why, from the very early stages, students should not reflect on the patterns of their own language and of other students, as a way of highlighting the learning task at hand...the more conscious students are about the activity of learning a language, the more their pre-existing linguistic competence and basic intelligence are engaged, the more likely they are to be able to intervene effectively in the learning process (Baynham, 1983).

The role of metacognition in the learning process and the part it plays in satisfying conflicting needs in educational provision, especially those which involve the interests of workplaces, leads us onto research question four where curriculum implications are explored.

3.5. Literature relating to Research question four

4. What are the curriculum implications that emerge from an analysis of the relationship between classroom practices and stakeholder perspectives and theories about the nature and assessment of spoken and written language proficiency? These include 'general' proficiency as measured by the ASLPR (1984), 'communicative competence' as outlined by Canale and Swain (1983), 'communicative language ability' (Bachman 1990) and more recent developments in theories of language and instruments used to measure language proficiency based on systemic functional grammar. These include the competency-based English language framework in *AMES (NSW), The Certificate in Spoken and Written English*, Hagan, Hood, Jackson, Jones, Joyce & Manidis (1993) and *The English in the Workplace Competencies Framework*, Baylis & Thomas (1992).

Research question four is concerned with the summative product of all the other research questions in this study. It is concerned with the adequacy or otherwise of current and traditional assessment instruments and their relevance to the findings of the above questions. It is also concerned with proposals for new frameworks which may take better account of workplace and learner perspectives.

A great deal has been written on the 'construct' validity of oral proficiency scales and on the validity of criterion-referenced assessment instruments (Lowe, Pardee, [1985], Lantolf & Frawley [1985], Ingram [1981], Hilsdon [1991], Clark and Clifford [1988], Brindley [1986], van Lier [1989]). Because of the infinite variations and complexities in our learners, their language performances and the difficulty of 'capturing' the essence of language proficiency, our tools to date, for measuring them have been shown to be inherently inadequate. In placing learners' language proficiency into the categories described in assessment instruments, we are always aiming for the 'best possible' fit, rather than the 'perfect' fit.

Language ability, as life itself, does not fall neatly into natural pre-existing categories, but has to be forced into man-made categories with varying degrees of success (Porter 1990:32-33).

For educational purposes however, assessment processes and instruments are essential for learners, teachers, and supervisors or employers to monitor progress and record achievement. The psychometric tradition of educational research has left us with the legacy of assigning numerical values and 'ladder metaphors' to human capacity and

learning. In this way, complex capacities and progress have attempted to be 'simply' counted, scored and aggregated.

The instrument used to measure language proficiency levels in the *AMEP* over the last decade has been the *ASLPR*, (*Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating Scales*, DIEA (1984). *AMES (NSW)* however, developed its own proficiency rating scale, the *AMES Oral Proficiency Scale*.

The *ASLPR* was developed by a Queensland working party to describe, and provide a framework for the path of development of second language proficiency for the 'on-arrival program' of the *AMEP*. As this program was to emphasise the development of practical skills, it was felt by the Working Party that the assessment measures should reflect this 'practical' proficiency (Ingram, 1984:3).

The instrument, in its descriptions and rationale, focuses on the language behaviour of learners as demonstrated in the way actual communication tasks are carried out, ie. the nature of the language forms that appear, eg. syntactic forms, lexis, cohesive features, phonology, functions, register, flexibility (Ingram, 1990:47).

The *ASLPR* like many other rating scales, particularly those on which it is based, (ACTFL or American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages) has shortcomings relating to its construct validity, ie. how it interprets the construct of proficiency, (Brindley [1986], Bachman [1990], Bachman and Savignon [1986], Lantolf and Frawley [1988]) as well as to its practicality, ie. teachers find it difficult to read the lengthy and spatially separate descriptors (MacIntyre, 1989).

Equally this instrument is used during an oral proficiency interview to measure general language proficiency. Oral proficiency interviews were originally envisaged in the USA in the late 1950s, as fairly lengthy interviewer/examinee interactions, where interviewers would pursue, according to a loosely structured framework a range of topics and language functions with the learner (Clark and Clifford, 1988). In their original construction, these tests appeared to be measuring, directly, through a face to face interaction, the oral language ability of the learner as demonstrated in this conversation.

However, research over the past few decades *has clearly shown that there is such a thing as method effect in testing* (Alderson, 1991a:11), which means that a range of factors, including the fact that we are dealing with a test and not real-life itself, will alter the quality and kind of language skills we purport to measure.

Other theorists have questioned the oral proficiency interview in particular, asking,

Can ratings based on oral interviews, for example, be clearly interpreted as indicators of language competencies, or should they be seen as indicators of an individual's ability to perform well under a particular set of test method conditions (Bachman, 1990:225).

Van Lier (1989) describes the discourse of the interview as exhibiting 'controlled interview features' and not 'conversational' features, which restricts the learner in terms of displaying a wide range of language ability skills. These limitations are outlined by others:

From a linguistic point, the oral proficiency interview represents a 'single speech style, the interview' and therefore cannot be a valid indication of the test-taker's overall oral proficiency, (Reves, 1990:179).

In his paper, *Defining Language Ability: The Criteria for Criteria* Brindley (1991) highlights the pitfalls of using old or creating new language assessment criteria and instruments. He looks at the problems of using existing criteria, which means using the proficiency scales with all their associated problems mentioned above. He then suggests consulting expert judges, but asks, who are the experts - teachers, learners, employers or native speakers? He goes on to say this won't solve all the problems because collecting data for this is resource intensive, precise information is difficult to elicit, expert judgement may be unreliable, different people use different criteria and finally the use of assessment tools is always subjective.

What ought to be the subject of study for criteria is language itself and how it is created as text as argued by Matthiessen, Slade, Macken (1990). Systemic functional linguistic approaches, through the study of language in context, could provide an answer to the search for language proficiency criteria as object of assessment. This is because systemic theory has identified how the three different register variables of any particular context, field, tenor and mode are categories of context as a higher level semiotic organisation.

they are a conceptual framework for representing the social context as the semiotic environment in which people exchange meanings (Halliday, 1978:110).

This ability of language to configurate grammatical resources in contextual terms allows the language assessment theorist to identify the relationship between the three

contextual variables and identify the relative absence or presence of these linguistic resources in any given context.. This model delivers the ability *to correlate the contextual 'profile' with a linguistic one'* (Matthiessen et al. 1990:155) and is in contrast to descriptive models of assessment which do not show the relationship between language (ie the components of proficiency) and contexts of communication.

Current research in testing and language theory, has emphasised the importance of context and the impact which changes in context have on language use. The literature and developments in current language proficiency theory and language proficiency as object of assessment therefore support the development of a specific-context-based framework such as those language competencies developed in NSW AMES and from which the *English in the Workplace Competency Framework* (Baylis & Thomas [1992]) was derived. This is because these language competencies are based on identifying and then measuring the contextual variables of a range of texts and therefore provide explicit criteria for establishing the extent to which these are present or absent in the language usage of second language users.

The task--related nature of the competencies also reinforces the authenticity of language use, and so increases the face validity and predictive validity of a test which allows the learner to exchange knowledge not simply to display it, for specified and not all contexts of use. The overlay of 'context' on the 'task', especially the socio-cultural variables, ensures that it is possible to identify the extent to which a learner lacks knowledge of important features of that context. This specificity undermines the arguments for measuring 'general language proficiency':

First, since language occurs only in situations, and the situations in which it occurs determine the language forms that occur, it could be argued that one cannot speak of "general proficiency" so much as proficiency in this situation or that, in this register or that and that one can speak only of specific purposes proficiency (Ingram, 1990:50).

Bachman (1990) and his colleagues whom he cites (Woodford [1978 &1981], Carroll [1980], Clark [1980] and Brindley [1986]) however hold the belief *that a precise, empirically based definition of language ability can provide the basis for developing a 'common metric' scale for measuring language abilities in a wide variety of contexts, at all levels and in many different languages* (Bachman, 1990:5). The advantages of such a scale is outlined as follows:

the obvious advantage of such a scale and tests developed from it is that it would provide a standard for defining and measuring language abilities that would be independent of

specific languages, contexts and domains of discourse. Scores from tests based on this scale would thus be comparable across different languages and contexts (Bachman and Clark, 1987:27 in Bachman 1990:6).

The provision of assessment measures at Brindley's (1989) type 2 assessment is desirable for a number of reasons, and was identified by him in the study on assessment practices in the *AMEP*. This is because text or task type assessment procedures are characterised by the following factors:

- ***explicit*** *Assessment criteria are made explicit and are stated in terms comprehensible to the learner and to any other parties involved in the assessment*
- ***criterion-referenced*** *The assessment criteria are derived from a well defined domain of ability*
- ***standardised*** *Standards of performance are defined and agreed upon with the learners and others as necessary. These may be quantified if necessary.*
- ***relevant*** *The performance that is assessed is seen by the learners and/or others relevant to the learners' language-learning goals*
- ***task-related*** *The learner's ability to carry out a communication task for a particular purpose is assessed (Brindley, 1989:44).*

The above principles of assessment, based on linguistic criteria derived from the systemic theory of language, form the basis of the text-type competencies in the *AMEP* both in the general program and the *English in the Workplace* program. The other factors listed above, supplement additional features of context related language tasks or genres which can be underpinned by a systemic functional theory of language.

3.6. Summary

This chapter has presented the relevant literature in relation to the four research questions. The relevant literature presented above does not cover the entire field of applied linguistics such as language theory, language proficiency, language proficiency as object of assessment and language development or language acquisition. However it does include those readings and references which are judged to be relevant to complete the links made in the study between the organisational, industrial and theoretical changes with which English in the workplace teachers are grappling.

Chapters two, four and five also include additional references to relevant research on the industrial context, research methodology, the development of the competency frameworks and the change process in education.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the general research approach used in this study, the rationale for the sample selection of the class profiles, the lessons and the supervisor meetings which form the basis of the data used to address the research questions. This will be followed by an outline of the research procedure which will indicate the specific items of data collected and their sequence of collection.

The approach used in this study has been to explore the classroom, in this case a workplace English language and literacy one, in its social and educational context. The classroom has increasingly been acknowledged as a worthwhile focus of study for educational researchers, in their attempts to describe and explain how the classroom, as a specific context might contribute to learning (van Lier, 1988). It presents itself as an experimental laboratory, as a unique, interactive culture, where events can be observed, described and explained in terms of their intertextuality.

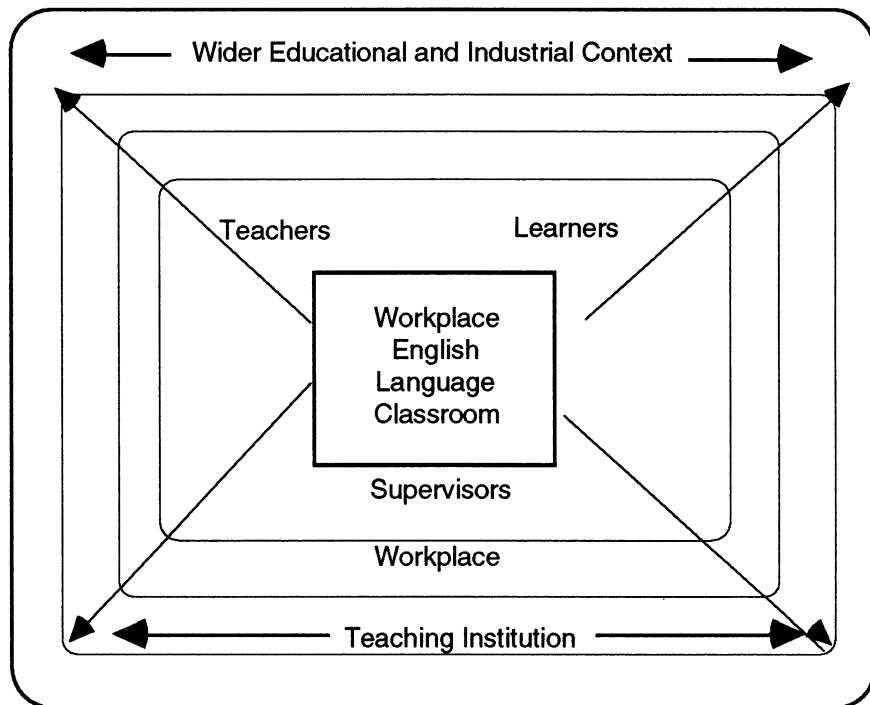


Diagram 7. The Classroom and its wider Context

These might include the relationship between teachers and learners for example, the nature and kind of interaction in the classroom, the methodologies and practices of

teachers and the learning strategies of learners. Analyses of language within and immediately without the classroom can be linked to wider social, industrial and institutional settings to examine how a particular classroom under study may be characteristic of the ideologies and time period in which it is located, (Hodge and Kress, 1988).

The methodology used to interpret the data obtained in this study draws on a combination of several approaches including interaction analysis, discourse analysis and ethnographic procedures.

Studies in interaction analysis were initiated in the late sixties (Moskowitz, 1967, 1971 and 1976 cited in Chaudron, 1988) and the analysis of classroom and workplace behaviour through discourse arose because linguists attempted to analyse and explain the discourse of classrooms in structural-functional linguistic terms, (see the work of Bellack et al. 1966 cited in Chaudron, 1988). The investigation of conversational data in the classroom has offered much to describing and explaining the roles of teachers and learners and the role of language in learning (Christie, 1985 and van Lier, 1988).

The ethnographic tradition to classroom research was fostered by influences from sociology and anthropology, where classroom behaviours were interpreted from the perspectives of the participants' understandings of events, rather than from the observer's supposed 'objective' stance. This kind of approach has encouraged the piecing together of different kinds of information to increase the understanding of education as a complex, human phenomenon. *The rationale behind the use of ethnography is the research-based belief that behaviour is significantly influenced by the environment in which it occurs. In other words, behaviour occurs in a context and accurate understanding of the behaviour requires understanding of the context in which it occurs* (Gay, 1987:210).

4.2 Method of data collection

Several different kinds of data were collected in this study and these have been triangulated to form a complex picture of the events in language assessment in current workplace classes and workplaces themselves. The primary source of data in this study was the classroom. It provided the base data which was used to link the practices of teachers to the context immediately outside the classroom.

Additional data was obtained from the organisational surroundings of the classroom and those immediately involved in its operations, all of which gave additional meaning to its

practices and outcomes. These included the educational philosophies of the teaching provider, the primary beneficiaries of educational provision, employers and learners in this case, and other policy and theoretical developments in the wider context.

The following data for each group of the research participants was as gathered as outlined below:

(a) Teacher perspectives on language proficiency and teaching practices

- Transcripts of the classrooms
- Transcripts of the meetings between teachers and supervisors
- Written responses to the teacher questionnaires
- Spoken interviews with teachers
- Written samples of course proposals
- Classroom materials

In summary, transcripts of the classrooms and meetings, teacher questionnaires and interviews as well as written samples of course proposals and classroom materials have been used as data to inform the analysis of teaching practice and proficiency conceptualisation from the perspective of the teacher. Interviews with teachers have been used to allow teachers to describe and explain classroom processes which have taken place. These verbal protocols of teachers and their classroom discourse have been analysed interpretively to draw conclusions about classroom practices and teacher beliefs. Course records and program outlines have been analysed to ascertain what spoken and written language skills teachers aimed to develop in their learners, what methodologies they planned to implement to achieve this and what aspects of employer input they have incorporated into their course design.

(b) Supervisor perspectives on language proficiency

- Samples (transcripts) of teacher/supervisor meetings
- Written comments on the language proficiency of learners in the courses
- Written responses to questionnaires

The above transcripts and responses have been used to inform the perspectives of supervisors. The analysis of supervisors' (employers) questionnaires and meetings has aimed to elicit the assessment perspectives of supervisors regarding language performances of workers and how they assess satisfactory or unsatisfactory levels of linguistic competence or vocational proficiency in the workplace.

(c) Learner perspectives on language proficiency

- Samples (transcripts) of interviews with learners
- Written responses to questionnaires

The above spoken and written data has been used to determine the perspectives of learners within the context of this study. A diagrammatic representation of the research data collection looks as follows:

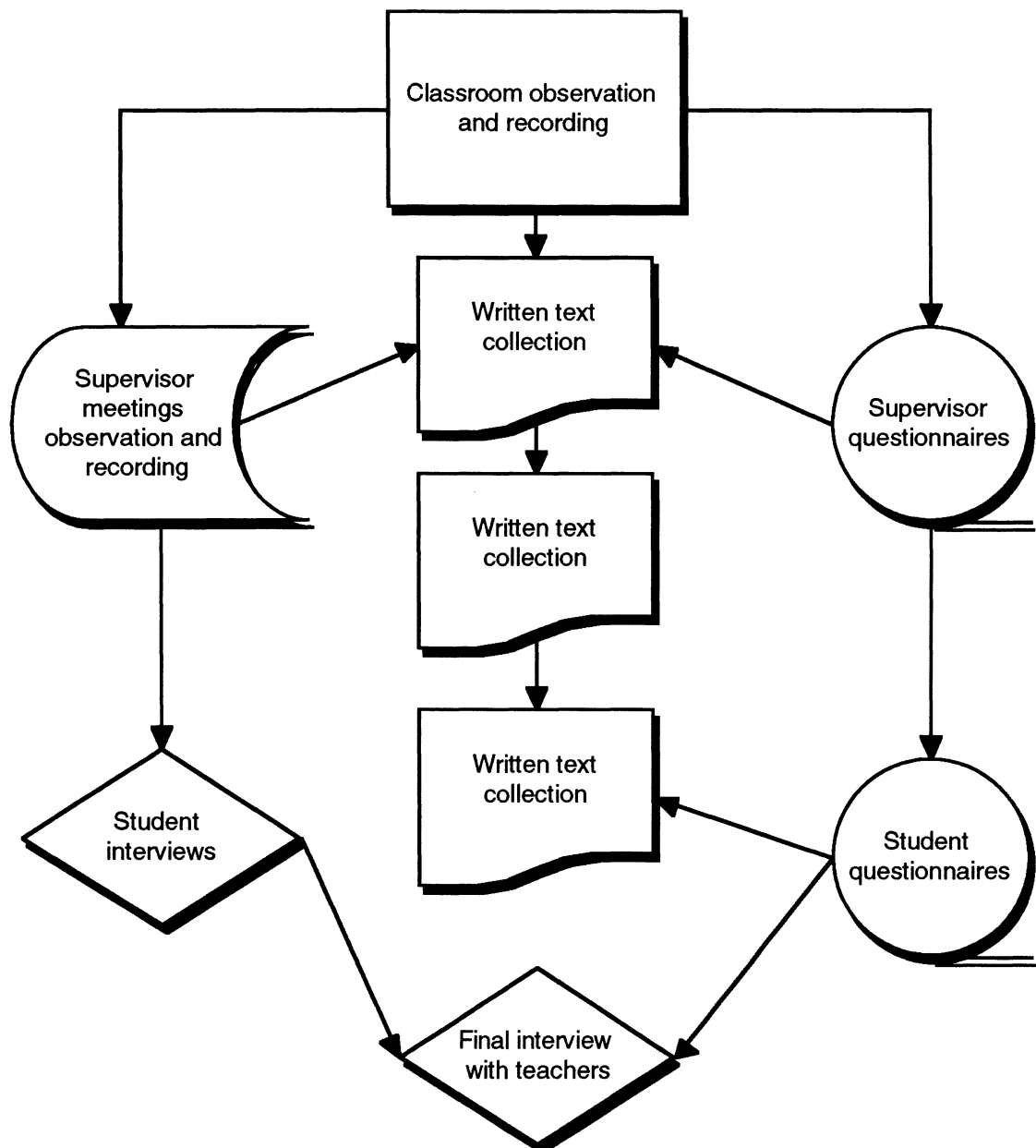


Diagram 8. Research Data Collection

Principally, discourse analysis and ethnographic research methods have been applied to this study because of the kind of data investigated and the intended outcomes of the study, ie the progressive understanding of the phenomenon of how language proficiency is perceived by key stakeholders in workplaces, through what each stakeholder group is saying and doing in central and peripheral events of learning in this context.

4.3 The classroom samples of this study

As mentioned in Chapter 2, workplace English language and literacy classes in the *Adult Migrant English Service* were established several years ago to address the particular difficulties that migrant workers were experiencing in the workplace environment. More recently, some of the course provision in this area has started to address the English language needs required for retraining and restructuring because of wider industrial workplace changes.

These classes therefore are unique within the service because they bring teachers and learners together in an educational setting, which is clearly intended to be a part of the wider workplace/industrial culture. Very definite demands are made on teachers in the program, beginning with their assessments of learners' competencies and their need to identify the language tasks in such clearly-defined contexts and to find the most effective methodologies of developing the language needed to cope in these contexts. The enterprise-based teacher exemplifies the ultimate in educational/industrial interfacing and is accountable in a very 'corporate' way for language and productivity outcomes.

In the light of the recent *National Training Reform Agenda* initiatives however, and the new focus on workplace competencies, including language competencies, or vocational proficiency levels, accountability to learners and employers is increased and these classrooms thus offer themselves as worthwhile contexts to investigate.

4.3.1. Selection of sample classes

The specific classes in this study comprise four *English in the Workplace* classes across a range of workplace environments comprising Public Service offices and private sector manufacturing. Participant occupations in the classes include clerical staff, advanced technical graduates and factory employees. The four classes were selected for the study on the basis of the following factors, each of which is detailed below.

- a) being typical examples of the range of workplace classes in the *English in the Workplace Program* at the time of the study.
- b) having similar learner profiles of high level oracy and similar levels of education.
- c) having teachers willing to be part of the research process.

(a) Type of class

Firstly, as typical examples of the range of workplace classes; three of the classes were public sector classes, two of those being provided under Skillmax funding, and one a private sector class. The classes have been named numerically as Class 1, 2, 3 & 4 to maintain the anonymity of the teachers and the learners in the study. Each is outlined below.

Class 1:

Type of class	Workplace	Teacher	Class Dates
Workplace English language and literacy class	SC	1	23 October 1991 - 1 April 1992 (a semester course), No. of lessons 18, Teaching hours 72.

This class was one introduced by a private sector workplace to improve the language and literacy skills because of the need for non-English speakers to cope with new restructuring and retraining needs. These included the need for all personnel to read fairly complicated flow charts which were being introduced as the company went for national and international standards accreditation. The particular course in the study was the second of two courses held at the company and included two learners from the first course and five new participants.

Students in the class included line operators, line setters, line supervisors, product makers, fitters, warehouse personnel and cleaners.

Class 2:

Type of class	Workplace	Teacher	Class Dates
Skillmax in the Workplace	Public Sector	2	6 August -10 December 1991 at the State Superannuation Board.

This class was a Skillmax in the Workplace class for immigrants of various professional backgrounds who were all employed in the Public Sector and who were considered to be underemployed in relation to their overseas qualifications. The Skillmax in the

Workplace Program is a State Government Initiative which aims to assist migrant employees with overseas qualifications and experience to gain positions which would use their skills as fully as possible.

Learner occupations ranged from those of accountant, (trained as a chartered accountant), clerical assistant, (trained as a lawyer), quality control clerk, (trained as a social worker), clerk, (trained as scientist, draughtsman) and a clerical officer (trained as a personnel officer). They were nominated from 40 public sector organisations and eligible applicants were grouped according to common needs to form the class.

Class 3:

Type of class	Workplace	Teacher	Class Dates
Workplace English language and literacy	Public Sector, DSS	3	9.30 - 1.30 Mondays, Term 4 1991, - Term 2 1992, finishing 13 March 1992

The class in the study was one of an on-going program in the Department of Social Security which was largely attended by non-English speakers to assist them with English in the Workplace. This class comprised clerical officers in a departmental office which dealt with the public and with other clerical duties.

Class 4:

Type of class	Workplace	Teacher	Class Dates
Skillmax in the Workplace	Public Sector	4	July 1992 to December 1992, going from 12 August 1992 to 23 September 1992, and 14 October - 16 December 1992.

This course was requested to be included in a program of public service provision which addressed the needs of employees who required additional support with writing skills essential for the effective creation of documents such as reports and submissions. Developing the ability to produce written documents of this kind was expected to enable participants to overcome barriers to promotion into the supervisory, professional and managerial positions appropriate to their qualifications and experience.

Students in this class were very high level professional graduates who were working in the NSW Public Sector. Their oral proficiency level was very high and the class was focusing on the development of writing skills, mainly report writing.

(b) Learner Profile

The second factor taken into account when selecting the class samples for this study was the need for the student profile across the classes to be similar. As the study was concerned with the judgements made on workplace proficiency by learners, teachers and employers, two variables, a fairly high spoken language level and 12-18 years of education in the first language were selected to define the learner group.

Note: A composite profile of these language levels as rated on various assessment instruments by the four teachers in question is as follows:

Oral Proficiency Ratings (AMES Oral Proficiency Scale)			Literacy Proficiency Ratings (Unknown Instrument)	Years of education		
3 learners	x	3-3.5	Literacy skills commensurate	3	x	higher degrees
7 learners	x	4.0	in two classes, two classes	14	x	degrees (bachelor)
5 learners	x	4.5	did not record scores, one	4	x	diplomas
8 learners	x	5.0	being the writing class.	4	x	technical or trades
3 learners	x	5.5				qualifications
5 learners	x	6.0		6	x	matriculation

Table 2. Profiles of All Learners

This breaks down into the following class profiles:

Class 1	Oral Proficiency Ratings (AMES O.P. Scale)	Literacy Proficiency Ratings (Unknown scale)	Years of education
	1 learner x 3.0	1 learner x 3.0	1 x degrees
	1 learners x 3.5	1 learner x 3.5	4 x matriculation
	2 learners x 4	1 learner x 4.0	
	1 learners x 5.0	2 learners (no score)	
Class 2	1 learners x 3.5	2 learners x 3.5	2 x degrees
	4 learners x 4.0	3 learners x 4.0	1 x diploma
	1 learner x 4.5	2 learners x 4.5	3 x technical qualification
	1 learner x 5.0		1 x matriculation
Class 3	1 learner x 4.5	no writing scores	1 x higher degree
	3 learners x 5.0		5 x degrees
	2 learners x 5.5		2 x diploma
	3 learners x 6.0		1 x technical qualification
Class 4	1 learner x 4.0	writing score for one	2 x higher degrees
	3 learners x 4.5	learner only	6 x degrees
	3 learners x 5.0	1 x 4.0	1 x diploma
	1 learner x 5.5		1 x matriculation
	2 learners x 6.0		

Table:3 Profiles of learners by class groupings

Note: While country of origin was not a factor in selecting class samples, the role of English language tuition and general levels of education in these countries is significant in the discussions on learner perspectives and supervisor perspectives under Research Question 1 in Chapter 5. This is because all learners in the study had previously had overseas education in English, with several being taught through the medium of English, ie learners from the Philippines and Mauritius. The perspectives of workplace supervisors in relation to the employees' fairly well-developed oracy skills is interesting to note. (Some supervisors were speakers of languages other than English). Countries of origin of the learners included the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Poland, Malaysia, Laos, India, Vietnam, Germany, China, Thailand, Indonesia, Taiwan, Korea, Burma,

Egypt, Peru, U.S.S.R., Israel and Mauritius with the largest groupings in the study from the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

(c) Willingness of teachers to participate in study

The final factor which determined the ultimate selection of the class samples was the willingness of individual teachers to be involved in the study. It was intended to take a random sample of four teachers, so once the classes had been identified as having similar profiles, several teachers were approached to be part of the study. Six teachers in total agreed to participate, but four were selected on the basis of convenience in terms of location, visits and the researcher's time.

The experience levels and differing theoretical approaches of the different teachers were not known although in the data analysis these aspects have come to play a major role. This is because the classroom practices of the teachers have been shown to be influenced very clearly by individual approaches as well as their experience with classes of this level.

4.3.2. Selection of sample lessons

The lessons were selected on a random basis, according to the convenience of the teacher and the researcher once the class samples had been identified. The teacher did not make any special arrangements for any visits and therefore the classes were simply one of the twenty or so lessons of each course. All classes were established as typical classes for that course as well as classes which typically represented the teacher's approach to language and language teaching. This validation was carried out at the time that the teachers were asked to reflect on the transcripts of the lessons through an informal interview and discussion.

4.3.3. Selection of supervisors and supervisor meetings

- Supervisor meetings were selected on the basis of convenience and tended to be towards the beginning of the course in each case (for classes 1 & 3, with four supervisors from class 1 taking part in and eight supervisors from class 3 taking part from class three, being 50% of those surveyed).
- Two groups of supervisors did not have meetings but they were sent a supervisor questionnaire which was completed at their convenience (for classes 2 & 4, with four supervisors from class 2 and eight supervisors from class four responding, being 50% of those surveyed).

A total of 24 supervisors who were involved in the formation of the classes and/or who had learners participating in the courses were sent questionnaires about the respective learners or were recorded at the supervisor meetings.

4.4 Research procedure

Data from the classroom, the learning context and participants was collected from a range of activities outlined below over a period of two years:

- Classroom observations and audio recording (for all classes)
- Transcribing of classroom discourse and collection of samples of teaching and assessment tasks (for all classes)
- Teacher interviews and/or questionnaires (for all teachers)
- Learner interviews (for classes 1 & 2)
- Learner questionnaires (for classes 3 & 4)
- Supervisor meeting observations and audio recording (for classes 1 & 3)
- Employer/supervisor interviews and/or questionnaires (for classes 2 and 4)
- Collection of course records and program outlines (for all classes)
- Interviews with teachers after reading class transcript (for all teachers).

The transcribed data from the lessons, the interviews with learners and the supervisor meetings are available as appendix 1 under separate cover. Samples of discourse used to support the arguments of the thesis are included verbatim in chapter 5. The questionnaires in Addendum 1 were used for the sampled teachers and their respective learners and supervisors.

Different data collection methods were used across the groups of supervisors and learners. In classes 1 and 2, twelve students (five from class 1 and seven from class 2) were interviewed and in classes 3 & 4 the remaining 19 students (9 from class 3 and eleven from class 4) were sent questionnaires. This difference came about largely because of time and availability constraints of the researcher and the learners concerned. In both cases, the actual questions asked of the learners were the same, as was the sequence of questions and while the spoken interviews yielded more comprehensive responses from the student because of the interactive nature of the interview, these different methods of collection were not judged to have a significant impact on the findings. This is because essentially, while the method of data collection was different, the same information was being sought from the learners.

The same differences in data collection arose with the four groups of supervisors. In classes 1 and 3 the supervisors' meetings were attended by the researcher (12 supervisors being 50% of the total in the study) whereas in classes 2 & 4 (12 supervisors being 50% of the total in the study) the supervisors were sent a questionnaire. This difference in data collection arose because of time constraints and the nature of the four classes. Classes 2 & 4 were both Public Sector Skillmax classes and comprised supervisors from different departments who did not gather together for supervisor meetings as did the other two groups of supervisors. In both cases, the data collection sought similar information, although the supervisors who responded to the questionnaire were able to grade their concerns about the learners' proficiency more systematically because of question 3 which included a Lockert scale of 1-5. These differences in data collection were not expected to affect the findings significantly because essentially supervisors were being asked the same information about learners through both channels.

For the four classes in the study the timeline for each was as follows:

Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom visits on 20 November 1991 • Supervisors' meeting on 16 October 1991 • Interviews with students on 11 December 1991 • Teacher's questionnaire on 15 July 1992 • Interview with teacher July 1993 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom visits on 22 October 1991 and 3 December 1991 • Interviews with students on 3 December 1991 • Notes from teacher and student data • Teacher's questionnaire on 15 July 1992 • Supervisors' questionnaires on 15 July 1992 • Interview with teacher June 1993 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom visit on 9 December 1991 • Supervisor's meeting on 9 December 1992 and • Questionnaires to students on 15 July 1992 • Teacher's questionnaire on 15 July 1992 • Interview with teacher June 1993 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom visit on 16 September 1992 • Supervisors' meeting on 23 September 1992 • Supervisors' questionnaire on 24 November 1992 • Students interview/questionnaire on 24 November 1992 • Interview with teacher June 1993

Table 4. Research Data Collection Schedule

The sequence of data collection most often followed the same pattern. That is, the classroom observation and recording came first; this was followed by a supervisor meeting and or a questionnaire; which in turn was followed by an interview with the students or a questionnaire.

The only significant time-dependent procedure was the final interview with teachers which was done a considerable time after the initial data collection. This needed to be

the final data collection as teachers were presented with a transcript of their lesson and asked to comment on the typicality of that lesson in terms of the course as a whole and in terms of their approach. The timing of the final teacher interview was also significant in the light of the curriculum and assessment changes which had been introduced into the *English in the Workplace Program* and which are addressed in Research Question 4. The following table indicates the percentages of questionnaires returned from supervisors and students:

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
Student Survey	All students interviewed (5) = 100%	All students interviewed (7) = 100%	9/11 returned = 81%	10/11 returned = 91%
Supervisor Survey	All supervisors documented (4) = 100%	4/7 returned = 57%	All supervisors documented (8) = 100%	8/11 returned = 73%
Teachers Observed	1 = 100%	1 = 100%	1 = 100%	1 = 100%
Teachers Interviewed	1 = 100%	1 = 100%	1 = 100%	1 = 100%

Table 5. Percentage sample returns

A total of 31 learners, 24 supervisors and 4 teachers were investigated in the study.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has outlined the methodology used to select the samples and collect the data. The following four chapters covers the analysis of each of the research questions through classroom and related transcripts.

5 DATA ANALYSIS

5.1. Introduction

This first part of this chapter will analyse the different perspectives of supervisors, teachers and learners to language abilities in the workplace. The extent of subjective variation concerning language proficiency across the stakeholder groups in the research will be explored first. An analysis will be made of the extent to which perspectives concur or appear in discord with each other. Implications of the match between these perspectives and the practice of teachers will be analysed below in this chapter, under question three. Finally, under research question four, proposals about new curriculum frameworks will be made, which may take better account of stakeholder needs.

5.2. Research Question 1

The question posed by research question 1 is: *what are some of the features that distinguish supervisor, teacher and learner perspectives of spoken and written language abilities in the workplace?* This question is precipitated by the relationship between two significant factors involved in language assessment:

- the nature of proficiency (or how the 'construct' of proficiency is defined)
- the subjectivity of language assessments (or reliability issues in assessment)

Chapters two and three have covered these issues in detail and it is evident from the literature that consensus on judgements about a phenomenon as complex as language proficiency is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. What the data analysis of research question 1 aims to reveal therefore, is evidence about those differences. This includes what they are, how they are conceptualised and how, what may *seem* to be agreement within stakeholder groups or individuals, is in fact not agreement at all but an idiosyncratic interpretation of an event or phenomenon.

The stakeholder groups will be analysed in the following order, teachers, supervisors and then learners. Their perspectives will be analysed firstly in terms of how they responded to the questions on the questionnaires and their comments in the meetings, then these responses will be analysed in terms of the three types of assessment. For the purposes of this study, the theoretical framework which has been used to cluster the conceptualisations of proficiency by the stakeholders in the study, is based on the

distinctions between three kinds of 'proficiency' outlined by Spolsky (1986) and framed in AMES organisation terms by Brindley (1989). These are type 1 proficiency which is 'a general proficiency', type 2 proficiency which is the ability to perform particular communicative tasks and type 3 proficiency, gains in knowledge of the language systems and structures.

Teachers comments about 'strategic competence' while based on the Canale & Swain model (1980) have been placed under type 3 assessment rather than under type 1 general proficiency, because strategic competence was seen by the researcher as more like an 'enabling' skill or part of the 'knowledge of the language system' rather than as a reference to 'general proficiency' skills. This is largely because the communicative movement in language teaching focussed so heavily on these communication strategies that they became a separate part of language teaching (such as grammatical rules or vocabulary) and therefore only a part of what was conceived of as 'general proficiency'. A fourth category of assessment has been introduced to accommodate statements on learners' language which were not directly linguistic.

All the comments of teachers, supervisors and learners have been clustered according to the researcher's interpretations of their intended meanings. In some cases the teachers have reworked the original wordings to fit their own interpretations. The researcher has used the word 'discourse' skills to refer in fact to what Canale & Swain (1980) term 'strategic competence'. Because the questionnaires contained additional information on this wording, it is believed that teachers understood the intended meaning.

5.2.1.a. Teachers' perspectives

The four teachers in the sample were each given the teacher questionnaire (see Appendix 1) and asked to complete it at their convenience. A collation of their responses from those questionnaires is outlined in Appendix 2.

In analysing their responses to questions 1 & 2, it was clear that all teachers agreed that '*control of discourse skills, ie knowledge of appropriate turn taking mechanisms, knowledge of feedback, clarification and challenging techniques, discourse cohesion eg appropriate staging for say a formal oral presentation, appropriate use of conjunctions etc.*' were one of the most important skills for high level speakers to have control of in the workplace. Two teachers (classes 1 & 3) scored this skill as the most important skill, and the other two teachers scored this as the second most important skill. This skill rated as highly as '*knowledge and control of specific language tasks or texts, (ie contextual skills) ie handling clients on the telephone (eg DSS), clarifying queries (eg*

ATO), *job interview language skills, managing supervisor's meetings etc.*' for two of the teachers (classes 1 & 2), second highly for one of the teachers (class 4), and as relatively important only different for one of the teachers, (class 3).

One of the teachers (class 4) saw, what she termed 'the expression plane', ie '*control of pronunciation/ stress/ intonation ie general intelligibility*' as the most important skill saying '*Expression plane is where all language skills and knowledge skills come together. If a speaker, no matter how high level, is not intelligible then none of their other skills with English can be revealed or exploited. Stress and intonation are equally if not more important than pronunciation to achieve intelligibility*'.

This indicates a strong agreement of all the teachers albeit idiosyncratically on three of the most important skills required by high level speakers in the workplace as follows:

- (a) the importance of what Canale & Swain (1980) termed 'strategic competence', or what characterised the 'communicative paradigm' of language teaching, ie the negotiation of meaning through discourse skills with a minimal focus on 'form' or grammatical structure. *Much communicative methodological theory comes from the foreign language teaching context, where it is crucially important to 'get them talking'* (Willing, 1988:118). The Canale & Swain model included aspects of grammatical competence but these have been shown to be de-emphasised in practice in the discussion under research question two. The one teacher (class 4) who does not exemplify the communicative model, while seeing discourse skills as the second most important skill, also sees *control of grammatical forms, eg tenses, word order, prepositions, clause formation, definite/indefinite articles etc.* as the second most important skill which she has rated equal to *knowledge and control of specific texts*. This is in contrast to the other three teachers (classes 1, 2 & 3) who rate *control of grammatical forms, eg tenses, word order, prepositions, clause formation, definite/ indefinite articles etc* as less important skills. This is again in line with the de-emphasising of grammar in the communicative paradigm.

The interpretation of type 3 assessment, especially the interpretation of pronunciation and grammar, thus varied between the four teachers. What this indicates is that while teachers' approaches may appear to fall into similar categories of looking at language proficiency, there are differences in how they interpret these levels.

- (b) *the importance of contextual knowledge ie knowledge and control of specific language tasks or texts* (emphasised by all teachers with the possible exception of the teacher of class 3). This again shows the influence of current trends in language theory and language testing as well as organisational priorities for the teachers concerned, where the focus of communicative testing is moving in the direction of being increasingly context-based (Bachman, 1990), as well as emphasising the need for teachers to be workplace-specific and focus on tasks and texts specifically related to each workplace. This underpins the moves in recent years to encourage the use of authentic texts, or ‘realia’ and have workplace teachers focusing on the development of skills related to spoken and written texts in the workplace. Comments like ‘*idioms came up a lot but we always do them in context*’ and ‘*learners need a thorough understanding of the job-seeking process in the Australian context, in particular the purpose of the interview and the intention of common questions*’ indicate a firm grounding in text level and context specific teaching.

There was close agreement amongst the teachers on the third most important skill, ie

- (c) *the importance of cross-cultural linguistic differences and consequences of these*, with only one teacher (class 3) seeing this quite low down on the scale of importance for high level speakers. One teacher in particular (class 2) extended this aspect to include the ‘*knowledge of appropriate roles, responsibilities, relationships in various workplace speech activities, eg what is my role at a meeting, how should I address others, what should I say, how much should I say and at what level of deference, solidarity etc.*’

Again, interpretations of speech activities and their roles differ between the teachers, with one teacher seeing the cross-cultural knowledge as additional to managing these texts, and another teacher (class 4) seeing the ‘*lexicogrammar and discourse levels, including cross-cultural linguistic differences*’ of equal importance and to be employed simultaneously.

So the ability to negotiate conversations at a discourse level, to handle specific work-related texts and tasks and the knowledge of cross-cultural or sociolinguistic factors in relation to language use in the workplace are the primary focuses of all the teachers, as stated.

Beyond this agreement on the three most important skills for high level oracy speakers in the workplace there were disparate views amongst the teachers on the rating of the

other aspects of language proficiency. In identifying the least important skills there was an interesting finding as follows:

- (d) there was some similarity amongst three of the teachers (classes 1, 2 & 3) who adhere to the communicative paradigm in rating the importance of *'control of grammatical forms, eg tenses, word order, prepositions, clause formation etc.'* This was in contrast to the teacher influenced by the systemic model of functional grammar (class 4), who rated control of grammar as equal to the discourse and cross-cultural skills and second only in importance to what she termed the 'expression plane' and this included accent, pronunciation and intelligibility. This finding again supports the focus of the communicative methodology where 'form' was second to 'the negotiation of meaning' and functions rather than structures were taught and lessons were organised around communicative activities.

When considering barriers to successful workplace performance by high level oracy learners there was again a great deal of similarity on the ratings amongst the teachers. These are as follows:

- (a) *'lack of spoken language negotiation techniques, eg giving feedback, asking for clarification or repetition'* were rated as either the greatest, the second greatest or one of the greatest barriers to successful workplace performance by all four teachers .
- (b) *'unfamiliarity with contextual features of an exchange eg amount of formality or informality required when addressing colleagues or supervisors'* were rated highly by all four teachers as likely barriers to successful workplace performance.
- (c) *cross cultural communication factors eg intonation patterns that might send different messages to interlocutors'* were also rated very highly by all four teachers.
- (c) *'inappropriate strategic management of their jobs ie not following procedures correctly when this happens they should talk to their supervisor'* rated very highly by three of the most experienced teachers as a barrier to successful workplace performance. Only one of the four teachers (class 3) did not see this as a significant barrier to successful workplace performance

Differences amongst the teachers, consistent with those identified in question 1 of the questionnaire appeared again in this question as follows:

- (a) only one of the teachers (class 4) saw what she termed the 'expression plane', ie *phonological language difficulties, eg accent, pronunciation, stress patterns* as the greatest barrier.
- (b) two of the teachers (classes 1 & 4) saw that *having unsympathetic supervisors and perceived cultural differences that may create difficulties, eg having a different way to solve a problem in their previous work life* as likely to be major barriers to successful workplace performance.
- (c) '*inability to do the task*' was also seen by these two teachers as a likely barrier whereas one teacher saw this as a very unlikely barrier (class 3) and not a very likely barrier by another teacher (class 2)!
- (d) '*personality factors, ie too shy, doesn't speak up at meetings*', '*unfamiliarity with contextual features of an exchange eg amount of formality or informality required when addressing colleagues or supervisors*' and '*cross cultural communication factors eg intonation patterns that might send different messages to interlocutors*' were seen by one of the teachers (class 2) as factors '*that can lead to misjudgments about abilities, personality attitude.*' She added '*these misjudgments I've observed can mean exclusion from opportunities as well as day to day difficulties in getting on with colleagues.*' She added an additional barrier as '*being marginalised from networks through which people find out about opportunities, trends, issues, buzz words etc. This marginalisation could be due to linguistic/ cultural factors or attitudes of ESB colleagues.*' The beliefs underpinning this teacher's approach are exemplified in the classroom sample of her lesson and in the course proposal both outlined below.
- (e) '*little knowledge of and practice in colloquial, idiomatic Australian speech (fast speech included)*' were identified as quite significant barriers to successful workplace performance by two of the teachers (classes 1 & 3) , while the other two rated these as quite insignificant barriers (classes 2 & 4).

Responses to questions four indicate the idiosyncraticity of the approaches of the four teachers. The teacher of class 1, while claiming to be 'eclectic' is also firmly grounded in the communicative paradigm underpinned by the components of communicative competence as outlined by Canale and Swain (as stated). The teacher of class 2, very

clearly outlines the collaborative approach to communication, firmly based in the pragmatic view of exchanges, (Levinson, 1983) calling upon shared schemas, shared understandings, and involving many of the aspects of the cross-cultural approach where there is a focus on inferencing, understanding the speaker's intentions and knowing the roles and rules which govern social exchanges in the workplace. The teacher of class 3 responded rather vaguely to this question and did not indicate a very firm grounding in known theoretical approaches, despite recent formal TESOL training. This may be attributable to her relative inexperience in teaching a class of this level when compared with the other teachers. She aimed to incorporate a wide spectrum of aspects in her view on language or communication, and finished up by saying the classroom was *a place for sharing experiences* and *where learners could access more specialised knowledge on English of the teacher*. The teacher of class four has a firm theoretical grounding in systemic functional grammar and uses the genre-based teaching and learning cycle in her classes.

All four teachers therefore effectively foregrounded different aspects of language proficiency in response to question four. Despite their apparent agreement on what constitutes the most essential skills or factors which contribute to workplace failure for non-English speakers, their responses to this question also highlight the individual differences, or emphases each of them places on the role of particular components of language proficiency in achieving communication success. There are clearly overlaps in metalanguage. One teacher mentions the word 'functional' (class 3) which may translate as 'purpose' according to teachers who are informed by functional grammar theory. The teacher of class 2 also mentions the necessity for people to share an understanding of the 'purpose' of exchanges, while the teacher of class 1 talks about being 'task-oriented, or goals targeted' which surely means the same as a focus on the 'purpose' of exchanges.

The mention of strategic competence appears in the comments of teachers 1 & 2 as well. The teacher of class 1 talks about 'strategic competence' as outlined by Canale & Swain, and the teacher of class 2 talks about *'the effective use of clarification and repair strategies to regain our footing; to get back on track'*. The focus of the classroom activities of class 3 indicates quite clearly that this teacher too saw the strategic management of her learners as extremely significant.

The word 'grammar' is mentioned by three of the teachers. The teacher of class 1 states she is *'influenced by Canale and Swain's competencies, grammatical etc....'*. The teacher of class 3 states *'language involves a number of aspects - technical,*

manipulating grammatical.....' In class 4, the mention of language features and functional grammar is dominant.

Clearly the use of the word 'grammar' across the two approaches, ie communicative and systemic-functional is already a problem for other stakeholders, because teachers in the different schools mean different things when they talk about 'grammar'. 'Grammar' according to the communicative paradigm can be interpreted in several ways. Allen and Widdowson (1979) refer to the distinction between linguistic and pedagogic grammars as follows:

A linguistic grammar is concerned with a specification of the formal properties of a language, while the purpose of a pedagogic grammar is to help a learner acquire a practical mastery of a language. (ibid. p.133).

They acknowledge that this distinction is handled by teachers in an eclectic way:

Pedagogic grammars are typically eclectic. By this we mean that the applied linguist must pick and choose among formal statements in the light of his experience as a teacher, and decide what are pedagogically the most appropriate ways of arranging the information that he derives from linguistic grammars. (ibid)

In the case of the dominant approach to communicative language teaching in the NSW AMES, it is fair to say that neglect of a focus on form (ie pedagogic grammars) typified many teachers' practices as is shown in this study. Where pedagogic grammars were used, ie when linguistic forms rather than their communicative functions were focused on, they were frequently 'sentence-bound' (ibid. p.125) and structures and rules taught in this way did not necessarily relate to specific contexts of use, or whole texts.

'Grammar' according to the systemic functional theory of language is understood as being the lexico-grammatical choices made by speakers and writers and the use of these to make meaning in contexts. This moves beyond the use and practice of formal properties in sentences (ie structures and rules) to the use of these in whole texts within specific contexts.

The differences in response to question four in contrast to the surface similarities in questions 1 & 2, represent in this study the essence of the diversity of beliefs about language and language proficiency of the teachers in the study. The impact of these beliefs on classroom practice, will be analysed further under question 2.

5.2.1.b. Teachers' perspectives and language assessment

The perspectives of teachers' outlined above have been placed in a framework of language assessment theory. This framework is that outlined by Brindley (1989) whose research into language assessment in the *AMEP* found that for historical reasons both within the organisation and within language teaching itself, two levels or two types of assessment were the main focus of stakeholders in the *AMEP*. These have been outlined in chapter 2 and are summarised again below.

Type 1 assessment concerned general descriptions of language using traditional proficiency scales in this case the *AMES Oral Proficiency Scale* or the *Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating Scale*. This quantitative measure was able to indicate numerically a level of interlanguage development which was described by descriptors that identified the characteristics of language production of a range of learners at different stages of second language development.

Brindley (ibid;15) conceptualised the notion of 'achievement' as a second type, type 2, which he suggested would be concerned with what Spolsky (1985) referred to as 'functional' proficiency and which would relate specifically to the learner's ability to fulfil real life linguistic tasks.

What he called type 3 assessment was informal feedback that teachers gave to learners in an on-going fashion and concerned mainly grammatical and lexical items that were generally related to the development of knowledge and enabling skills and which were structurally based (Brindley, 1989:15).

These three types of assessment or three levels of generalised description about learner language will frame the perspectives of the different stakeholders. A table of these is outlined in chapter 2.

An additional category has been added on to the three types of language proficiency, and this is one used to cluster comments about cultural, socio-linguistic appropriacy descriptions as well as personality and behavioural comments such as accent is too strong, too shy etc.

Similarities and differences between the teachers' perspectives on the conceptualisation of language proficiency were found as follows.

- (a) All teachers indicated a very heavy contextual emphasis in relation to their discourse on language proficiency ie a focus on text or task abilities as opposed to general language proficiency statements. As seen above, *knowledge and control of specific language tasks or texts ie contextual skills* were seen by three of the teachers as extremely or very important as were a lack of these skills seen as significant barriers to successful performance by all four. The one teacher who rated text level skills are relatively unimportant still focussed on text level skills within the classroom and in conceptualising her course design. She was able to focus to some extent on the actual workplace texts her learners needed to develop in, and stated at a supervisor meeting *'give them a good model, particularly in areas where people are making regular errors..but it's really useful if you can give me the kind of form that they are doing it on because if I don't have the context....'* which emphasised contextualised skills.
- (b) Teachers did not conceptualise about language proficiency in 'general' terms. Although this may have been brought about by the nature of the questions in the survey, it was also supported by an almost complete lack of mention of language ability in these terms in the supervisors' meetings and in the classrooms. This issue will be explored in question four where use of general proficiency measures has been the dominant instrument available to the teachers in this study for the past decade, yet so little of their conceptualisation and course design has been influenced by them.
- (c) All four of the teachers were quite concerned with level 3 development of language proficiency, ie with the knowledge and enabling skills (structural) knowledge, usually interpreted as context and task independent. However the interpretation of this level by three of the teachers differed quite significantly from the fourth teacher. More importantly, the classroom practice for the three who agreed on interpretations of this level differed significantly. This will be explored later when an analysis will be made of how teaching approaches, while ostensibly similar, can in fact be realised in completely different classroom practices.

The notion of 'strategic competence' as outlined by Canale and Swain (1980) accounted for the high profile of three of the teachers in this level of proficiency. As mentioned above, discourse skills were unanimously rated the most or second most important skill and discourse skills or 'strategic competence' have been placed in this type of proficiency, because they are frequently taught independently of context, as an enabling skill. A focus on these skills is typical

of the communicative paradigm and is characterised by comments like *'Normally I try to teach them strategies so that they can cope by themselves...I don't normally teach instructions for operating in a particular line but I try to teach them strategies like you were saying, ways to ask for focussed repetition....what I will be doing is giving them strategies for coping with instructions rather than instructions themselves'* and *'I'm not really worried too much about the content of any specific lesson...it's really the strategies that they can take away so that they can continue learning by themselves which is really important'*. (Source: supervisor meeting).

The teacher who differs from the others, (class 4) also sees discourse competence as important but as stated sees 'the expression plane' or control of pronunciation, stress, intonation or general intelligibility, as the place where all the language skills come together. She sees the combination of the lexicogrammatical and discourse skills, defined by specific contexts, as inextricably linked. The communicatively oriented teachers did rate grammatical skills as fairly important, which was not supported however by their comments (see above) or their classroom practice in the classes observed. One of the teachers saw grammar as the least important skill which was consistent with the classroom practice observed.

- (d) Three teachers (classes 1, 2 & 4) were extremely aware of the cultural, sociolinguistic and 'non-linguistic' factors that impinge on non-English speakers in the workplace. This was identified by their ratings of the significance of cross-cultural linguistic skills and the impact of a lack of these skills as barriers to successful workplace performance. It was also supported by the importance they assigned to the inappropriate strategic management of jobs by Non-English speakers in the workplace and how this would be likely to act as a barrier to success. One teacher (class 3) was inconsistent in her indication of awareness of the role of 'other' non-linguistic barriers in the workplace. She rated knowledge of cross-cultural linguistic differences as an insignificant skill yet saw the lack of these as a significant barrier to successful workplace performance. She was the least experienced of the four teachers with this level of student and the high level oracy class was her first such class. It is possible that she did not have a great deal of experience with learners at that level who are usually fluent enough to and do articulate how these factors impact on them in the workplace or she incorrectly marked the question.

The one teacher whose approach directly addresses the ‘discriminatory’ factors in the workplace went as far as separating the language ability of her class from these issues by saying in her course proposal ‘*All applicants speak and write English proficiently. Some were educated through the medium of English. Nevertheless cultural and linguistic factors contribute to their difficulties in achieving appropriate positions.*’

In summary then, the following comments can be made:

- all four teachers share similar views on the importance of discourse skills for high level oracy speakers in the workplace
- they all acknowledge the role of contextual features of exchanges and the importance of teaching and focusing on specific workplace texts
- all four teachers recognise the role and importance of ‘non-linguistic’ or behavioural factors that impinge on successful workplace performance for non-English speakers.

The four teachers however differ on the constitution of these aspects of language proficiency and idiosyncratically combine them with different factors highlighting some and down playing others. The degree to which each of their approaches is supported by and realised through classroom practice differs significantly. The details of these differences and their impact on consistency of service of workplace teachers and the role of curriculum frameworks will be discussed below.

5.2.2.a. Supervisors’ perspectives

Supervisor’s perspectives on language proficiency do not fall as neatly as the teachers’ do. This is to be expected as they represent a disparate group of individuals, with a lay understanding of language and language teaching. They are also independent of current theories and methodologies on language proficiency as it is not their field of expertise, but they relate to language and language ability at what may be termed an ‘operational level’. This point is significant in understanding the view of teachers which is shaped so strongly by organisational and theoretical underpinnings where common views are reinforced.

However there are patterns of similarity across the four groups of supervisors.

- (a) One of those similarities is the variation expressed on language proficiency issues as opposed to the uniformity of the approach of the teachers. As mentioned above the reasons for this are obvious yet significant. Individual supervisors and employers would bring to the language assessment procedure a host of different attitudinal, experiential, personal, historic and learned influences which are reflected by haphazard allocations of what they see as the most important skills, how each of these skills or its absence may affect them in the workplace.

In response to the question on '*listing recent areas of spoken communication difficulties with the learners*' supervisor comments varied from lists of specific tasks or texts that learners were unable to do to generalised statements on intelligibility, to vocabulary, to pronunciation difficulties, to discourse skills to accuracy and comprehension. Supervisors frequently referred to the medium, ie telephone, or to the skill, ie writing or really vague descriptions such as '*numerous conversations regarding a variety of work issues - some straightforward, some complex*'.

In response to the question on '*what do you see as the most essential spoken workplace skills for this employee*' which was given to two groups of supervisors, there was again a variety of responses. Many of these comments were expressed in terms of a 'general ability' ie '*the ability to determine what the inquirer wants so that the correct help can be offered*' or '*to obtain precise information from others ie have the capacity to judge when further elaboration is required*' or '*adequate and accurate communication on scientific matters*'. Where the two groups of supervisors were notated during supervisor meetings, many of their comments were able to specify the tasks more specifically and refer to language ability in terms such as '*he can't explain set-up problems on the line*' or '*she has difficulties writing quality deviation reports*'. It is possible that the questionnaire used for two of the supervisor groups and the meetings used for the other two groups yielded slightly different data. However, when the overall comments of all the supervisors are categorised according to Brindley (1989) and Spolsky's (1985) types of proficiency, similarities in conceptualisation start to appear. These will be analysed below.

In trying to identify what aspects of language performance 'concern' supervisors most, the pattern of variation continues. Grammar 'deficiencies', aspects of pronunciation and accent and lack of confidence were seen as the most concerning aspects of language proficiency by supervisors, but only marginally

above that of idioms and 'other'. This means that neither aspect really features as a predominant concern for any individual or group of supervisors. This again supports the notion that individual supervisors were not influenced by any particular 'school' of thought as was the case with the teachers. Areas of concern were randomly assigned without any particular pattern of similarity.

Before looking at the supervisors' comments in relation to the theoretical framework it is worth noting the scale of comments which relate to the cultural behaviour and cultural knowledge of learners in the workplace. This suggests that supervisors in the study view language proficiency 'through' a cultural sieve and have difficulty separating language from cultural behaviour as second language teachers are trained to do.

5.2.2.b. Supervisors' comments and language assessment

When supervisor comments are categorised according to the types of proficiency as outlined by Brindley, the similarities between the four groups begin to appear. Although data was collected differently for two groups, the findings fall into similar patterns across the groups in terms of how language proficiency is conceptualised by supervisors and employers.

The similarities amongst the supervisor groups are as follows:

- (a) Comments describing language ability in 'general' terms are considerable across the four groups. Statements like *'needs written language skills'*, *'is an effective communicator'*, *'general English comprehension is quite good'*, *'has difficulty making herself understood to staff and clients'* and *'generally spoken communication is quite good'* typify many of the comments of supervisors across the four groups. These general references to language proficiency are in contrast to the teachers who had very few references to general language ability.
- (b) All supervisors were able to be quite specific about the tasks or contexts and situations in which learners experienced difficulties. They were able to identify texts in some instances such as *'learn to follow written procedures on the line'*, *I have given an instruction which involves 3 steps and L has not been able to advise me of what she has to do'*, *'unable to express opinions at section meetings'* and *'aspects of grammar when writing papers and thesis'*. Supervisors were also able to identify the context and in some cases register variables such as audience. These are typified by comments such as

'understanding problems expressed to her by users of the computer systems', 'didn't understand basic client enquiries and vice versa', 'comprehension skills especially Australian idiom when dealing with customers' and 'can't understand my command'.

- (c) When talking about the type 3 focus of language proficiency, ie structural or enabling skills context independent, supervisors mention accent /pronunciation and grammar as issues. As mentioned above however, this concern is not shared by all supervisors. When referring to grammar a few supervisors referred to the mixing of gender pronouns which resulted in confusion, several referred to verb tenses, one to prepositions, some made the link between grammar and text, and some referred to the incorrect use of vocabulary. When referring to accent and pronunciation, the two groups of supervisors whose workers dealt with the public indicated accent as a fairly significant issue. Many stated that clients could not understand the learners especially on the phone and sometimes at the counter.
- (d) Across all supervisor groups, comments about the workplace behaviour of non-English speakers and their personality attributes as interpreted cross-culturally feature as a significant aspect of their assessments. All supervisor groups focused heavily on what may be described 'the workplace culture' and this culture includes references to learners levels of assertiveness, lack of cultural literacy (Hirsch, 1987), their levels of confidence, shyness, the adherence to group norms and the 'proper' carrying out of procedures. The following statements are typical of this phenomenon:
- *'not to feel embarrassed when not understanding direction sheets given to them'*
 - *'not questioning supervisors, it's built into a lot of nationalities'*
 - *'they speak their own language they don't mix with anyone'*
 - *'most concerned with students' lack of confidence in obtaining feedback as to if matters are understood'*
 - *'use of soft voice and lack of assertiveness would seem to indicate a lack of confidence in undertaking communication with peers and supervisors'*
 - *'they tend to take their breaks together and speak their native language or they speak in a language that they themselves can understand like limited English or whatever it is and that can annoy other members of staff'*
 - *'and they don't say straight away that they don't understand something'*
 - *'attitude difficulties, reluctance to recognise areas of improvement and to participate fully in training'*

As indicated above, some supervisors did not indicate this as a major concern but across all the groups, the greatest amount of comment was to do with this aspect of 'appropriate workplace behaviour'. Significantly too, most of the comments tended to be negative, rather than seeing the diversity offered by non-English speakers as a positive factor. Several of the supervisors, in fact several from each class except class 1, also made references to a factor, which could be called 'cultural literacy' (Hirsch, 1987). This would include comments about learners' *lack of knowledge of Australian institutions, government systems, ministerial positions and just general 'local' knowledge gained from growing up in Australia such as the names of people and places*'. Post-course comments of supervisors indicate improvements in confidence levels, and in fact they tend to remark on type 4 comments rather than on type two improvements.

In summary then, the perspectives of supervisors show individual variation but as four groups there are similarities. These are that:

- they conceptualise quite considerably in terms of generalised statements of language proficiency
- they are all able to specify tasks and contexts of learner difficulties
- many are concerned with general intelligibility which is often affected by accent and pronunciation and
- almost all are particularly concerned with and articulate the need for non-English speaking workers to adhere to appropriate group norms, increase cultural awareness and adopt 'appropriate' behavioural norms in the workplace.

Of the 24 supervisors in the study, only about three were of non-English speaking background yet their comments do not differ from those of the English speaking supervisors.

5.2.3.a. Learners' perspectives

Learner's perspectives on language proficiency again share some similarities as well as differences between individual learners. For the purposes of the research it was assumed that 'self-reporting' by learners on their language proficiency needs would be sufficiently accurate. According to Spolsky (1985:181) *Self-report is considered to be satisfactory in situations in which there is reason to trust the reporter's judgement, or in which no special degree of accuracy is needed.*

What is interesting to note however, is that there are patterns of similarity and difference between the class groups of learners, which may indicate that their comments have been partly framed by:

- (a) either the approach/ style of their teachers or
- (b) the nature of their work and the language difficulties they experience in their work. These will be analysed further below.

Similarities across the individuals are as follows:

- (a) There is a great deal of reference to idiomatic or colloquial English by almost half of the learners. Sixteen out of the thirty three learners comment about the difficulty of following colloquial language in the workplace and eleven learners identify that idiomatic or casual conversation is an area they would like to improve most in their language skills. Skills in this area are identified most frequently along with statements about general fluency, which is discussed below. The comments on colloquialisms are particularly interesting when considering the measuring tools eg *AMES Oral Proficiency Scale* which makes reference to these abilities at the level that most of these learners find themselves. For example, at 5.0 on the scale, in relation to *Comprehension*, the descriptor reads:

Can understand most speech directed at him/her without requiring repetition or explanation, except where highly colloquial register is used or where subject is very specialised.

And 6.0 on the scale the descriptor reads:

Can with concentration, follow all forms of speech understood by native speaker, though may have difficulty with some varieties of Australian English involving high frequency use of colloquialisms and cultural references outside his/her immediate experience.

- (b) General fluency is mentioned as frequently as idiomatic or colloquial English. Learners refer to macro-skill descriptors like 'writing', 'conversation', 'ability to speak better' and 'understand more effectively' etc. Included in these references to 'general ability' are many that talk about the desire to be appropriate or use language which is suitable for the 'level' of person they are speaking to, ie register variables, which are able to represent them as educated, informed speakers. This is not surprising considering that many of the learners involved

are highly educated and understand the role which inadequate language skills play in social perceptions. Comments which are typical of this include:

- *I would like to be very versatile in the sense that if I am talking to a native I could be like one and same with all the different nationalities also involved in my line of work*
- *To be able to write as professionally as the native speakers if not better*
- *Be able to write in any register with ease*
- *Communicating with workmates using the correct/ right terminology, words according to their level of understanding*
- *Well if I speak I prefer it if I speak to be more professional using more professional words which is important*

- (c) There were many references by learners to the role of accent, pronunciation, intonation and stress patterns and an expressed understanding that native speakers have difficulty with their accents and pronunciation. The issue of accent and work related to the public was mentioned several times where learners indicated quite strongly that members of the public frequently referred to their accents or stated they could not understand them because of their accents. This is consistent with findings of previous studies in the *AMEP* where learners indicated great concern with accent and pronunciation (Willing, 1988).
- (d) There was not all that much reference to the word “grammar” from the learners. This is in contrast to previous studies where learners often mentioned grammatical inadequacies or 'accuracy' in relation to their language development (Willing, 1988). Individual students however did see 'grammar' as their major problem in language learning. A considerable amount of items clustered in this category however because learners, while not actually mentioning the word 'grammar', did conceptualise their needs at this level in relation to aspects of language proficiency like vocabulary, accent, pronunciation which traditionally form part of 'grammar' etc.
- (e) Most learners referred to an improvement in confidence either as a desired outcome of the courses they were enrolled in, or as a result of the course they were enrolled in and these form part of category 4 in the cluster. Comments relating to increased confidence suggested that linguistic confidence had increased as well as behavioural confidence, ie increased assertiveness. Statements which indicate this change in behaviour are ones like :

- *The course has given me a lot of confidence about talking about the topic on learn some the way to communicate with the supervisor, with the worker, the thinking, cultural background...*
- *Then I do what I have been taught about to impose my authority in that situation because at that moment I am discriminated against*

The perception that workplace acceptance would increase (ie perceived discrimination would decrease) or that cultural stereotypes would be challenged by improved English language skills was also evident in many of the comments. For example:

- *I think the acceptance level would be better (if I could express myself more professionally with supervisors)*
- *If I had good English language skills I would have confidence in supervising staff. How could I get respect from my colleagues if my English is not perfect without show that I'm a migrant and do not belong*
- *I feel that native speakers are more preferred to us for promotion selection even if we have the necessary skills than them (technical knowledge)*
- *In an interview they might not accept your spoken English....generally Asian populations speak not as assertive as the other culture*

(f) Many learners referred to lexical items or a difficulty in being able to select the correct wording, terminology or vocabulary. These comments were made in relation to register variables, as well as in relation to text abilities. Learners were frequently aware that they were using the wrong word in a particular context and the class with the lowest oral proficiency score mentioned vocabulary deficiencies the most. Across the groups learners said things like:

- *Biggest difficulty particularly in the searching about the vocabulary to express myself correctly*
- *I have trouble finding the right word in the right context*
- *I had a problem with legal terminology I'm learning for which case for which situation*
- *Sometimes I don't know the meaning of words*
- *I have trouble using the right words*
- *Get loss with communicating with other people once the word is forgotten...*

5.2.3.b. Students' perspectives and language proficiency

When categorised according to the types of proficiency outlined by Brindley, the findings are revealing. The following similarities and differences were found:

- (a) All classes except class four, where the basis of teaching was very explicitly at text level, made considerable reference to general proficiency descriptors.
- (b) A similar variation exists equally in relation to comments at a text level, where all groups spoke considerably about text level expertise except for the lowest proficiency class where there was just one comment. This was in stark contrast to the other three classes, where learners made substantial references to text specific abilities.
- (c) Almost every student mentioned an enabling skill as part of their difficulties with language proficiency. The two major areas of perceived need, or perceived skills deficit were vocabulary and pronunciation/accent/diction. The need for vocabulary relates either to the terminology of their workplace, the difficulty associated with selecting the right word in the right context and what many students referred to as their need for colloquial or idiomatic expressions. (These have been put under type two proficiency however.) Statements suggest that inappropriate or inadequate lexical resources and knowledge of colloquialisms are very noticeable by native speakers and learners alike. Comments such as the following are typical of those expressed by learners:

- *I have trouble finding the right words not the grammar*
- *I need more technical words, more difficult words that I can use in a conversation and more "subtlety"*
- *My written language is most often criticised for the choice of words by my supervisor*
- *Colleagues talk openly about the funny words that I am using*
- *Communicating with workmates using the correct/right terminology/words according to their level of understanding*
- *I'd like to be able to use more colloquial English and Australian slangs*
- *However I am still interested in Australian slang and the 'culture' that go with it*
- *Improving skills on slang most of which is indigenous to Australians only*

- *In this course I would be getting knowledge of Australian English or how you use English in different situations*
- *Most things is vocabulary and the other is very hard to the problem is not just the vocabulary but how to select the right vocabulary to use it sometimes I stuck there which word will I actually say which word I can use it*

The low level class learners did not refer that much to idiomatic expressions but expressed the need for more vocabulary as in the last comment above.

- (d) All learners featured strongly in comments relating to improved levels of confidence as a result of doing the courses and the perception that they would be accepted and integrated more readily into the workplace culture if their language skills were improved. See above.

In summary then it could be argued from the findings of learners comments above that learners could be influenced in their conceptualisations about language proficiency by the focus of their class and their previous educational experiences. This is supported by the fact that almost all the learners were concerned with type three enabling skills which may reflect their language learning backgrounds where trends in language learning would have focused on 'language as a set of rules', characterised in *English as a Foreign Language* teaching rather than 'language as a resource for making meaning', (Slade, 1986). Most of the overseas testing institutions through their entrance assessments, the Michigan University Test, or the Cambridge Certificate or the Joint Matriculation Board Test in English (Overseas) Weir (1990) encourage the view of language as a set of rules.

At least twenty of the thirty one learners in the study had definitely been taught English in their country of origin (so stated on their data base forms, in the interviews with the researcher and based on educational practices in their home country such as Mauritius, the Philippines and Sri Lanka). The remaining eleven were likely to have had previous English language learning. This is assumed from their current levels of proficiency (*AMES Oral Proficiency Ratings*) and their dates of arrival in Australia.

5.2.4. Comparison of perspectives of teachers, supervisors and learners

Similarities and differences across these three stakeholder groups when analysed along conceptualisation according to type of assessment were as follows:

In relation to type 1 assessment, ie 'general proficiency' terms;

- (a) Teachers make very little reference to generalised proficiency in overall comments. This is partly due to the nature of the questionnaire teachers completed, which did not have an open ended question which would permit such statements. However, in classroom discourse and course preparation materials the same absence of general proficiency statements is again evident. The only implicit reference to 'general proficiency' levels is each teacher's compulsory use of oral proficiency scores for initial and post course assessment. This is particularly interesting considering that the scales are the primary instrument of language measurement in the organisation. This lack of reference concurs with other findings (Brindley, 1989) that teachers, while using the oral proficiency instruments for reporting purposes, were found to be more concerned at a teaching level with type 3 assessment ie structural or enabling skills.

Teachers' lack of mention of proficiency at this level could be attributed to their depth of knowledge about language at the other levels, ie at the need for text level development and at the need for enabling skill development. It could be argued that teachers have "too much" knowledge about language to talk about it in such vague and general terms. However it is interesting to note that while teachers do not refer to language ability in general proficiency terms, all four teachers rate 'discourse skills' as very important, eg

Least important = 10
 Most important = 1

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
(e)control of discourse skills ie turn taking, feedback, clarification etc	1	2	1	2

It is possible that teachers when they refer to 'discourse skills', are 'speaking' about 'general proficiency' as conceptualised by employers and learners ie as ordinary language users. This is because what is implied by discourse skills in this sense is the 'strategic competence' referred to by Canale (1983) and really the ability to maintain a conversation or a discussion which would be similar to what learners and employers mean when they talk about 'general comprehension' or 'fluency'. It could even be argued that the preoccupation with “strategic competence”, or discourse skills, by teachers is really the same concept as “general language ability” referred to by learners and supervisors as it very much embodies the notion of the ability to cope in a conversational situation and keep things going. A measure of one’s ability to do precisely this, would be the lay person’s interpretation of one’s general level of proficiency.

Supervisors made more references to general proficiency levels than teachers but less so than learners. This could be attributed to ‘lay’ conceptualisation of language skills and knowledge where comments about general language proficiency can be in vague terms. In historical terms the oral proficiency scales (a measure of general language proficiency) were primarily utilised by program funding bodies, made up largely of non-technical language experts, and largely because they provided rough numerical indications of progress and were interpretable by non-specialists, ie funding bodies. The descriptors of the levels at each numbered stage were usually unknown by non-teachers, except for when "ASLPR 2" was introduced as a benchmark level for several funding and course provision initiatives, (Act of Parliament, 1992) because it was “generally” accepted as “minimal vocational proficiency”.

So, in conceptualising language proficiency in general terms, there is clearly a discord between teachers on the one hand and supervisors and learners on the other. This discord is fairly typical of any arena where technical experts may come across non-technical groups, but in the realm of service provision such as teachers provide to workplaces, the onus is on teachers to explain and translate their technical expertise to both supervisors and learners. Particularly with learners, the onus is on teachers to bridge the possible gap between learners'

perceived needs ie the need for “general English classes” and the teacher’s delivery of more specific text-based language classes.

This responsibility and its implications are very evident at type two proficiency, where there is common ground for joint understanding and joint conceptualisation of language proficiency, and the findings of this study indicate that there are missed opportunities here in terms of “translating” technical expertise to supervisors and learners in accessible ways.

- (b) Type two proficiency, ie task and or text type proficiency is central to the approach of all the teachers, (explicitly stated by classes 1, 2 & 4, and implicitly by class 3) but three of the teachers (class 1, 2 & 3) didn’t *talk* much about this kind of text type ability to supervisors. The teacher of class four, whose approach to language is genre-based or systemic-functional grammar-based, did talk to supervisors explicitly about text level ability, ie report writing. All four teachers indicated that text level ability is central to the skills of high level oracy speakers in the workplace. Their responses were as follows:

Most important = 1
Least important = 10

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
(g) knowledge and control of specific language tasks or texts ie contextual skills	1	1	4	2

and they wrote about text level abilities in the course proposals, but in supervisor meetings they do not refer to specific instances. Supervisors across all four workplaces were able to indicate very specific instances of tasks and texts that learners were having difficulty with. Learners comments of this type of proficiency were very numerous except for class one which was the class with the lowest level learners.

Comments about idiomatic expressions and colloquial language which rated highly amongst learners and which obviously present many difficulties for them, and which were also mentioned by supervisors received a varied response from teachers.

Most important = 1
 Least important = 10

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
(b) knowledge and control of idiomatic Australian English	3	7	2	9

From the above it is clear that three of the teachers, except class 3, do not see idiomatic English as a significant problem yet learners are very aware of their deficiencies in this area. It could be argued that what has been traditionally termed 'idiomatic' English is, in functional grammar terms, none other than the use of contextually-appropriate lexico-grammatical choices made by speakers who share extensive knowledge about the social and cultural context as well as the wordings to achieve specific social purposes in the workplace. Frequently these wordings are used in casual conversation and their social purpose is to achieve and maintain solidarity through sending up, anecdotes, gossip, observation comment etc. (Slade & Norris, 1986).

The absence of these casual conversation skills appears to be one of the underlying factors for social and cultural isolation in the workplace and from these findings is recognised as a problem by learners and supervisors but not, it appears, significantly by teachers. The absence of colloquial register with the sample learners consistent with the *AMES O.P. Scale*, supports the assumption that English language teaching up until now has not focused on the register variables of specific contexts, but rather on decontextualised structural knowledge. What is interesting to note however, is that learners are able to indicate that they lack knowledge, ie the terminology and meanings, to cope with these contextualised exchanges yet these are not explicitly taught by teachers or considered as very significant.

What these findings show is that all groups potentially share a mutual understanding of how language and language skills could be conceptualised at type two assessment, but that this common ground is not being maximised at present. All four teachers do bridge this gap when it comes to writing their course proposals, where more specific reference is made to the kinds of texts (ie level two proficiency) they will be covering with learners. Their teaching practice also indicates that they are aware of the need to develop text-specific skills so they would be meeting student needs in these cases. In two of the supervisor meetings, relating to classes 1 & 3, teachers sought information from supervisors in very general terms rather than tapping "common" ground information.

In relation to teaching 'idiomatic' or 'colloquial' language, only one of the teachers (class 3) saw this as a major part of her course, but she addressed this in her teaching practice from a decontextualised point of view and selected a collection of idiomatic expressions which were literature and not workplace-based.

- (c) At type three proficiency level, there are some interesting findings. Teachers bring to this type of proficiency the greatest knowledge, which as mentioned above, reflects their professional training and extensive language teaching experience. Teachers of classes 1 to 3 focus most heavily on “strategic” discourse competence while the teacher of class 4 sees intelligibility, accent and pronunciation as the most important at this level. Supervisors and learners mention accent or pronunciation as a fairly significant issue but teachers vary in their perceived importance of the skill. It only rates as the most important skill for the teacher of class four.

Most important = 1
Least important = 10

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4
(d) control of pronunciation stress, intonation ie general intelligibility	2-3	5	3	1

Apparently then, there is a discord in the perceptions and needs of teachers, learners and supervisors on the significance of enabling skills as identified by type 3 assessment. The latter two groups experience considerable difficulties with accent and pronunciation and only one of the teachers (class 4) sees this as the most significant skill in the workplace. This suggests again that there is room for improved understanding on the needs of the three stakeholder groups.

- (d) A fourth level was added to the existing frameworks of language proficiency measures to accommodate the plethora of statements and concerns which were related to para-linguistic and workplace behaviour concerns of all the groups of stakeholders. All three groups, teachers, supervisors and learners were very aware of the role of cross-cultural judgements and adherence to workplace norms in the success in and adaptation to of non-English speakers to the Australian workplace. There was universal agreement that such factors played a vital part in the levels of confidence and integration of non-English speaking background workers, significantly those of high oracy.

What is at issue here is the difficulty associated with the formal incorporation of such extra-linguistic factors into the perceptions of language proficiency levels. A recent study (Porter, 1991) found evidence to support previous findings on the effect of the gender of the interviewer and oral proficiency scores and he asked *whether or how far, can extra linguistic (that is non-test) parameters properly be incorporated into language assessment?* (Porter 1991:45). These findings indicate the continued significance of incorporating extra-linguistic factors.

5.2.5. Summary and Conclusions

The findings of research question 1 support the view that there is little agreement about how individuals conceptualise the phenomenon of 'language proficiency'. If there is hardly agreement by the assessment theorists, it is not surprising that there is even less agreement by teachers, supervisors and learners, the stakeholder groups of this study.

For the domain of proficiency is outside the classroom, not inside. We can (perhaps) leave achievement testing to the teachers and professional testers, but once we aspire to measure proficiency, it becomes a question of vox populi, vox dei (Barnwell, 1987:39).

Different levels of theoretical understanding of the phenomenon in question explain in part the findings above,

Not the least of these is the fact that non-teacher native speakers, learners and teachers are likely to have different understandings of the language process (Brindley 1989:121).

and each group, teachers, learners and employers applies different 'criteria' to the ability in question (ibid.).

It could be argued that hierarchical levels of knowledge about language exist amongst the stakeholder groups. These levels of knowledge would be related to professional training, and specific experiences such as learning a second language, or using a second language as a minority group in a dominant cultural context. It could also be assumed that all speakers and writers have at least some knowledge about language. These different levels of knowledge and experiences impact on the judgements made about language and language use or language proficiency. Diagrammatically this hierarchy of language knowledge could be represented as follows:

Hierarchy of knowledge about language

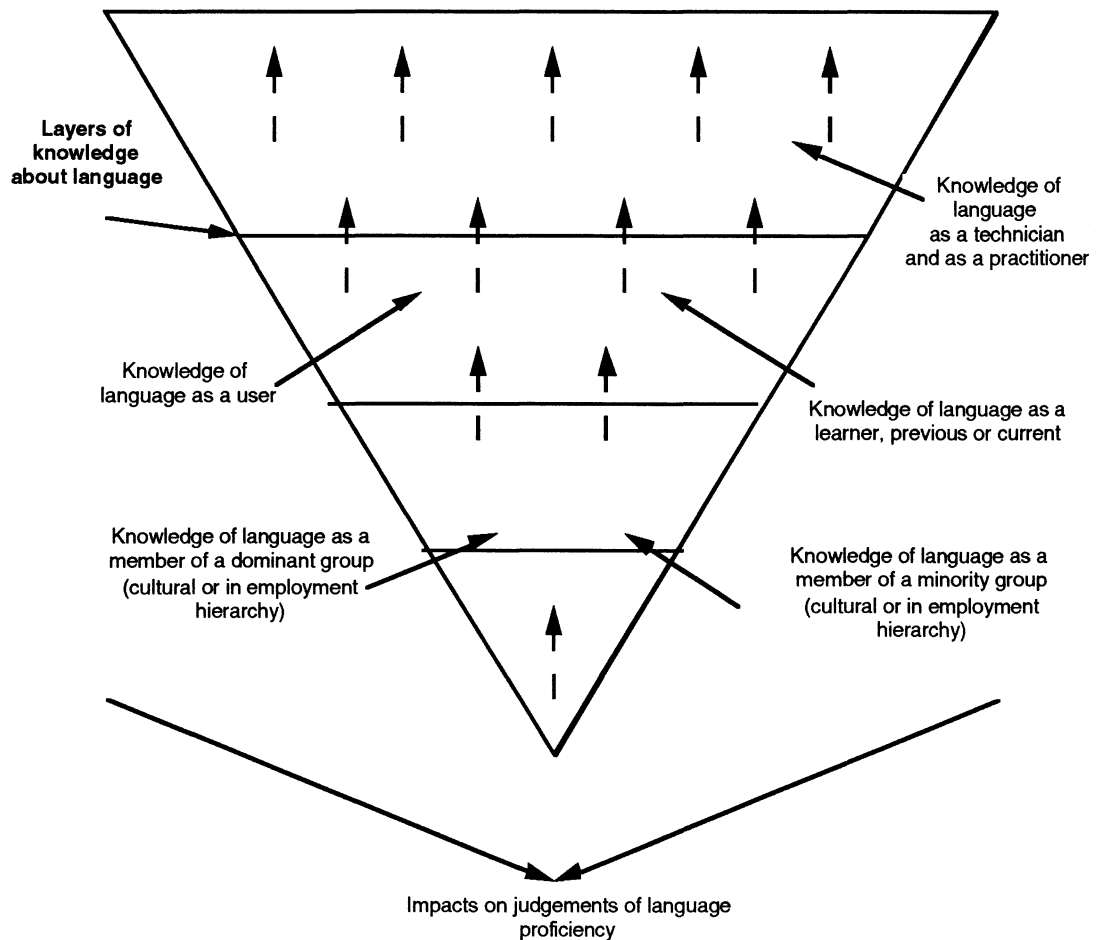


Diagram: 9 Hierarchy of knowledge about language

What is apparent then is that there are clear indicators of:

- (a) some shared understanding of significant linguistic skills, ie the importance of accent and pronunciation, and some which are not shared,
- (b) potential for greater clarity between the stakeholder groups, and
- (c) a need to frame and reference for all groups the criteria, implicit or explicit, that we all use to judge language proficiency and which incorporates all stakeholder concerns
- (d) the need to incorporate a fourth dimension into language assessment or at least address this as a real concern of all stakeholder groups, ie that of cross-cultural communication issues and behaviour and how these impact on learners in the workplace.

It is evident from the above analyses, that teachers learners and supervisors do have very different understandings of the language process. These differences however are not streamed. In other words, not all supervisors share a similar view, not all learners agree with each other, and equally not all the teachers themselves agree 'on the language process'.

The above perspectives on language proficiency have yielded the full range of cross-cultural and sociolinguistic factors which impact on the judgements involved in language. This is because language, in all cultures has developed within a framework of contextual 'meaning-making' and takes into account such variables as social or cultural status, age, personality and gender of interlocutors, the topic and purpose of the interaction, the discourse domain and the medium of exchange and the task; all of which affect proficiency and by implication, assessment of proficiency, [Tarone (1989), Tarone and Yule (1989) and Gass et al. (1989a;1989b) and Nunan (1989) cited in Brindley (1991)].

Although agreement among teachers appears to be greater than the other groups, their teaching practice as sampled in this study does not necessarily reflect these surface similarities. Research question two below explores the teaching practice and the way it relates to their espoused views on language and language teaching.

w5.3. Research Question 2

5.3.1. Introduction

The question posed by research question 2 is: *what are some of the practices/approaches used in the workplace English language and literacy classrooms investigated in the study to develop spoken and written language skills and communicative abilities within the classroom, and of workplace contexts, and how do they correlate with teachers' theoretical perspectives as revealed in research question one?* This question is supplementary to research question 1, as it aims to identify the methodologies used by teachers in workplace language and literacy classrooms and to demonstrate how these methodologies may or may not be characteristic of the perspectives of the teachers in the study.

Research question 2 also aims to situate these methodologies within the theoretical frameworks of language teaching and educational practice which have influenced the teachers. This will be done in several ways:

- by interpreting the focus and content of the lessons of each class
- by interpreting the statements made by teachers to learners about language
- by analysing the metalanguage used by teachers and situating it within theoretical models
- by analysing the teaching materials used.

5.3.2. Classroom 1, Teacher 1, Company SJ

The aims of the course (as outlined by the teacher in the course proposal) were:

- *to enable learners to communicate effectively in the workplace in order to carry out duties efficiently and to participate in workplace life*
- *to develop in learners confidence with English and assertive language behaviour for workplace and personal goals*

Goals

Learners will:

- *Develop strategies for coping with oral information flow through techniques including*
 - *giving feedback*
 - *seeking clarification*
 - *summarising and checking back for understanding*
- *Apply these coping strategies and integrate them in relevant contexts throughout the course*

- *Improve their conversation skills with coworkers*
- *Improve their telephone technique for specific workplace and general needs*
- *Read, understand and explain in their own words SC flow charts, seeking clarification from supervisors where necessary*
- *Report production problems to supervisors, as required by flow charts, applying appropriate language (discourse) strategies*
- *Develop confidence and assertive language skills*
- *Develop awareness of cross cultural issues external to and within Australia as relevant to all areas of the course*
- *Develop and extend language learning strategies in all areas of the course to become more self-directed language learners.”*

More detailed objectives of the course which outlined more specific outcomes relating to conversation at work with colleagues, specific telephone skills and the reading and understanding of flow charts followed the aims and goals. One of the assessment criteria of interest to this study was listed as follows:

“Assessment criteria

- *Assessment standard is the attainment of communicative competence in specified objectives, determined through needs analysis. Communicative competence includes grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic (eg. clarification) and discourse (knowledge of stages of oral and written texts) competencies.”*

5.3.2.a Classroom visit No. 1 on 20 November 1991

The lesson was selected on a random basis, ie. the teacher did not make any special arrangements for the researcher's visit and therefore the class was simply one of the twenty or so lessons of the course. After reading the lesson transcript the teacher identified the lesson as one that was typical of her general approach to teaching ‘*yes in terms of approach to whole text in workplace.....we weren't beginning with the grammar but the situation*’. Reference to ‘grammar’ here may be in response to the teacher having studied systemic functional grammar since the course was taught and having undertaken a course in systemic functional grammar. She indicated she ‘*would use the same content to achieve similar ends*’ and that ‘*the focus on interpersonal and pronunciation (elements) was typical for that course*’.

The lesson consisted of a fairly in-depth analysis of the tenor of differing statements and the teacher indicated fairly successfully to the learners how tenor differences are conveyed through paralinguistic mechanisms such as tone, body language and voice quality. This was done through the metalanguage of the communicative paradigm and models developed by Gubbay and Coghill (1987) who explored the role of successful ‘social’ outcomes for migrants through means of assertive, non-assertive and aggressive behaviour.

This approach fits in with the teacher's theoretical underpinning where she considers the "control of discourse skills, ie knowledge of appropriate turn-taking mechanisms, knowledge of feedback, clarification and challenging techniques, discourse cohesion, eg appropriate staging for say a formal oral presentation, appropriate use of conjunctions" or strategic competence according to Canale and Swain (1980) and Savignon (1983) as the most important language component for high level speakers to have control of in the workplace. She also states in response to the question 'What is your view of 'language' and/or 'communication' and how does this view impact on your teaching approach, that she is *'Influenced by Canale & Swain's competencies, grammatical, strategic discourse and sociolinguistic'*. (See questionnaire responses in Appendix 2). She also describes her approach as *'eclectic, task oriented, whole text, generally macro to micro'*.

The goal of the lesson was to focus on communication strategies and to encourage assertiveness in learners so that they could achieve communication outcomes that were primarily win/win ones. The teacher framed the lesson for the learners, telling them of the content of the day's class, lines 74-80:

Teacher: *Righto, today I'd like to talk a little bit more about assertiveness and non-assertive behaviour and aggressive behaviour..we were talking about assertive behaviour last week weren't we, so this week I would like you to do a little bit more practice about assertiveness, work out exactly what it is that makes a situation show that you are assertive or not and then give you a bit more practice in role playing....now that's ...let's take this situation.*

She wrote the following statement on the board *Excuse me please I need a ladder and* said, lines 81-87:

Teacher: *I want you to think about how you would say that in a way that was not assertive, in a way that was assertive and then in a way that was aggressive I'm going to say this in three ways in a way that will be aggressive or assertive or non-assertive.....and you're going to work out which way I'm saying it and tell me why ..what makes you think it's one of those things*

She then gave the learners an exemplary rendition of the statement according to the three 'tenor' models. She used varying lexico-grammatical choices, intonation and body language to achieve different semantic interpretations, particularly interpersonally, lines 90 onwards:

Exchange 1 (aggressive) went as follows:

Teacher (as supervisor): *Excuse me Mok I need a ladder (fairly aggressive)*
Student: (as employee) *I'm not Mok*
Teacher: *Mok or Henry listen mate it doesn't matter which , listen mate I need a ladder*

Exchange 2 (non-assertive) went as follows:

Teacher (as supervisor): *Excuse me Mok*
Student (as employee): *I'm not Mok*
Teacher: *Oh, I keep doing that*
Student: *That's alright*
Teacher: *um um 'scuse me Mok um um if it's not too much trouble I'm having a bit of trouble I need a ladder*

Exchange 3 (assertive) went as follows:

Teacher as supervisor: *Excuse me Mok*
Student (as employee): *I'm not Mok*
Teacher: *Look I need a ladder can you lend me a ladder*

This was followed by her analysing each exchange in turn, of which the excerpt below, in relation to exchange 1, is a typical example, lines 102-104:

Teacher: *Ok, what sorts of things gave you the idea of which was which, how did you know which one was going to be aggressive, how did you know the first one was aggressive?*
Students: *um*
Teacher (Probes for body language, lines 107-108)
Students: *this one was cranky*
Teacher : *Is cranky the right word, what did I say, let's listen.... (listens to the tape again)*

- Teacher: *how about you (to the student) were you being assertive or non-assertive or aggressive or what*
- Students: unclear
- Teacher: *what do you think (listens to the tape again), lines 115-120:*
- Teacher: *that was being assertive...he wasn't being aggressive he had a nice smile..(she repeated the aggressive rendition and asked).....what makes you think it's aggressive*
- Student: *no apologise for his call the wrong name when he talk*

Each exchange was analysed using specific examples from the role play to underline salient characteristics of the exchanges which the teacher wished to explore. For example in response to the student's answer above, the teacher then went on to insert this reference to apology into the schematic structure of the exchange by saying, lines 121-124:

- Teacher: *when I say stages...clear... I mean what you should say first, what you should say next, and you think that it was inappropriate that I didn't apologise I said **actually Mok or Henry doesn't matter which** um yes it's inappropriate in the terms of what I should have done...*

She then drew attention to the fact that the exchange was in fact a command because “*if I say I need a ladder it's not just the intonation, the way I use my voice, but it's also whether at the same time I'm choosing to ask a question or give a command*”.

She went on to question the learners to draw out body language indicators, lines 141-172:

- T *Is there anything, another aspect of that that shows you it was aggressive way of asking...it's a bit hard to see that anything else that gave you and idea.*
- S Silence
- T *what about my body language*
- S silence
- T *what was my body language like*
- S *you want to fighting*
- G *you think so what made you think so*
- S *look like a fight*
- G *how did I look*
- S *your face is how do you call it a snarl*
- G *what was I doing with my face*

- A *no smiling (tries to demonstrate - much laughter)*
- G *what is it that makes a face aggressive (demonstrates) what's the difference between that and that*
- S *not friendly*
- G *but what am I doing*
- S *like cranky*
- G *yeah...but what makes it cranky... what about my eyes...come on you do it...you look at me in an aggressive way...come on make your face...do that well just imagine one of our kids has done something really naughty go on that's a very unpleasant face ok now relax what's the difference what can you feel which muscles go tight*
- S *the cheek muscles*
- G *did I have a frown or not when I was being aggressive may be I had a frown I try not to frown because I don't want wrinkles but also the eyes staring eyes could be just staring and also another thing we do when we are being aggressive is make our eyes narrow if you do that aggressive face you feel the muscles go tight here 'cos' you are making your eyes smaller now that's just my face what about the rest of my body come out and do it here*

She proceeded to elicit the 'criteria' for why the statements may have appeared under each of the tenor descriptions for most of the remainder of the lesson.

The following three grids were filled in jointly by herself and the class group.

	Tone of voice	Stages	Intonation	Body language
Non assertive	soft	hesitation, ah...ah...well...hard apology... maybe over polite, too many politeness strategies	question tone	stooped, no eye contact, eyes down, too far distance ok turned body away
Assertive	moderate,	apology, but no over-reaction	blend of falling and rising tone	Good eye contact, distance is 'normal' appropriate to situation and status, smile
Aggressive	cranky, hard	inappropriate, no apology	order, not request tone	facial expression, no smile, frown, hard staring eyes, narrow eyes, distance, standing too close

This grid completion was interspersed by and followed by general discussion on the consequences and implications of projecting oneself in any one of these ways, ie. assertively, non-assertively or aggressively.

The teacher concluded the lesson by saying, lines 590-592:

Teacher: *I don't think that any of us realistically can expect do you, that we'll be assertive all the time but it's realistic to expect that we can move our behaviour towards being assertive...*

5.3.2.b. Analysis of teaching and assessment approach

The main focus of the teaching throughout the lesson was on eliciting information about non-verbal behaviour and much of the teaching was characterised by extensive and repeated questioning (directed elicitation) to elicit criteria from the learners on various aspects of the role play, lines 141-153.

T *Is there anything, another aspect of that that shows you it was aggressive way of asking...it's a bit hard to see that anything else that gave you and idea.*
S Silence
T *what about my body language*
S silence
T *what was my body language like*
S *you want to fighting*
G *you think so what made you think so*
S *look like a fight*
G *how did I look*
S *your face is how do you call it a snarl*
G *what was I doing with my face*

There was some input from the teacher on cultural behaviour, relating to how close you can stand to people (or supervisors) in different cultures, lines 174-180:

G *it was something like this I think Mok or Henry doesn't matter I need a ladder*
S *close close*
G *yes it's being too close I mean there are cultural differences here in how polite it is to stand and it can vary ...I mean with your supervisor and your colleagues it's different but I mean am I too close here if F's my supervisor I think he's not*

very good and I'm sick of him and I think I should have his job so am I too close to be telling a supervisor I need a ladder

A strong link was made between behaviour (eg. assertive behaviour) and language, but there was not much focus on the actual wordings used, nor how the learners might use different language choices to achieve the same ends. Language choices were thus not highlighted in this approach to communication, the focus was on fairly obvious non-verbal indicators and the reference to '*expressing your thoughts and wants appropriately and directly*', or '*failing to put forward your own point of view or doing so apologetically or in a way that can be ignored*' (Gubbay and Coghill, 1987). The primary focus therefore was on the behaviour surrounding the wordings, eg. eye contact, tone of voice, facial expressions, body distance, eyes etc.

Intonation patterns and non-verbal behaviour were addressed and modelled very explicitly. The teacher paid a great deal of attention to the interpersonal consequences of different approaches, and through her focus on the use of voice and body language demonstrated and explained how successful interpersonal relationships in the workplace might be achieved and maintained.

Where linguistic analysis (in this case the role of hesitation) was undertaken it went as follows, lines 217-226:

Teacher: *but if I'm going um um well that's different isn't it.. it's really showing that you were frightened isn't it...so a little bit of hesitation might be ok in any situation but there was. there was a lot there, too much ...but there's a difference between um let me think about that and and um um you're not busy ...isn't there...don't you think or not ...the difference between ah let me think about that and ah ah not busy um um have you got a ladder is there's a difference in confidence, it's a tone of voice, it's a combination of these two things and I think it's a bit hard to separate them....*

The teacher could have referred to this metalinguistically as modality. Rather she selected two different functional mechanisms, a 'filler' *um let me think about that* and an obvious modal choice *ah ah not busy um um have you got a ladder* to emphasise the point of being non-assertive. Modality and the lexico-grammatical choices to achieve it in this context were not addressed explicitly as they might be in an approach which is more linguistically informed.

Text structure was analysed in terms of the appropriate or inappropriate insertion of the apology about calling the student by the incorrect name. The schematic structure of the exchange was thus referred to in an assumed way, or inexplicitly, by focussing on the appropriate interpersonal behaviour patterns, eg. inappropriate, no apology, maybe over polite, too many politeness strategies, 238-265:

- Teacher: *and what should come next I've said **excuse me Mok I'm sorry I always keep doing that** what should come next if we're looking at the stages*
- Students: *(...) problem (...)*
- G *so I should go from the **excuse me** apology about mucking up the name and then I should go on to the request but did I go on to my request listen (plays tape again) I said **excuse me** did I go straight on to the request*
- S *no...(...) busy*
- G *I went back to the **excuse me** and then I even put in **you're not busy** were the stages appropriate or not*
- S *yes **and then silence** yes the stages*
- G *is it necessary to have all that in did it sound right the second lot of **excuse me** did it sound alright to you or not*
- S *(...)*
- G *so what does it show if someone goes putting in too many I mean I said **excuse me** then I said **you're not busy** and if it's not too much trouble when we've talked about all those softening phrases before **and if it's not too much trouble** is another one of those softening phrases so I've put three in a row there **excuse me again you're not busy** and if it's not too much trouble then I finally get to **I need a ladder** so I mean you might mean the stages... are these polite stages*
- S *it's too polite*
- G *yes it's too polite what does it tell you about me if I use all this language... what does it tell you about my speaking to Mok*
- S *you are strange*
- G *or I don't have confidence... maybe I'm frightened of him or something or whatever or maybe I've just lost the first ladder so the stages here they're really over polite aren't they*

These politeness strategies, here described as discourse stages, would, according to one current linguistic theory, (ie systemic functional grammar) be treated as modality. This choice of explanation reflects the teacher's paradigm which is based largely on the four categories of the model of communicative competence proposed by Canale and Swain

(1980) and Canale (1983) and Savignon (1983) Discourse competence under this model is described as:

the ability to understand the connection of a series of sentences or utterances to form a meaningful whole. Recognition of the theme or topic of a paragraph, chapter, or book, getting the gist of a telephone conversation, poem, TV. commercial, office memo, recipe or legal document requires discourse competence (Savignon, 1983).

but not as language choices and how they achieve interpersonal meanings by positioning the listener in different ways.

The approach used by the teacher was evidently embedded in the following paradigms. Firstly it is representative of the communicative paradigm. This is seen through her focus on 'strategic competence' Canale and Swain (1980) and her focus on meaning not form which is revealed by the fact that the language choices were not explicitly analysed from a grammatical basis at any time. The same wordings were used to convey a message to a supervisor, with changes only in intonation and body language.

She also focused on 'sociolinguistic competence (ibid.), or the appropriateness and inappropriateness of responses which has been detailed by the models of communicative competence outlined by Canale and Swain (1980) and Hymes (1972b) cited in Bachman (1990:109).

Her approach reflects a concern with the context of situation, but as noted by Slade (1986) the context is *reduced to a vehicle for the target function or structure*, rather than the language being used to signify how it embodies the situation. The teacher did succeed in highlighting the linguistic choices of the exchange, and did this by focusing on changes in intonation and body language rather than on how different wordings may have achieved different interpersonal consequences. This approach is consistent with communicative models and reflects international and AMES organisational trends in the eighties. It is embodied in the following words:

Communicative classrooms have also focused on task-based methodologies (eg Richards 1990, Nunan 1989) organised around the "activities, tasks and learning experiences selected by the teacher in order to achieve learning and how these are used within the teaching/learning process", (Richards 1990:11) (Hammond et al., 1992:54).

The teacher has drawn heavily on the work of Gubbay and Coghill (1987) in her use of role plays, assertive, non-assertive or aggressive behaviour analyses, win/win

interactions, win/lose and lose/lose interactions. The naming of these categorisations reflects their work which had a substantial influence over ESL teaching in England, Australia and New Zealand in the eighties.

In relation to approaches based on or derived from a systemic functional grammar analysis, the teacher could have explored the language features, schematic structure or social purpose of the particular 'genre' used as the model text in the classroom or how the language choices might have achieved different tenor relationships. The teacher could have explained for example how the statement *Excuse me Mok I need a ladder* could realise the command function because of the status relationship between the supervisor and the employee. This could have been done through an analysis of mood choices. The achievement of different interpersonal relationships could have been analysed in lexico-grammatical choice terms but was rather, as indicated above, analysed in terms of body language and intonation patterns.

The grid categories of the class activity do not represent those of systemic functional grammar where the emphasis for an in-depth analysis of this text may have been on the interpersonal meanings realised by the mood choices, and the role of intonation patterns in creating interpersonal meaning.

In line with the research procedure, the teacher was given a transcript of the above lesson and was interviewed about the impact of the systemically-based *English in the Workplace Framework* to establish if there a) had been a change in her teaching approach and b) would be a change in her teaching approach since the introduction of the framework. She acknowledged that the framework '*would have enabled (me) to have a more systematic approach, it would not necessarily alter what I would teach but it would give me a mental checklist on what to focus (on)*'.

The analysis above indicates quite clearly how the perspective of the teacher and her beliefs about language and language learning are realised in the content selection, discourse and methodologies of the lesson as identified in research question one. Influenced by the workplace needs she focussed on a workplace exchange, experienced and trained in the communicative paradigm and the work of Gubbay and Coghill she sought to teach aspects of social and linguistic ability outlined by them. Entrenched in the organisational culture of *AMES* she framed her lesson organisation and course design along recognised organisational structures, ie 'needs-based', Brindley (1984) and 'learner-centred', Burton (1987) and Nunan (1988). Her use of metalanguage is situated firmly in the communicative paradigm.

5.3.3. Classroom 2, Teacher 2, Skillmax - Public Sector

The primary course focus as outlined by the teacher in the course proposal, was to cover:

- “• *job seeking skills including researching a position, writing effective resumes and cover letters, interview skills*
- *cross cultural communication skills*
- *report writing*
- *idiomatic Australian speech”.*

The objectives of the class were outlined by the teacher as follows:

“All applicants speak and write English proficiently. Some were educated through the medium of English. Nevertheless cultural and linguistic factors contribute to their difficulties in achieving appropriate positions. Whilst these difficulties differ for individuals, they can be summarised as follows:

- *the need for a thorough understanding of the job seeking process in the Australian context, in particular the purpose of the interview and the intention of common questions*
- *the need to develop confidence and assertiveness to demonstrate professionalism and skills at interview and in the workplace*
- *the need to develop skills for writing effective resumes and cover letters*
- *the need to understand the cultural values and attitudes underlying the job selection process in Australia, to recognize how cultural differences may lead to ineffective interview behaviour*
- *the need to develop awareness of the differences between spoken and written English, and where appropriate to develop effective report writing skills*
- *the need to develop strategies for relating effectively with colleagues in the Australian workplace including awareness of cultural differences, strategies for understanding idiomatic speech*
- *the need to gain the confidence and motivation to apply for desired positions*

Recommendations

1. *the course cover the following areas:*
 - *job seeking skills including researching a position writing effective resumes and cover letters interview skills*
 - *cross cultural communication skills*
 - *report writing*
 - *idiomatic Australian speech*
2. *Where appropriate, organizations investigate the possibility of providing a work experience component for participants. Precedents for work experience*

provision range from full time placement in an appropriate branch to small professional projects or the opportunity to research goal position.

3. *Participating organizations nominate appropriate personnel to attend a cross cultural workshop conducted in conjunction with the Skillmax course. This workshop will focus on:*
 1. *Raising awareness to the difficulties experienced by applicants of different cultural background in the job seeking process.*
 2. *Developing strategies as interviewers to enable immigrant applicants to compete equally in the job selection process.*

Personnel who might benefit from the workshop include trainers, members of selection panels, personnel officers and supervisors.

Outcomes

The desired outcome of this course is that participants will gain work in the field or at the level appropriate to their qualifications and experience. However, it is recognised that in the current economic climate this may not occur immediately. Nevertheless it is anticipated that the career possibilities of participants will be improved in the following ways:

- * *participants will acquire the information and counselling to clarify their career path*
- * *where relevant, participants will undertake courses necessary to upgrade or gain recognition of their qualifications*
- * *apply or be prepared to apply for positions commensurate with their qualifications and experience*
- * *develop the oral and written communication skills previously identified as barriers to full employment*
- * *where relevant, actively seek and gain appropriate work experience with the help and support of their organisation”.*

Assessment was not specifically referred to, although it could be argued that the “Outcomes” section above would have been the teacher’s measure of the success of the course. In the evaluation document of the course the teacher again listed these measurable outcomes as the *means* of ‘evaluation’ (not assessment) but without figures to support the evaluation.

5.3.3.a. Description of lesson for classroom visit no 1 on 22.10.91

The purpose of the lesson observed was to focus on the interview process and the cultural and sociolinguistic factors that surround public service job interviews in Australia. This related to the needs of the particular learner group, who were all 'underemployed' in the public sector in relation to their levels of qualifications. One way of achieving equal employment would be through promotion via a public service interview.

The teacher framed the content of the lesson as follows (lines 19-23):

Teacher:: *I knew someone who was going for a job at the Regent, and somebody, I'm not sure who it was, said ...oh the interview is a game...and we talked....(.....) and someone mentioned oh it's like a game I was wondering what you feel about that (....) when we say the interview is like a game why would you say that*

There was some initial discussion from the class as to whether the interview was in fact a game, but some students indicated that skill and intelligence were also involved, while others suggested social and cultural discrimination played a part as well. An analysis of these aspects will be made below. The teacher then basing the lesson on the assumption that there were cultural and social rules which could be learnt about the Public Sector interview, sought to elicit from the students what these might be.

Each learner then suggested a piece of advice to the newcomer to Australia and the teacher wrote these down as "rules" that govern the public service interviews. Their responses were as follows:

(Learners feeding in suggestions while teacher writes on white board).

1. *Listen to questions and talk slowly.*
2. *Connect past experience and connect this with your wish to fill the new position, with the requirements of the position.*
3. *Learn (prepare and rehearse) questions related to the essentials.*
4. *Do not interrupt the panel - wait your turn.*
5. *Answer questions honestly, to the best of your knowledge.*
6. *Be yourself.*
7. *Be concise and direct, to the point.*
8. *Sell yourself - to express interest in the position.*
9. *Try to understand the underlying intent of the question.*
10. *Be aware that overuse of gestures may have negative effect.*
11. *Use concise factual info.*
12. *Give positive answers.*
13. *Show ability to cope with unexpected questions, take time to think.*
14. *Be prepared through research of company, position and duties.*
15. *Rehearse with a tape.*
16. *Write a good resume.*
17. *Know the techniques of the interview.*

18. *Clean, neat dress, dress appropriately for the position and for the interview.*
19. *Double-barrelled questions; make sure the panel is aware you have answered both.*

There was a great deal of discussion by the class on the relevance of the items on the final list. After this discussion the whole class watched a video of a Frenchman applying for a job as the concierge of an up market Melbourne hotel. The students in the class were asked to be the panel for the applicant and were asked to judge his performance based on the rules of the interview (solicited and noted down above) as well as judge his performance against a list of essential and desirable criteria which they had developed for the job the previous week.

5.3.3.b Analysis of teaching approach

The teacher was effectively exploring the 'genre' of interviews in the Australian context, and chose to do so from the point of view of it being an unfair situation rather than exploring it as a social phenomenon which has developed over time to achieve a particular purpose. Clearly in an interview situation power is distributed unequally, but it is also a context, which like all social contexts, is defined by linguistic and social rules and norms which are not always explicit. The initial discussion on public service interviews by the teacher did introduce the social 'power' ie cultural context element of job interviews, but with a heavy emphasis on it as a socially-biased one, lines 43-47:

Teacher: *I suppose it's unlike the usual games that we might think of where everybody has been equal to start with...you've got that unequal power relationship in the interview...a panel up there deciding who wins and who loses and the applicants trying to get what they want...so it's a fairly unequal game isn't it.....(...)*

Several of the students tried to balance the discussion by saying, line 52-56:

G: *you know how to go about it, but also I would not discard the fact that it is also a skill, an intelligence, and skill, but as we also say how good you say that, how good you serve yourself, how good you demonstrate your capacities in sort of twenty minutes.....'cos' sometimes you can't just explain what you can do right away, what you feel*

to which the teacher replied:

Teacher: *sure, sure, what were you going to say Elizabeth....*

One of the students did pick up on the issue of discrimination raised by the teacher and said, lines 62-63

L: *I also believe there is some injustice and there are rules because you got the feeling that something is against you...you've got the feeling*

The teacher then completed the sentence for the student, saying line 64

Teacher: *you feel they've got some preconceived*

and added a few moments later when challenged about alternative methods of assessment for promotion, line 72:

Teacher: *I feel there should be a range of things...like there should be other...*

These two lines indicate the particularly strong emphasis of the teacher on social and cultural relations in the workplace identified in the course proposal and reinforced in her responses to questions 1 & 2 of the teacher questionnaire, see Appendix 2. Many examples in the classroom discourse indicate the teacher's 'belief' that you ought to change the social groundrules rather than assisting people to cope with them linguistically. From the course proposal document we read: "*All applicants speak and write English proficiently. Some were educated through the medium of English. Nevertheless cultural and linguistic factors contribute to their difficulties in achieving appropriate positions* and a few lines further down one of those factors is listed as: *the need to understand the cultural values and attitudes underlying the job selection process in Australia*". The teacher's responses to questions 1 & 2 of the questionnaire reinforce this belief. When asked about the likelihood of the following aspects being a barrier to workplace success:

- (c) *personality factors, ie too shy, doesn't speak up at meeting etc*
- (i) *unfamiliarity with contextual features of an exchange eg amount of formality or informality required when addressing colleagues or supervisors*
- (j) *cross-cultural communication factors eg intonation patterns that might send different messages to interlocutors*

the teacher rated these as equal 8 (on a scale of 1-10, with 10 the greatest barrier) and qualified the responses by saying:

(c & i & j) (iii) *Such factors can lead to misjudgments about abilities, personality, attitude. These misjudgments I've observed can mean exclusion from opportunities as well as day to day difficulties in getting on with colleagues.*

Other, (iv) *Being marginalised from networks through which people find out about opportunities, trends, issues, buzz words etc. This marginalisation could be due to linguistic/cultural factors or attitudes of ESB colleagues.*

The manner of exploration of the cultural issues surrounding the interview is consistent with the theoretical underpinning of the teacher who views the knowledge of appropriate roles, responsibilities, relationships and awareness of linguistic and cultural differences in various workplaces as significantly as knowledge of specific texts.

It is evident from the transcripts that the views or beliefs of the teacher were fairly instrumental in dismissing the comments from some of the students who sought to raise another perspective on the features of the job interview while she supported those of the students who felt the injustice or discrimination.

The normality of interviews was challenged and the teacher suggested that too much depended on the twenty minutes or so of the interview, lines 77-80:

Teacher: *it seems very unusual that so much goes on those twenty minutes or so...ok thinking of it then as a game with rules, with conventions that you're saying are hidden to a lot of us, let's try and get down to what these rules are in the Public Sector....*

This critical interpretation of the interview as an unwelcome social exchange, as opposed to a social context with a particular social purpose is reinforced later in the transcript where the teacher says, lines 137 and 145:

Teacher: *an unnatural situation*

and

Teacher: *to it's be yourself which is difficult in this most unnatural*

The use of the word *unnatural* signifies to the observer or listener a sense of the abnormality with which she views the interview context. However, implicitly accepting the reality of the job interview she goes on to say, lines 80-84:

Teacher: *we'll get away from the Private sector for a minute...we'll think about your scene...imagine that you yourselves have been approached by a friend who's just come to Australia and who wanted to go for a job in the public service.... what do you think, how would you advise this friend*

As the list of suggestions were made by the students, it was evident again from the responses of the teacher the particular aspects of the interview which she sought to emphasise. When the student mentioned the role of learning the essentials the teacher replied, line 104:

Teacher: *yes that's incredibly important isn't it...*

This was followed by a comment from one of the students, line 112:

S: *Do not interrupt and wait for your turn*

The teacher's response was to indicate, through intonation and wordings, the significance of this comment, lines 113 and 115:

Teacher: *ah this is interesting.....power, it's about power isn't it...*

The teacher focused on the 'power' relationship again a few lines down where one of the students was trying to identify the difficulty of 'being yourself' in a rather difficult situation lines 128-132

G: *yeah but remember that you are in a situation where you are not yourself and that there is still the rapport between the interviewer...and you might be...and that's where the problem lies where you're too much yourself, your personality...you want it or you don't want it you feel a bit small*

The teacher's response to this was, line 133:

Teacher: *the power relationship*

to which the student replied, line 134

G: *the power relationship*

This phenomenon of students repeating verbatim what the teacher says is common throughout the interaction. It highlights a rather powerful learning tool, where learners repeat exact wordings but where the ideational interpretation of reality created for them, so to speak, by the teacher. Similar references to the resemblances between teachers' speech to second language learners and the learners' own second language output have been made by Hatch (1979) and Terrell (1980) in (Canale, 1983).

The teacher's beliefs about the interview and the way migrants and their work experience may be regarded was illustrated again when one of the students was discussing how she always referred to her overseas experience, which was quite interesting, and the teacher said, lines 265 & 266:

Teacher: *it's an important point though isn't it because so often people just don't regard your overseas experience*

and later, line 343

Teacher: *yeah that's the problem with the interviewers, they should have explored further, obviously their question was not enough to find out exactly what her experience was...*

At the conclusion of the brainstorm into the above points, the teacher asked the class the following question, lines 385-391:

Teacher: *just looking at it (the points listed) do you feel that they do reflect anything about the dominant, the majority culture, the Anglo-Australian culture, because actually it is the Anglo-Australian culture that create the interview and that create its rules and uh mostly the panellists also are usually Anglo-Australians...it's changing, but slowly...do you feel that there is anything that reflects cultural values there...it might be different to the cultural values in the countries you've come from...would you give the same advice if you were in the Philippines or India or...*

one student replied, line 392:

S: *all of them, most of them....*

Teacher: *most of them uhu uhu*

S: *these only point out to them*

Teacher: *to your friend the applicant who's just come from some other country I'm just wondering whether they would find it culturally very different the experience they might have had*

S: *the first thing I would tell them is that there's not a godfather here*

One student said she would tell people from her country that there was no godfather here, because she suggested you may get a job in her country depending on who your father was or knew and then said about Australia *you've got to fight for independence here which is good, I like it*, lines 403 to which the teacher replied, lines 404, 406 - 408:

Teacher: *I think there's probably still some connection, I think we all know there are some people who get jobs and there are little groups who seem to know what's going on and know how to answer and others that don't...*

There was a small discussion on the changing face of panels and then the teacher said that from her experience and work in the area of training panellists to consider the needs of non-English speaking background applicants, she had found that panellists were biased lines 415 - 419:

Teacher: *yeah, quite a few things, underlying it all seems to be this feeling about what is someone who could fit in, and that might even be subconscious and they need to become aware that they've got to discard that and be objective...people have mentioned eye contact, they have mentioned a lot of people just giving very short answers, just saying yes or no, not really expanding...*

When given the opportunity to really explore the role of context in the wordings, the teacher elected to interpret the misunderstandings as cross-cultural rather than linguistic, lines 436-470:

Teacher: *mostly what the people on the panels in workshops have said to us is that they often recognise that people haven't really understood the intention of their question... something you brought up B... , that they understand the words perfectly well but not what they really want and then they get into a bind because they think oh EEO I can't I can't give more information to this person than that person ,usually they come around to seeing that that's a bit silly, the important thing is that people understand the question ,you don't give them the answer but you make*

- sure that they understand the question ,then it's a fair system ,and then they come up with the ...*
- G: *what's the problem then ,is the problem in the wording of the question or how you say it*
- Teacher: *let's just remember do you remember we watched Joanna the Polish woman going for an interview and just a simple example they said to her **Oh how do you like Australia** and she went on and on and on and on and she liked the beach....*
- S: *and she liked the beach....*
- Teacher: *she thought ,well she thought it was an important part of the interview and for them it was to relax her, so a panel should just recognise that they should maybe, they should say **Oh you know, just to settle you in now, can you tell us about a bit about your impressions of Australia** do you remember they also asked here **Why do you want towhat do you know about the company** she very honestly said **“Well not very much I don't know very much about your company, food processing is the same everywhere”***
- G: *...(....)*
- Teacher: *well I think it's related to not understanding what in this particular interview, in Australia ,that question means so in some ways it's cultural*
- G: *so are you saying that an Australian or an English speaker would always get that question right*
- Teacher: *no sometimes Australian born people don't get it right either, so probably in some ways it's about knowing that sub-culture of the public service as well as the culture of Australia ok ...what I'll do now is I'll give you out....these are some of the comments....we asked people in some of our workshops to do exactly what you just did and these were mostly EEO coordinators and people who sit on panels and staff development people... they came up with loads of things that you've come up with actually have a quick look at them see if there's anything you find surprising or different*

Part of the cultural behaviour, realised linguistically in the interview is, *not* to tell the applicant that the first question is a 'settler'. Knowing the context and what that question means in that context through its linguistic realisation is the key to understanding the implied meaning. This interpretation of misunderstanding in the interview is consonant with the teacher's view on language and communication and it is supported throughout the lesson by a distinct focus on the strategic management of the interview rather than on the language of the interview. This is further supported by advice given by the teacher such as, *use concise , factual (275) and so if somebody asks*

*you a difficult question, take time take time to think (288 & 290, research of company, (295) so rehearse with a tape (301). Another example is in line 152 where one of the students has suggested *be direct* and the teacher has replied, *be concise and direct* yes.....yet with no examples given of how this is to be achieved linguistically.*

There was also quite a lot of discussion on paralinguistic features of the interview when the class debated the use of hand gestures. This is similar to the teacher in class 1, where paralinguistic gestures are referred to quite explicitly, but not the language used. In the discussion about the use or overuse of hand movements, lines 184-185, the teacher says *right so you are saying if you might annoy them or something or it's a risk, so your advice may be be aware that body language can risk negative.....*

There were very few direct references to wordings used by applicants and their contextual meanings. One which was discussed was the use of the word 'I think' by the applicant in the video. The exchange on the use of the word went as follows, lines 528-534:

- D: *and also this word "I think" ..(...)you say "I am" you know "I will" ..(...) uncertain..(...) you say "I am" you don't say "I think"*
- G: *what do you answer in that case*
- D: *well in that case yes in that case it could apply you say "I think I am doing very well, I got that experience" but "I think" it doesn't give too much confidence to the panel*
- Teacher: *not it was very tentative wasn't it , any other points before you get on to how he met the criteria*

There was some discussion about appropriate comments, 537-538.

- C: *certainly there are things....you may not tell lies but there are things you leave out like your desire to go back to France or to transfer ...*

Where the teacher referred explicitly to the contextual meanings of the questions, she explained them from the appropriate cross-cultural behaviour point of view rather than how the context of such questions and wordings created their meaning. She directed the elicitation to extract a strategic response, line 546, *he could have framed it positively, what could he have said instead of saying Oh I know nothing.....*

The students discussed how the learner managed the answers strategically. lines 540-555:

Teacher: *when they asked him “what do you know about the Regent”...and again there’s an implied meaning in that question isn’t there, what’s the implied question in a question that asks you “What do you know about...?”....so it’s to show your knowledge of the research, do you think it’s also, do you think to show how you might match as wellI noticed that he said “I know nothing” which is incredibly categorical but then he went on say “ I visited the hotel.”.. so he could have said something, he could have framed it positively , what could he have said instead of saying **Oh I know nothing***

Students answering

Teacher: *it was a funny question “what will you do if you don’t get the job”....(....) one of the rules of the game is show you are very interested in working for us.....any other points you want to make then...I noticed some funny things I felt things like D....mentioned, rather limited use of vocabulary saying **I think I think...***

G: *listening to him he was just translating his French....*

From a linguistic perspective, the teacher could have addressed the issue of the wording “*I think*” as modality. The students in the class were clearly conscious of the use of the word and were unable to capitalise on its use as an effective tool to indicate modesty on the part of the applicant. They finished up by saying that the applicant should have used *I am*, or *I will*, which would give a completely different interpersonal meaning to the response.

The discussion continued with extensive analysis of the use of the wording ‘*I think*’ as follows, lines 559-586:

D: ***je pense**.....that’s politeness when they say **Je pense**.....so that’s why they translate to the English but I mean that’s not acceptable here, he’s going for a managerial position*

G: *that’s very French*

Teacher: *that’s one of those examples I think we talked about them once where phrases worked appropriately in one language and culture and you translate them directly and they have a different effect*

Selim: *what does that word have to do with management*

- D: *I mean not use “**I think**” because he’s going for a top position he’s going for a managerial position so he should be aware already that his French translation wouldn’t be the same to the English ...you have to adapt yourselves to the high techniques rules of the English language*
- Teacher: *and would it be appropriate in French to say **Je Pense** in that situation would it have a different effect*
- D: *it would be quite alright hey George*
- M: *I think you could use it in English too though but you would use it in a way you could say **I think this is really important** or*
- D: *or what do you think.*
- M: *it sort of softens*
- D: *knowing that when you say **I think I’m doing very well** it is something that you are giving to them you are selling yourself you can’t be doubtful you’ve got to say **I know***
- Teacher: ***I think**, so it has a different impact than it would in English*
- M: *it’s more tentative in English*
- G: *so you think '**I think**' should be supported when you say '**I think**' in English it has to be supported*
- Teacher: *it probably needs **I really think that.....I really think that....***
- Researcher: *it’s modality yeah*

The teacher appeared reluctant to capitalise on the ability of the students to conceptualise metalinguistically about the use of the words '**I think**'. They were seeking to understand the register implications of using the wordings, and could have been supported in how to interpret the interpersonal meaning conveyed by the possibility conveyed by '**I think**' rather than the certainty. '**I think**' would in fact be a very effective device to signal deference to the panel. The teacher did however give a good model of how to strengthen the belief of the speaker without losing the interpersonal effect, in saying '**I really think that.....**'.

There was some analysis of the actual language used in a follow up task where short authentic dialogues were worked on (see appendix 4) but in the main students were directed to focus on the content value of the response rather than on the contextual use of language. The teacher introduced the activity as follows, lines 614-622:

- Teacher: *I have got six interactions, I want you to look at them and discuss them in pairs or in small groups if you like and think about what’s going on and what’s going wrong in these interactions....the grammar is fine there’s nothing wrong with the grammar and yet there’s something going wrong*

between the panel and the applicant and try and identify what's happening, think about the advice you might give to this person to help them to answer more appropriately they're all separate they are not one nice long interview unfortunately they're six separate interactions from six separate interviews so you've got to treat each one independently

Traditional grammar is called upon at this stage to emphasise that meaning is in fact taking place at another level, ie the text level, which is situated in a social and cultural context. The mistakes made by the learners in the examples given indicate very strongly that their interpretation of meaning is based at the sentence and word level and definitely not at the text level.

This activity did have the potential to explore lexico-grammatical choices which may cause problems for non-native speakers, eg. "*Can you tell us*" was interpreted by the interviewee as "*can you*" ie. *have you got the ability*. There was also discussion on the use of "*of course*" by non-native speakers and the intent which that carries in Australian English. "*What's your name, D..... Can you spell it, of course*". Learners related similar incidents, eg. "*Do you think you can handle the job?*" was interpreted by the student as "*Do you have the ability?*"

The teacher very clearly defined the boundaries of the classroom discourse. She made it very clear that she was focussing on the genre of the interview, and analysing the contextual issues (although not a lot of language, ie. specific lexico-grammatical realisations) around a particular spoken genre. Examples of this framing are, line 79: *Let's try and get down to what these rules are in the NSW Public Service*. From this point of view, her comments about the significance of text-level ability and its importance for high level speakers of English are consistent with her statements in the responses to the questionnaire. Her ratings were as follows:

Question 1	(1= most important) (10 = least important)	Teacher 2
(a)	Knowledge and control of technical vocab	6
(b)	knowledge and control of idiomatic Australian English	7
(c)	control of grammatical forms, eg tenses, word order, prepositions, clause formation etc	4
(d)	control of pronunciation stress, intonation ie general intelligibility	5
(e)	control of discourse skills ie turn taking, feedback, clarification etc <i>I feel that awareness of linguistic and cultural differences is essential to control of discourse, eg turn taking roles and strategies may be different across languages and cultures. In order to control topic, hold ground it is essential to understand how behaviours might differ across languages and speech communities.</i>	2(i)
(f)	knowledge of cross cultural linguistic differences and consequences of these between L1 and English	2
(g)	knowledge and control of spec language tasks or texts ie contextual skills	1
(h)	other <i>Knowledge of appropriate roles, responsibilities, relationships in various workplace speech activities, eg what is my role at a meeting, how should I address others, what should I say, how much should I say and at what level of deference solidarity , I'd weight this I as I see it as going hand in hand with knowledge of specific texts, Difficulties in inferring the intention, force of what is said & done dealing with the ambiguity which is part and parcel of cross cultural communication</i>	1-3 (ii)

Examples of the contextual focus of the teacher were illustrated through the focus of the lesson on a particular text type, ie the job interview. At the same time however, this focus was on the communication rules, contextual skills, and a distinct behavioural dimension, eg. *be honest, sell yourself, express interest* etc. rather than on the linguistic realisations and the lexico-grammatical choices of this context. A further example of this is when giving instructions to the class to do the task of evaluating the applicant, the teacher said the following, lines 507-513:

Teacher: *what I want you to do is listen to the applicant and then to think about the rules of the interview that this person breaks we've got all the rules there, so observe them critically and imagine that you were one of the panellists then if you could rate them, these are the essentials and the desirables that you developed last week and just make comments as you're watching them so that at the end you can decide how this person compares with Bernadette and we will be watching one or two others as well*

The focus of the teacher is very clearly on the cross-cultural rules of the interview and this approach is particularly interesting in relation to current and past theoretical

developments on language proficiency and the link with *AMES (NSW)* organisational policy. This is because of the fact that the extra-linguistic or paralinguistic dimension of communication has not really been accounted for in assessment scales, and cross-cultural communication factors have never played a major part in assessment measures in general nor in the *AMEP*.

An attempt is made in more recent communicative tests to incorporate sociolinguistic appropriacy, under such titles as *Appropriateness* with descriptors saying at the upper level of the *Associated Examining Board Test in English for Educational Purposes (TEEP Test)* :*Almost no errors in the socio-cultural conventions of language; errors not significant enough to be likely to cause social misunderstanding* (Weir, 1990:147).

However, there is no mention of interlocutor variables, such as gender, attitudes to non-English speakers nor cross-cultural inferencing errors, with which the teacher of class two is evidently very concerned. She is correct in seeing these factors as major workplace barriers as do the teachers of the other three classes, because they have rated significantly in comments by supervisors and learners in research question one. Yet this 'view' of communication as outlined by her, is not aligned with a theory on language proficiency or language proficiency as object of assessment as such.

Although a great deal has been documented about cross-cultural communication by Gumperz, Jupp and Roberts (1979) as detailed in Nemetz Robinson (1985) and others, this view of language and or communication places the measurement of proficiency on the interactive nature of the exchange and places the responsibility of the success of a meaning exchange on both participants and particularly the native speaker, rather on the 'language' of the person being assessed. The incorporation of pragmatics, *which governs both context-dependent aspects of language structure and principles of language usage and understanding that have nothing or little to do with linguistic structure*, (Levinson, 1983) has impacted on the teaching of many teachers in the organisation.

The approach by the teacher through a focus on the likely rules which govern such an exchange rather than through an analysis of how the linguistic choices made by native and non-native speakers might create interpersonal and ideational differences is evident in this lesson and is representative of pre-systemic functional grammar approaches to language teaching. The mention of traditional ESL approaches and materials which begin with the situation (in this case, the interview) and seek to explain the rules and norms around the situation but neglect the language which is the embodiment of the situation, as pointed out by Slade (1986), is well illustrated here.

This approach, Slade (ibid.) argues, fails to draw the links for learners between the linguistic choices and the ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings which are realised through these choices in particular contexts. The problem for teachers who use this approach is that despite the social desirability of native speakers 'changing the rules' or 'using clearer questions in interviews' the language which constructs the reality of the interview is unlikely to be adapted significantly by native speakers. This is because, like all situational contexts, it inherently reflects the social and cultural conventions and ideologies which surround the interview (Halliday, 1978).

When given the transcript of her lesson and questioned about whether or not her approach had changed since the introduction of the *English in the Workplace Competency Framework* and the influence of systemic-functional grammar, the teacher of class two said she was unaware of the exact content of the framework. *I hardly know anything about the framework..* There is a division between those teachers in AMES who follow the school of 'pragmatics' and those who adhere to systemic functional grammar approaches to language teaching and assessment. By her comments on the competency framework the teacher of this class reflects that tension and difference of approach. Again, this belief is evident in her metalanguage.

She is well aware of the need to be contextually relevant as her choice of text relates to a workplace need of the learners. However, as we will see in research question three, her students did have a considerable number of other linguistic needs, identified by themselves and their supervisors which were not addressed in the course. Her focus on strategic management of the interview is supported by statements like *be precise, be honest, sell yourself*, ie strategic skills, as outlined above.

The above analysis reveals how this teacher's approach is embedded in recent language teaching theories and approaches, organisational and international, and how her beliefs about what language or communication is, are reflected in her classroom practice. Equally her metalanguage is actively concerned with cross-cultural communication 'approaches', some communicative terminology and some relating to text level abilities.

5.3.4. Classroom 3, Teacher 3, Public Sector Service Blacktown

The overall aims of the class were (as listed by the teacher in the initial course proposal):

1. *To improve oral communication in the workplace.*
2. *To improve written skills.*

3. *To develop awareness of self-directed learning styles and strategies.*
4. *To gain confidence and assertiveness in approaching communication tasks.*

The course objectives were:

1. *To improve pronunciation of English.*

- *To develop strategies for dealing with pronunciation related communication difficulties.*
- *To develop awareness of basic English stress, rhythm and intonation features.*
- *To practice pronunciation through exercises and chants; examples of words and phrases brought to class by students and patterns arising naturally during the course of teaching.*

2. *To develop an understanding of Australian idiom and culture.*

- *To develop strategies for understanding different Australian accents.*
- *To listen to a range of accents and age groups*
- *To improve understanding of jargon and idioms of Australia.*
- *To increase awareness of topics in Australian conversation and the features of casual conversation.*
- *To develop an awareness of the issues related to cross cultural communication.*

3. *To develop strategies for communicating effectively with clients and staff.*

- *To develop strategies for opening and closing conversations; asking for and giving information; giving feedback; asking for clarification and dealing with aggression.*
- *To apply these strategies in a range of simulated workplace situations.*
- *To develop telephone techniques.*
- *To develop interview techniques.*
- *To write statements on behalf of clients*
- *To develop a confident and assertive approach to these tasks.”*

Assessment and evaluation were mentioned briefly in the initial proposal as follows:

“The course outline is based on the needs of course participants with input from the supervisors and DSS training staff.

The assessment procedure will be a continual process within the classroom by the teacher, together with students who will be encouraged to monitor their progress.

Evaluation of the program by the teacher, students and appropriate workplace personnel will be on-going”

5.3.4.a Description of lesson for classroom visit no 1 on 9.12.91

The teacher informed the learners that the purpose of the class observed was to do a holiday activity (the class was coming up to the Christmas break) "*to develop your awareness of Australian culture*". It appears that the aim of the lesson was to address one of the perennial issues involved in learning a second language, ie. cultural

misunderstandings, value differences and how 'to understand and use idioms and colloquialisms'.

The teacher introduced the notion of 'cultural bumps'. She explained this by saying "*a cultural bump occurs when an individual from one culture finds himself or herself in a difficult, strange or uncomfortable situation interacting with persons of a different culture, this will include misunderstandings that occur such as polite/impolite behaviour, correct/incorrect and uncomfortable moments in social interaction*" (Lines 82-86). This discussion was followed by a look at a poem by C. J. Dennis which was full of idiomatic expressions. The learners then moved on to an activity where they matched a list of idiomatic expressions with paraphrased meanings. After this they moved onto 'problem-solving' where they discussed the problem of 'discretionary benefits' (related to their work in the DSS), see appendix 4.

The underlying aim of the activity was to explore strategies which they could use in dealing with communication breakdowns while talking to their clients and strategies which they could use in communication with clients to terminate conversations, or be more assertive about departmental policy and procedures. The teacher was aiming at developing a win/win notion about language behaviour with clients.

5.3.4.b Analysis of teaching approach

The selection of teaching activities during this lesson, was a combination of approaches to teaching English as a second language in the workplace. The first activity which was aimed at raising awareness of Australian cultural values and customs was going to be achieved through the students reading several 'classical' Australian books. These included titles such as *My Place* by Sally Morgan, *For the Term of His Natural Life* by Marcus Clark, *Songlines* by Bruce Chatwin, *Bring Larks and Heroes* by T. Kennealy and so on. The purpose of the activity was introduced as follows, lines 77-153, excluding 92-103:

Teacher: *ok Prava would you like to just read what (...)*

S *Australian Literature.*

Teacher: *Read some Australian literature ...(...) and complete the following information author, title, level of English, subject matter, cultural information, cultural bumps tell us about the cultural bumps which you have experienced a cultural bump occurs when an individual from one culture finds himself or herself in a difficult, strange or uncomfortable situation interacting with persons of a different culture this will include*

misunderstandings that occur such as polite/impolite behaviour, correct/ incorrect and uncomfortable moments in social interaction when a cultural bump occurs it occurs when

M (student arriving late) *you couldn't get through the security*

S *yes that is right*

Teacher: *do you understand that ,have you ever felt a culture bump*

S *no response but students arriving late all the time*

Teacher: *there you go we are just looking at some ideas of things that you can do over the holidays if you want to to help you with to develop your cultural awareness of Australian culture there's three different tasks there's one that's to do with reading an Australian literature of some kind the next one is to do with observing when you feel some discomfort to do with cultural differences and the third one is just an inquiry where you think of some questions that you've got about Australian culture that you want to know more about and you talk to someone about it so depending on how much time, motivation whatever these are ways that can help you and maybe even if you don't get time to do some now things you can do we were just going through it we've talked about culture bumps and I'm just trying to think of an example of when you feel a culture bump can anyone think of one*

S *maybe if you are in a situation you are in a group and then you can't understand what they are talking about maybe that's a culture bump and then you repeat and uncomfortable*

Teacher: *I'm not quite sure*

S *like you don't know what they are talking about they have a word that sometimes you don't understand no*

Teacher: *it's that could be it's not exactly what I imagine as a culture bump*

S *oh*

Teacher: *that's more to do with the language not understanding a word*

S *I see*

Teacher: *but these are things to do with not understanding the culture*

S *I see*

Teacher: *just having a different way of seeing things*

S *I'm thinking of a marriage day in (our culture...) I try.....we have a big difference still that's going on you know our country is not like this freedom it's you can't go and get one boy and our mom and dad said they want we can't manage like that (....) seventy percent of people still waiting for their mom and dad looking for a girl or boy when they are about 20, 21 years of a minimum um up to the age of maybe 30 you*

know for the guys and 25, 26 for the girls specially working girls waiting for a suitable man they are (...) specially doctor or engineer they want to marry a doctor or engineer so they parents are usually looking for a guy with a horoscope you know a horoscope when you don't want your parents (...) a horoscope they just match the horoscope ninety percent of marriages still going the same way (...) I never talk about our way here because I don't want to people don't understand they just laughing at us and make us more irritation so I never talk because I don't want to because they I don't want to blame them but that's understandable they can't understand the way our way I understand their way because I am living here I understand Australian way of life but I can't explain them our way of life to them you know just verbally if they come in (to our country) if they have been living like us for two years they understand more than what ever we say to them especially when they talk um I left this guy you know um my first boyfriend ah you know he's my third boyfriend you know like that um what people

Teacher (.....)

S *yeah*

Teacher: *uhm that's what I said it is confidential and don't misunderstand me but there is a cultural bump*

M *you are right*

The teacher first introduced the rationale for reading some Australian literature and then went on to explore what she was hoping to achieve through the literature and that was an awareness of 'a cultural bump'. This was done inductively, ie the teacher asked if anyone could explain what *she* meant by a cultural bump and the first student who attempted this, got it wrong. The second student understood the intention when she related information about marriage in her country.

The use of literature to raise cultural awareness is an interesting one and it is not typical of content selection in English in the workplace classes. This class was the teacher's first high level spoken group and as students had indicated fairly strongly that they 'would be interested to know more about idiomatic expressions and other colloquial terms and the Australian culture' she felt that by reading Australian literature this could be achieved.

This indicates an interesting interpretation by the teacher of the students' perspectives on their language proficiency needs . The students dealt extensively with the public

and mentioned 'accent', both theirs and the Australian as creating difficulties for them, and the need to understand idiomatic or colloquial English. The teacher's response to this was to give them literature and lists of idioms from poetry (C. J. Dennis) to address this kind of language.

The idiomatic expressions were dealt with in a decontextualised way. The following extract from the class transcript reveals how neither context, nor participants, nor social purpose were addressed via the idioms. Equally, the selection of idioms were not necessarily work-based and some were somewhat anachronistic, lines 261-325:

- Teacher: *do you want to get out the idioms from last week unfortunately I haven't got a spare copy if you didn't get a chance to do it so we might just go through it and mark it and then we'll have a listen to um the tape so the first one*
- S *a balmy goat*
- Teacher: *what's the first one*
- S *a silly billy*
- S *an old man*
- Teacher: *yes silly old man or a mad old man*
- S *balmy goat here that means a silly lady*
- Teacher: *not a lady it's usually a man (great mirth)*
- M *actually I've never heard it*
- Teacher: *it's pretty unusual this is more from early this century it's historical ,the next one*
- S *a sexy woman a tart a girl or a woman sometimes it can be derogatory too*
- M *she's a tart like sort of a prostitute really*
- S *yes I remember when I was in Si.....hey had this big ad on the paper you can pick up your tarts in the lobby and this is like a hotel and it caused a big uproar because there's this little girl holding a tart meaning from the delicatessen S.....is a very straight country part of this prim and proper women said it wasn't a good thing to put this one big spread in the newspaper Pick up our tarts in the lobby*
- M *it had another meaning*
- S *yes like pick up a prostitute*
- Teacher: *the next one a bloke*
- S *a man*
- Teacher: *yes but you you hear that one he's a nice bloke the next one a bunch of crooks*

S *a crowd of crooks*

Teacher: *a crowd of crooks does anyone know what that is what did you have*

S *ruffians*

S *tough people*

S *dishonest person*

Teacher: *yes dishonest and people who get involved in illegal activities*

M *there's another one if you say your back is crook*

Teacher: *instead of saying they are a crowd of crooks you might say they are a bunch of crooks you might go to a shop and they charge you too much and you'd say ah they are a bunch of crooks as well like they are trying to take something from you literally someone doing something dishonest or illegal thieves I think the next one*

S *....nark*

Teacher: *an informer I think that's now if you had police informers who might join a gang of crooks and they are called narks it can also mean narcotics a narcotics agent now next one Gerry*

S *brute, selfish*

Teacher: *not selfish no*

S *rough*

Teacher: *rough yes*

S *bully*

Teacher: *bully more rough and strong like the perfume*

S *yes there is a perfume named Brut*

Teacher: *masculine the next one*

S *a gospel code*

Teacher: *a gospel code that is one you won't hear now*

S *a priest*

Teacher: *a priest yes*

S *can it be clergymen too*

Teacher: *yes and the next one York*

S *a (...)*

Teacher: *an idiot yes and the next one*

S *a cobber*

Teacher: *what is it*

S *a cobber*

S *a mate*

Teacher: *a mate yes*

S *that's what they told me the Australian people a mate*

Teacher: *a cobber's your mate or friend and the next one*

S *the cops police*

These idioms were looked at in list fashion, the next one, the next one, the next and there was no or little discussion about the contexts in which they would be used.

The following activity was one which was marginally more contextualised in that there were three or four lines of a conversation and students were asked to predict finishing lines for them, which included a selection of phrasal verbs or commonly used expressions.

The approach used in this activity was one typical of the communicative paradigm in that there was no modelling of text, no discussion of the context or actual lexicogrammatical choices of exchanges; but rather there was a focus on guessing, predicting, focusing on meaning rather than on form, lines 430-452

Teacher: *so did you have a chance to look at the next part what I thought might be good for you to do is just predict how somebody could finish those conversations so maybe with the person next to you you could just go through them and predict something that fits in with the conversation and then we'll listen to the idiomatic language so with the person next to you just have a guess and make a good*

S *going to the snow this weekend you lucky things hope you get lots of snow yeah we are what (unintelligible suggestions) going to the snow this weekend you lucky things hope you get lots of snow yeah we are having a good time what would be the 'Aussie Talk 'we're*

M *I think it's an expression which means we are hoping that it will happen we're hoping that it will*

S *Aussie Talk it's hard*

Teacher: *if you write it in normal English that's fine and then you will hear it later just what you can think of ...try and do it without looking at it*

S *ah*

Teacher: *because then you will get more easily into the meaning*

student's discussing

Teacher: *what I want you to do is just try and do it and use your own natural (...)*

S (...)

Teacher: *that's alright*

discussion

Teacher: *don't look at the back try and use your own predictions you'd use*

S *I'm cheating*

There were several attempts by the students to have the language modelled, eg *what would be the Aussie Talk*, and *Aussie Talk, it's hard*, but the teacher persisted with the approach of having the learners guess the meaning, *predict something that fits into the meaning, just try and make a guess, try and do it without looking at it (the answers), because then you will get more easily into the meaning, try and do it and use your own natural, don't look at the back, try and use your own predictions you'd use.....* etcetera.

The following activity undertaken by the class was a look at problem solving and the strategic management of client enquiries in the workplace. It appears that the teacher was focusing very heavily on the procedural strategies with the officers rather than on the language. Part of her introduction to the activity went as follows, lines 592-601:

Teacher: *about details that you normally get with every phone call about the client who's speaking and what the call is so just from what you were talking about your ways of dealing with it I wrote down the details that you should always make sure are clear or establish the identity of the caller, the purpose of the call and decide what the appropriate action is and do not get distracted by irrelevant things when you haven't got all those things all that information and giving the client feedback that you've let him know that you've understood his needs is important that will help it run smoothly and clarifying what's not there the one that seemed the most difficult to deal with is the one that R.....brought up which is um the one about the pensioner was he a pensioner who rang up and*

The entire focus of her teaching input was to do with the procedural execution of the job rather than the language the students may use to manage the calls better. As with the teacher of class one, the underlying aim was to achieve a win/win conversational exchange as per the Gubbay and Coghill (1987) model. This was outlined in the teacher's setting up of the task which was answered by one of the students, lines 616-629:

S *ok this is the problem when a client rang us saying why is it that she doesn't receive as much as the other is receiving so the question is um (1) what does the client want and the client wanted her pay to be the same as someone who has got the same circumstances as her and number (2) is what does the clerk want and I think the clerk wants to just cut the conversation by saying that that's the last thing I can pay*

and I can't help you more than that (3) was the was the clerk assertive, aggressive or non-assertive and I said that the clerk is non assertive because she don't want to elaborate any more on the matter and that she didn't get the detailed information regarding the conversation so (4) was the client happy at the end of the conversation the client's not happy because they didn't get to any detailed or she didn't get an answer (5) was the clerk happy at the end of the conversation no because she wasn't able to resolve the issue (6) was the supervisor happy at the end of the conversation no 'cos they talked for quite a while and that things are hanging or there are so many things that have to be done

Questions one and two aimed to clarify the purpose of the call, but the remaining questions focused very heavily on the achievement of win/win outcomes and on the behavioural dimension of language behaviour, ie being assertive, non-assertive or aggressive.

The remaining questions focused on the strategic management of conversation as follows, lines 632-639:

S *no 7 what did the supervisor want the supervisor want the clerk to cut the conversation short 8 where did the conversation break down the conversation break down when the clerk said she don't help she can't help more than that because that's your maximum entitlement without explaining*

Teacher: *uhum*

S *no 9 what's strategies could the clerk have used to avoid a breakdown for us the strategies is that the clerk must is to get more detailed information and to compare each detailed information on both cases,*

One of the supervisors even said that the learners didn't know how to terminate conversations (*lines 95-96 second supervisor's meeting*) and in the lesson this was not taken up by the teacher with specific language examples. The teacher did say at one stage, *the language can be, you can use language to say the truth in the way that you are allowed to as well* (*lines 751-752*) but again she did not give a model of how this could be done. There was a concluding discussion on strategies that could be used to satisfy the client, and the lesson was summarised by the teacher, saying line 825: *'so the main things that have come up so far is you can explain a general rule, not to get*

involved in privacy, what is it , don't breach privacy if it (the conversation) gets too long...

In summary then, the teacher's methodology comprised an eclectic mix of approaches, including the use of literature to assist learners to find out more about Australian culture, a communicative look at a list of decontextualised, anachronistic idiomatic expressions which would be unlikely to assist learners in their workplace context, and then a problem-solving look at the strategic management of handling client enquiries, focusing on the satisfactory resolution of exchanges on a win/win basis using behavioural indicators. These findings are consistent with the teacher's responses to question one of the questionnaire (see appendix 2) where she has rated (e) as the most important and (b) idiomatic English as the second most important skill.

Most important skill to have control of = 1
Least important skill to have control of = 10

Question 1	Teacher
(a) Knowledge and control of technical vocab	3
(b) knowledge and control of idiomatic Australian English	5
(c) control of grammatical forms, eg tenses, word order, prepositions, clause formation etc	2
(d) control of pronunciation stress, intonation ie general intelligibility	7
(e) control of discourse skills ie turn taking, feedback, clarification etc	3
(f) knowledge of cross cultural linguistic differences and consequences of these between L1 and English	1
(g) knowledge and control of specific language tasks or texts ie contextual skills	6
(h) other	4

The low rating of control of grammatical forms, (c) reflects the move away from grammar teaching during the communicative paradigm. Conversely, the high rating of the discourse skills (e) which I have suggested here really refers to strategic management, reflects the focus of the communicative paradigm on negotiated meaning. This teacher while attempting to focus on the texts of the workplace, appears not to rate this very highly (g) and as we have seen in the lesson, the problem-solving activity which focused on the workplace text (ie talking to clients) was only a small part of the day's lesson.

The teacher as an inexperienced workplace teacher, by not focusing that much on workplace texts, reflects expectations based on her response to question 2, where she rated *inability to do the linguistic task*, as the least likely barrier for non-English speakers in the workplace. This belief is borne out by the classroom practice, where the teacher obviously relies on a number of other approaches, ie the use of literature and idiomatic expressions, to develop language skills. However she does indicate in the supervisor's meeting some understanding of the contextual variables (ie as realised

through particular texts) when she says lines 217-228, *give them a good model...particular areas where people are making regular errors I'm quite happy to deal with that but it's really useful if you can give me the kind of form that they are doing it on, because if I don't have the context.....so that we can select what makes a good statement what makes a bad one and avoid doing things.....*

On reading the transcript of the lesson a while after the initial research has finished, and after the influence of the *English in the Workplace Competency Framework* and also after the teacher had completed a functional grammar course, the teacher stated that she had selected the literature activity because of the upcoming Christmas holidays. She said that *'the idioms and the use of the Sentimental Bloke were one-off activities'*. But she said she *'would use the Aussie Talk contextualised predictions again'*. She said however that *'now her teaching would be more explicit, she would give the students more of a structure to hang things on'*, she stated that she *'was more into communicative competence then, there would have been more coming from the teacher to the students'* now than at the time of the lesson.

The teacher also reflected the influence of the Gubbay and Coghill (1987) approach to conversational outcomes as shown in the activity which was devised for the learners on their client enquiries. This is similar to that used by the teacher of class 1. The metalanguage used by the teacher is based on the above theorists as well as the communicative paradigm including references to words like *predict, guess the meaning, use your own natural (words)* and so on.

The analysis of language features of exchanges (ie the client enquiry) which might be expected in a genre-based approach to teaching based on systemic functional grammar was not evident in this teacher's approach. There was also no discussion of the social purpose of such an exchange other than to discuss the informational exchange aspect of the client enquiry. Once again as identified by Slade (1986) the situation has been reduced to the vehicle for the particular strategic management of the exchanges as exemplified by the communicative paradigm. Language is not analysed as the embodiment of the particular context even though there are some fairly significant interpersonal outcomes dependent on the successful achievement of this exchange.

The eclectic mix of content, contradictory responses on the teacher questionnaire and post-transcript interview of the teacher as well as the lesson content and practices, indicate the kind of confusion in methodology which can result when teachers are inexperienced with a particular learner profile and when faced with the large number of competing theories which can be applied to teaching English as a second language.

The overall picture is one of a grab-bag of strategies and activities which no doubt result in improved language outcomes at the end of the course but which are particularly difficult to quantify, assess, and report on.

Other systemic problems are evident here as well which are not the fault of the teacher concerned. These include the lack of formal procedures to incorporate the needs of supervisors, and equally a lack of supervision by more experienced educational supervisors in the area of curriculum management. These issues are however not within the scope of this research and will not be addressed here.

5.3.5 Classroom 4, Teacher 4 Skillmax, Public Sector

The proposed course content as outlined by the teacher in the initial proposal is as follows:

- “• *the relationship between context and language*
- *a discussion of the nature of language with the development of a metalanguage to talk about language as technology*
- *a comparison of spoken and written language*
- *an overview of the writing process including preparation, drafting, editing and proof-reading*
- *English structure and spelling*
- *opportunities for practice and production of a variety of short and longer written texts especially those texts used in the workplace such as messages, memos, circulars, letters, short and long reports and submissions*
- *an investigation of the report genre to identify types of reports and their staging*
- *the opportunity to undertake an individual project within the participant's workplace generating the need for the presentation of a written report*

Desired outcomes of the course

- *the desired outcome of this course would be for the participants to be able to undertake a variety of written tasks in the workplace with confidence. In particular it is planned that the participants will be able to:*
- *select, prepare and organise ideas, information and analyses for presentation in written form*
- *use appropriate language*
- *use appropriate layout*
- *prepare a cohesive and coherent text*
- *use accurate sentence structure, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation*
- *use strategies for editing and proof-reading*
- *compensate for gaps in linguistic knowledge of English where necessary“*

As is evident above, “*it is proposed that the successful presentation of a report will be a means of assessing each participant’s progress and of evaluating the course.*” These measures were supported by those in the *Outcomes* where specific text abilities were outlined as measures.

5.3.5.a Description of lesson for classroom visit no 1 on 16.9.92

The teacher introduced the lesson by revisiting the lesson of the previous week saying “*Alright, now let's go back to last week...just as revision...I'd like you to reorder this exposition*’”. The learners worked on a group task reordering an exposition, (a text arguing a particular point) into the two parts of the thesis, ie. the position and preview and then the arguments into points and elaborations, (The Report of the Disadvantaged Schools Project - Metropolitan East Region, 1988). The teacher explored the social purpose of expositions and looked at the language features and stages of expositions. She compared these to recounts . The class then looked at an example of an exposition and worked through the language features and stages and layout of this exposition together. The learners did an activity where they sought to identify different aspects of the text, ie underlining the verbal processes and identifying the kinds of processes they were, eg material etc, identifying tenses, passive voice, conjunctive links, and so on. The entire lesson focused on the analysis of the texts in hand and discussion and activities all centred around the language of the text and those of other texts.

The teacher finished the lesson by suggesting that the learners examined the writing (ie. texts) that they had in their workplaces to discover what the genres were and the linguistic features. The learners were able to see immediately how the lesson related to their workplace situation although the text used was a child's text, see appendix 4.

5.3.5.b Analysis of teaching approach

The teacher introduced the lesson of the day to the students in terms of a clearly linguistic task, lines 82-88:

Teacher: *just as revision I'd like you to try and I've cut that up that exposition into lots of little pieces I've also cut up the labels I'd like you to put the exposition back into order and put the labels on the parts, you might need a reasonably clean space there are lots of little pieces of paper before we go any further I'm not sure that my cutting was very good so I might have cut off some of the words sorry about that the idea is to put it back into the right order with the right labels on*

(Note: labels of schematic stages, eg thesis etc)

It was clear that the learners were dealing with a fairly substantial amount of metalanguage both in their task and that the teacher was also using a great deal of metalanguage in relation to the written task, lines 124, 173, 180, 189, 197, 233, 236:

Teacher: *"In expositions....we're using a logical sequence...the preview is important because it gets the reader familiar with your (argument) logic....for the reiteration, you restate but you add something...language features focus on generic human and non-human participants...simple present is used the most.....the verb to be.....mental processes...those are the particular parts that come into this kind of writing..."*

The lesson was characterised by a sustained use of metalinguistic terms, related to functional grammar or genre-based teaching. This is consistent with the teacher's statements about her approach to teaching, especially her focus on the 'level of expression' which in terms of written language is realised through lexico-grammatical choices made by writers.

There was continual focus on the actual language used by the example text, as well as constant reference to metalinguistic terms relating to systemic functional grammar and their role in the text, eg. lines 224-229:

Teacher: *and the conjunction goes into the verb **this resulted in such and such** and sometimes we can go to the next step into the noun **the result of this** ok so you are conscious of what has happened with the conjunction alright and material relations and mental processes we haven't done this yet we will do more of this next term but remember we talked about verbs what do verbs do...processes are verbs what do verbs do in the language any language?*

The teacher made explicit references to the language and encouraged the learners to locate specific language features and reflect on how the language was operating in the text and according to the text's purpose, eg. lines 663, 672-689, 707-714

Teacher: *'the little changes in the language...have we got ourselves a whole lot of action verbs, approximately eight, how many of the relational ones 'is' and 'are' the verb to be and the verb to have...how many of the mental*

verbs...this is where we get a difference between adult writing and children's' writing...'were killed' becomes 'three fatalities'... and action verbs become relational verbs... we have compressed the conjunction, these are the main reasons why 'equals 'because'...'another reason' came from 'because'...pushing the conjunctions into the noun....

She constantly used actual wordings throughout the lesson, lines 604-610:

Teacher: *yeah shall it is hard to argue with shall but it is easier to argue with should so should is softer would you mind writing a note for me could you write a note for me they are all the same they are all pretty much the same would you mind is probably more formal than could you alright so*

ss (...)

S *would you mind is*

The approach of the teacher's was characterised by what was referred to as 'directed elicitation' yet the aims were very different from those of the teacher of class 1.

Examples of directed elicitation are the following, lines 125-139:

Teacher: *what does the word sequence mean*

ss *put in order*

S *put in order ...temporal what do you think temporal sequencing means*

ss (...)

S *what's temporal got to do with*

ss *time*

S *time, thank you time, temporal's got to do with time if we put something in temporal sequencing we put them in the order of time*

ss *chronological order*

S *chronological order but in expositions we don't put things in chronological order necessarily we are using a logical order which is often different*

ss *can you give us an example*

S *ok what's an example alright let's say um did you have trouble getting to work on the train this morning Ramon was that your problem*

and lines 203-214:

Teacher: *when you talk generally in English which tense do you use*

ss (silence)

S *what tense is all through that*
 ss *present*
 S *which present huh something that happens every day*
 ss *simple present*
 S *the simple present is used the most I mean it is not the only tense that is*
 used you'll come to see others mixed up in it with adult writing but if you
 are going to talk about something generally in English that happens
 every day or should happen every day what are we going to be using
 ss *the simple present*
 S *the simple present ok we are getting into the present continuous the 'ing'*
 form

and line 229:

Teacher: *what do verbs do... processes are verbs what do verbs do in the language*
 any language what do verbs give us what do they talk about
 ss *they give us the action*

The above extract in particular is a very good example of the teacher's 'line of questioning' so to speak, where she elicits in ever increasingly refined clauses the precise kind of information she is seeking.

The text which was the subject of most of the lesson, was not a workplace text. For this teacher who would be well aware of the impact of contextual variables on language use, this point was raised as an issue. However, the generic type of text, ie expository, which was the focus of the lesson, did relate to the workplace language of the class as the task of the whole course was in fact to have students write a workplace report. The teacher did try and link what was covered in the lesson to the workplace by saying, lines 918-928:

Teacher: *I want you now that you've looked at those different language features*
 we've talked about them over the next few weeks look at writing that you
 have in your workplace and see what you can find out about it now what
 we are going to do after the break it is break time now what we are
 going to do after the break is look at Amy's Amy very courageously
 wrote an exposition for me in the form of a memo taking from that letter
 to the editor about the young criminals do you remember that letter
 about yeah and she actually what we started to do at the end of last week
 she wrote that and so I put it on overhead she didn't know any of this
 stuff when she wrote it so we are going to have a look and just she how

successful she was in what ways we can sort of rework what she has written given what we know now ok so that's what we'll do after the break ok

What this last extract indicates, and what the entire transcript is characterised by is a great deal of 'teacher talk'. This is antithetical to the communicative paradigm where the teacher was encouraged to talk as little as possible, and instead have the students do as many communicative activities with very little teacher intervention:

Much communicative methodological theory comes from the foreign language teaching context, where it is crucially important to 'get them talking" (Willing, 1988:118).

This approach in class 4 is the opposite to the communicative paradigm and is consistent with the moves towards more explicitness by teachers, more explicitness about language and a heavy focus on texts and the language of texts.

The teacher of class four did not refer to any metalanguage of the communicative era. There was no mention of strategic management of writing texts, although in her course proposal she does talk about 'The Writing Process' which looks at drafting, organising, revising etc. There was no mention of 'assertiveness', or the work of Gubbay and Coghill, and equally very little mention of cross-cultural issues in communication. She did however refer to the fact that different cultures may do things differently with language, but again this was at the linguistic, rather than at the communication level, lines 165-168:

Teacher: *exactly you don't think about it but you do have to think about it when you start doing it in a different language every language does this but every language does it differently that's one of the things so you've got to start thinking about when you start to do it in a different language*

There was no discussion like that in class 2, of the impact of language choices on the non-English speaking reader, but rather the emphasis was on how the choices changed the interpersonal groundrules of the text, lines 755-768:

Teacher: *oh I see what you mean it's because if you are putting forward it is one of those difficult things if you push it too far it can be a real it can be a negative thing I'm not sure about what Ai...is saying the reason is that we are trying if you are putting forward an argument an exposition to come to some kind of formal recommendation you want it to sound*

objective not like that it is you personally who is suggesting this that you've got to this reason because that is the way the world is alright and your evidence has supported it and it is possible and it is possible now if you say it is possible no one can come and say to you you are wrong can they it is possible means that all this evidence has proved that it is some objective statement whereas if you say I think or I believe someone can say well you are wrong and I don't agree can you see the difference

ss

yes

Teacher: *but it is much easier to argue it is that same thing about being able to argue you can argue with someone if they say I believe*

Discussion centres on the semiotics, and the ideational interpretation of the world realised by the language choices rather than on inferencing or misunderstanding intent and so on. All the teacher's references are firmly grounded in considering the contextual variables of an exchange, for example in lines 658-663:

Teacher: *you know having built a sort of relationship over a period of time um even my present boss who I've worked for for a couple of years I say all sorts of things to and know when she is being the boss and I've got to do as I'm told I mean you just know just because of little changes I know what I can argue with her about and what I can't argue about and it's got to do with the little changes in the language so that's just getting a bit*

...

The lesson transcript of the teacher of class four who has a distinctly different approach to the three other teachers reveals a completely different methodology to the ones we have considered above. There is far more teacher talk, extensive use of functional grammar metalanguage, very strict focus on the text and its contextual variables, very strict adherence to analysing the language features, definite deconstructions, modelling, explicit teaching and use of verbatim wordings. The direction of the lesson as with the others is established by the parameters of the teacher, whose activities and line of questioning structures the knowledge and information sought according to the focus of the teacher's view of language or language teaching.

When interviewed after reading the transcript of the lesson, the teacher said that the *English in the Workplace Competency Framework* (1992) was reflective of her approach.

5.3.6. Similarities and differences between teaching practices

The lessons of classes 1, 2, 3 and 4 had certain features in common. These were:

1. Parts of each of the lessons (in some cases the whole lesson) were based explicitly on workplace language contexts. Class 1 was considering the relationship between workers and supervisors and exploring interpersonal intonational choices which could be made in the workplace to achieve desired outcomes. This was modelled on the Gubbay & Coghill (1987) example using assertive, aggressive or non-assertive paralinguistic indicators. Class 2 addressed the strategic management of the Public Service job interview in Australia and focused on the unwritten (social and cultural) rules of the interview and the role of language in creating difficulties for speakers of non-English speaking background. A part of class 3 addressed the strategic management of client enquiries of students in the class, and focused on improving procedural management of these enquiries. Class 4 dealt with the language features of expositions which was related to the reports which needed to be written in the workplaces of the students. However the manner in which language needs of the workplace and classroom practice was realised, differed considerably (see above).

The explicit focus however of all four teachers on workplace-based content indicates a common awareness of the profiles of learners and a definite desire on the part of the teachers to be relevant to their pedagogical responsibilities in the workplace context. It could be argued then, in intent, the four workplace teachers in the study do try and satisfy aspects of the other stakeholder needs, even if this is executed according to their own styles and preferences.

2. In all lessons, spoken and written language teaching was approached from the basis of language as text. Class 1 was exploring a transactional exchange with the teacher making obvious but implicit changes in lexico-grammatical choices in realising different interpersonal meanings. Class 2 was concerned with the job interview as a whole text and explored primarily cross-cultural aspects of this genre. Class 3, while spending a considerable part of the lesson on decontextualised language teaching, ie the idioms, the remaining part of the lesson discussed and analysed the factual exchanges made by learners to clients in their workplace context. Class 4 focussed on the specific language features and structure of reports transferring from a non-work to a work context.

This finding is significant in relation to historical developments in language testing as this approach reflects a focus on *language in use*, ie the communicative paradigm, as opposed to periods of language testing where there was a focus on *language for language's sake*. A notable exception to the *language in use* emphasis was the teacher of class 3 and the activity on the idiomatic expressions.

This approach does infer however the availability of appropriate assessment tools and procedures to measure the outcomes of such lessons in text terms. Explicit assessment criteria at the text level could be inferred by each of the teachers but these were not formalised during the lesson or at the completion of the course except in the case of class four. The absence of text level assessment instruments is discussed in research question four as clearly there is a mismatch between the level at which teachers are teaching and the assessment instruments available to assess learning outcomes.

3. All four teachers framed the 'direction' and 'focus' of their lessons according to their stated stance on language and language proficiency. The teachers were able to articulate their beliefs and approaches to communication and these were clearly distinguishable in their methodologies. The one teacher (class 3) who was the least articulate about her theoretical approaches demonstrated a variety of methodological approaches. This could be attributed to her inexperience with such a high level class which she herself identified as a problem in her final interview. All the teachers' approaches were clearly evident in the activities they set up for the students, their questioning techniques or directed elicitation, their selection or non-selection of metalanguage, their course proposals and their content selection for the particular lesson observed, and in some cases for the entire course.

While a clear understanding of their approach as teachers appears on the surface to be a bonus, it is in fact fairly incontrovertible evidence of adherence to individualised methodologies which may take place over and above the needs of learners and supervisors. The findings suggest quite clearly, that teachers will appear to consult supervisors and learners at the beginning of the course and then proceed according to their own paradigms anyway. Research question 3 will explore the benefits or pitfalls of this finding.

The lessons of classes 1, 2, 3 and 4 differed in several ways. These differences were:

1. Classes 1, 2 and 3 focussed very much on the strategic management of linguistic situations, eg. class 1 on the strategic management of win/win conversations (with an

implicit focus on language features), class 2 on the strategic management of the NSW Public Sector Interview, and part of class 3 on the strategic management of interactions with clients. Class 4 however focussed very strongly on the linguistic management of reports. So while all four classes concentrated on particular spoken or written genres, eg. workplace requests, interviews, information exchanges and reports, these workplace texts were addressed methodologically in substantially different ways.

While all four teachers incorporated 'language as text' into their teaching practice, the teachers of classes 1, 2 and 3 who began with the 'task' as the primary vehicle, as opposed to the 'language' as did the teacher of class 4, differed considerably. This demonstrates the variation in outcome which the task-based approach to language teaching may generate. A task may be analysed from several different aspects as we have seen, with particular emphases placed on differing linguistic features associated with that task. However, if language is the starting point rather than the task, the lexico-grammatical features may be dealt with in a more consistent and explicit way.

2. The amount of teacher talk varied considerably between the different classes. Class 1 & 4 had the greatest amount of 'teacher talk', followed by class 2 and then class 3. In the follow up interview with the teachers all of them made comments about the amount of 'teacher talk'. The teacher of class 2 stated that she was relieved to see that there was not a great deal of teacher talk (obviously reflecting values of the communicative paradigm), the teacher of class 1 felt there was too much teacher talk (again reflecting the values of the communicative paradigm), the teacher of class 3 felt there hadn't been enough teacher talk because she realised she had not been very directive in her lesson, and the teacher of class 4 also felt that she had talked too much. When it was pointed out to her that explicit teaching would most probably result in more teacher talk she agreed.

Both classes where there was modelling of text, ie classes 1 & 4 had the greatest amount of teacher talk. These two classes also feature the greatest amount of metalanguage. In class 1 this was to do with being assertive, aggressive or non-assertive and body language, and in class 4 it was to do with systemic-functional grammar metalanguage.

3. The role of assessment varies in the four classes. In class 1, 2 & 3, assessment was not envisaged at the text level. Learners were taught at the text level, but there were no fixed tasks to assess their performance on these texts. Equally, the criteria, implicit or otherwise for assessment, were all at the level of the social rules (class 2),

the paralinguistic behavioural dimension (class 1) and the strategic management of client exchanges (class 3) and not on the whole text. It was only class 4 where the learners were required to produce a report, which was the focus of the course, to be assessed on. The fact that class 4 was a writing class where all the others were oracy, may have produced this phenomenon because of the absence, at an organisational level, of assessment tasks to measure oracy outcomes in a text-based format as well as the absence of communicative language tests and ones which focus on cross-cultural criteria or sociolinguistic appropriacy. Also, the assessment of written texts is relatively more developed because of the permanence of writing and the difficulties associated with capturing, analysing and describing spoken language.

5.3.7 Summary and conclusions

The above findings indicate that the teachers in the study taught in ways that were clearly informed by their own beliefs about language and language proficiency. The above findings also support the 'washback' relationship between the teachers' practices and historical developments in language and language assessment theory at an organisational and wider theoretical level.

When considering the layers of knowledge about language it is evident that while teachers have considerably more knowledge about language than the other stakeholders in this context, they are selective about aspects of their language knowledge which is reflected in their approaches. This selectivity may be represented as follows:

Hierarchy of knowledge about language

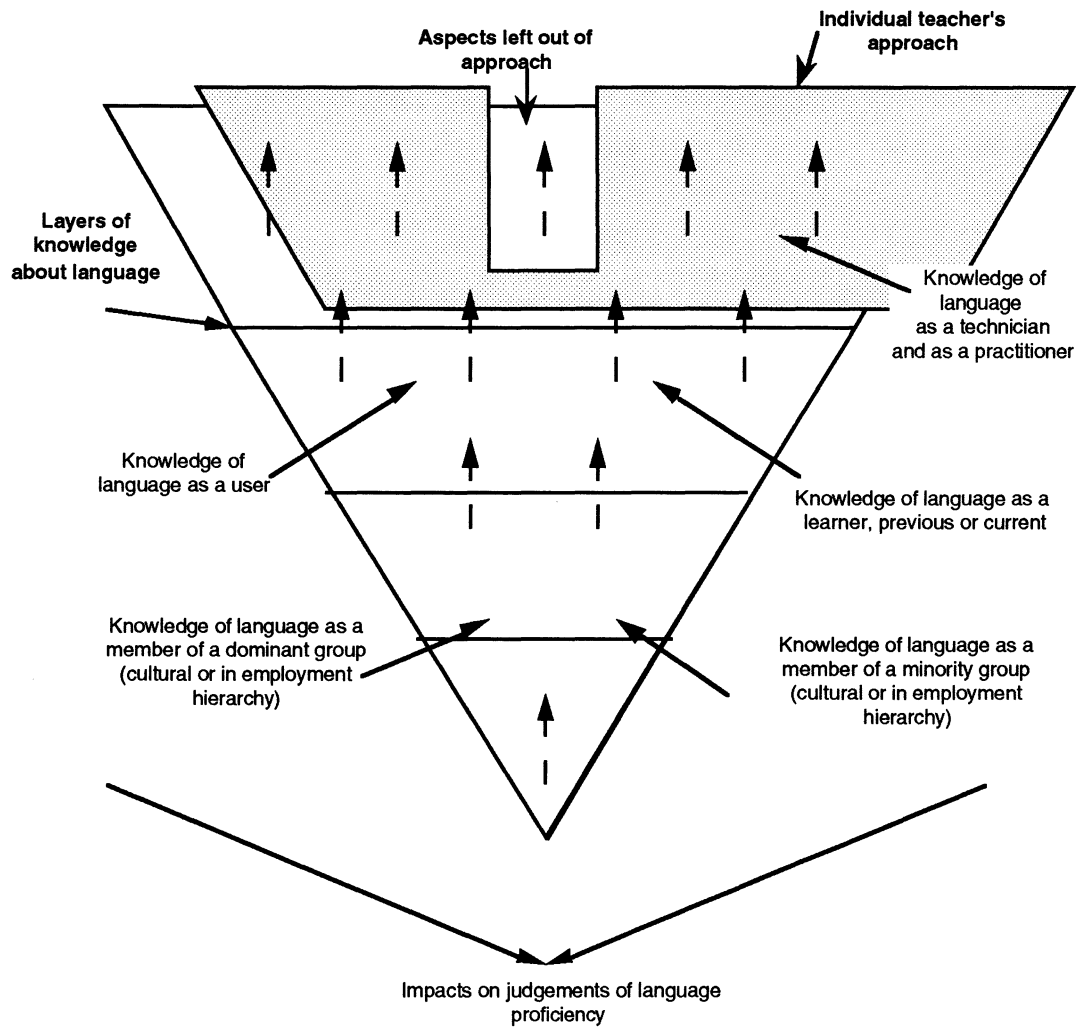


Diagram: 10 Hierarchy of knowledge about language and individual teacher's approach

The implications of these findings and their relationship to stakeholder needs in workplace classes will be discussed in research question 3.

5.4. Research Question 3

5.4.1 Introduction

Research question 3 reads: *What does a comparison of the methodological development of spoken and written language proficiency and the perspectives of teachers, learners and workplace supervisors reveal about the satisfaction of stakeholder needs?* In answering this question an analysis will be made of how the methodological practices of the four teachers in the study outlined above are related to the expectations of learners and employers.

The findings from research question one reveal that all four teachers agreed, on face value, on two and almost three (except for class 3) of the most essential skills required in the workplace for high level learners. These are the control of discourse skills, (all four teachers) learners' knowledge about cross-cultural communication factors (except for teacher 3) and learners' knowledge and control of specific language tasks or texts (except for teacher 3). Findings also support their agreement on three of the greatest barriers to workplace success for non-English speakers. These are 'lack of spoken negotiation techniques', and cross-cultural factors like the amount of formality required when addressing supervisors and cross-cultural inferencing problems.

Findings from question one also revealed that learners and supervisors express different concerns about language proficiency from those of teachers, including the amount of talk about 'general' proficiency, (Spolsky, 1985), (Brindley, 1989), the focus of supervisors on workplace culture issues, the focus of learners on their difficulties with idiomatic English and a difference in the significance of enabling skills especially accent and pronunciation by both learners and supervisors.

Findings from question two indicate that despite agreement by teachers on the primary factors and how they impact on non-English speakers in the workplace and despite apparent consensus on terminology relating to language and language teaching, their agreement has not ensured a consistent approach to the methodological practices in addressing workplace English language needs.

Where then, does what teachers are saying about language learning and what they are doing about language learning leave the supervisors and the learners who are expressing their needs differently? Where does the discord between the relative emphases of the stakeholder groups leave the supervisors and the learners? To what extent are supervisor needs a) understood and b) addressed through methodology, content and

language development focus in the workplace classroom? Equally, to what extent are learner needs a) understood and b) met by methodology, content and language development focus in the language classroom?

In answering this question, each of the classes has been analysed separately. A comparison was made between the individual responses of learners, their supervisor comments and the teacher's approach. What emerges is a complex picture of some met and some unmet demands. Each class will be discussed separately and an attempt made to distil the level of 'compromise' (Breen, 1990) in each of the classroom situations.

(a) Class 1

The five learners in class 1 emphasised problems with vocabulary, colloquialisms, casual conversation and pronunciation or expression. Supervisors, in the supervisor meeting and from the responses written by them in this workplace, were mostly concerned with the cultural behaviour of workers in the plant. These included their levels of 'non-assertiveness', the 'inappropriacy' of workers talking in their own language, smiling when embarrassed or not understanding and generally their inability to fit in because of social and cultural behaviour norms which differed from those expected.

The supervisors had a secondary focus of concern which was to do with workers managing specific texts in the workplace, such as reading flow charts and procedures, following instructions and giving instructions. Neither of the above concerns was articulated as significant by the learners. The teacher of this class whose primary approach as a language teacher could be described as '*eclectic with a communicative bent*' (response in teacher questionnaire) was in agreement with the supervisors in her awareness of text level needs and her approach to improving the confidence or assertiveness of the workers. She also saw idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms as significant and in that sense was in concurrence with the learners. She positioned herself very well 'in-between' the learners and the supervisors, accommodating both.

Her classroom practice observed in the study substantiated her stated approach to language learning and her final course outline addressed the supervisor concerns particularly well. This is shown by the overall framework of her course proposal which itemised four main areas of development, (1) Conversation at work with colleagues, (2) Telephone skills, (3) Flow charts, and (4) Flow charts - further language skills. The learners' primary concerns were incorporated at a secondary level by including their needs within these categories. For example, under 'Conversation at work with

colleagues' she included (a) *Understand idioms as they naturally arise in context* and (b) *Listen to a range of accents of English and Non-English background speakers*. However, most of the items relating to the text development focussed on the strategic management of these rather than on the language choices per se, in keeping with the preferred focus of the teacher. The following extract taken from the course proposal illustrates this point clearly:

Learners will:

- *reinforce and extend oral communication skills of other communication units, particularly strategies for seeking clarification, giving feedback, summarising and checking back for understanding*
- *develop telephone strategies in the following contexts: phoning in sick at work, phoning personnel, eg to make an appointment, taking a telephone message and telephoning a public service facility about personal concerns*
- *develop understanding of the anticipated features and associated language of these types of calls*
- *cope with unexpected responses, eg wrong number, person unavailable and so on.*

The teacher worked very hard and successfully to incorporate the needs of both the other stakeholders but still imprinted her own approach onto the needs of learners and supervisors. This 'bias' was evident again in the primary approach to the lesson in the study where strategic management, awareness of body language etc. again dominated proceedings as shown in research question 2. The one lesson although claimed as typical by the teacher, cannot be used to generalise about the entire course. It is possible that other lessons addressed pronunciation issues in greater depth. What is interesting to note however, is the penchant for the teacher's approach to seep through in writing the course proposal, in her conceptualising and in her teaching..

When measuring the success of the course and the evaluations by learners and supervisors, these two stakeholders were pleased with the outcomes of the course despite disparate views each held about communication problems in the workplace. Learners and supervisors both mentioned 'increased confidence' as outcomes, which takes us once again into the type 4 assessment category. Two learner evaluations which represent a typical view of responses read as follows (note the last line of the second evaluation):

Evaluation 1

After completing this course, I feel that I have made a lot of progress in applying my English at the workplace. I have built up my confidence of talking to my colleague and supervisor about the work and general events. The most important thing that I achieved after completing this course is I understand the culture of workplace and supervisors' need to priorities, and develop my appropriate politeness and assertiveness strategies in reporting problems.

Evaluation 2

I would like to say something about what I am thinking of our English course in the end of this period.

- (1) Communication language and social language are both important for us to work and live in Australia. So we need more to practice about our conversation skills.*
- (2) We should have to know and learn more about the Australia's culture and customs.*
- (3) The problem of workplace communication we can solve it better than before. But quite a lot of new machines and equipment will be changing in our production lines in future, so we should have to learn as well.*

In my opinion, I just wish our teachers when they do their English course projects in the workplace, make sure what things the students are needed.

What could be argued then, based on the findings above, is that an experienced teacher can achieve a stakeholder match by incorporating their needs and overlaying these with her own approach even though individual needs may remain unmet. This notion relates to the 'culture of compromise' (Breen, 1990). The danger arises however when a particular teacher's approach is so dominant (or noticeably absent) that it is unable to take account of these other needs.

(b) Class 2

The seven learners in class 2 mentioned a range of concerns when asked to talk about their language proficiency. Three of them spoke about pronunciation and accent as a major problem, three mentioned a lack of faith in their grammar, one in spelling and the other indicated concerns about legal terminology. Some also indicated difficulty with coping when talking in groups with Australian native speakers and others were aware of the fact that they used inappropriate wordings (or register) with native speakers.

Not all supervisors for this class returned their surveys, but for those who did, there were some interesting points. One learner who mentioned grammar as her problem, has her supervisor being concerned with this the least. She also indicated accent difficulties which her supervisor agreed with. The supervisor was very concerned with her lack of confidence and lack of assertiveness but the learner never mentioned this as a problem. The second student who mentioned accent and grammar as a problem was evaluated similarly by his supervisor. The third student said that he had no difficulties with his language in the workplace, but he saw his work problems arising from the fact that he had no opportunities to practice his written language. In the same breath however, he said that his supervisor said he had problems communicating orally. The

fourth student who cited grammar as her main problem was evaluated similarly by her supervisor. The fifth student who only indicated legal terminology as a problem was seen by her supervisor as having difficulties with Australian idioms, grammar and pronunciation.

For this group of learners there is some agreement on language proficiency issues amongst students and supervisors, but equally there are some mismatched perceptions by the stakeholders.

The teacher of class 2, differs considerably when conceptualising needs and perceptions of the learners and the supervisors. Her overriding approach to communication is concerned with cross-cultural aspects even though this is not mentioned as an issue by any of the students nor any of the supervisors. Speaking of the class in the study she stated in her course outline:

“All applicants speak and write English proficiently. Some were educated through the medium of English. Nevertheless cultural and linguistic factors contribute to their difficulties in achieving appropriate positions. Whilst these difficulties differ for individuals, they can be summarised as follows:

- *the need for a thorough understanding of the job seeking process in the Australian context, in particular the purpose of the interview and the intention of common questions*
- *the need to develop confidence and assertiveness to demonstrate professionalism and skills at interview and in the workplace*
- *the need to develop skills for writing effective resumes and cover letters*
- *the need to understand the cultural values and attitudes underlying the job selection process in Australia, to recognize how cultural differences may lead to ineffective interview behaviour*
- *the need to develop awareness of the differences between spoken and written English, and where appropriate to develop effective report writing skills*
- *the need to develop strategies for relating effectively with colleagues in the Australian workplace including awareness of cultural differences, strategies for understanding idiomatic speech*
- *the need to gain the confidence and motivation to apply for desired positions*

Recommendations

1. *the course cover the following areas:*

- *job seeking skills including researching a position writing effective resumes and cover letters interview skills*
- *cross cultural communication skills*
- *report writing*
- *idiomatic Australian speech*

2. *Where appropriate, organizations investigate the possibility of providing a work experience component for participants. Precedents for work experience*

provision range from full time placement in an appropriate branch to small professional projects or the opportunity to research goal position.

3. *Participating organizations nominate appropriate personnel to attend a cross cultural workshop conducted in conjunction with the Skillmax course. This workshop will focus on:*
 1. *Raising awareness to the difficulties experienced by applicants of different cultural background in the job seeking process.*
 2. *Developing strategies as interviewers to enable immigrant applicants to compete equally in the job selection process.*

Personnel who might benefit from the workshop include trainers, members of selection panels, personnel officers and supervisors.

The first two sentences of the course proposal appear to contradict each other, ie “*All applicants speak and write English proficiently. Some were educated through the medium of English. Nevertheless cultural and linguistic factors contribute to their difficulties in achieving appropriate positions.*” Clearly, if they spoke and wrote English proficiently, learners would not require an English class, nor would linguistic factors contribute to their difficulties in achieving appropriate positions. Equally, when analysing the needs of the learners and the comments by supervisors, and the total lack of mention of cross-cultural factors by these groups, it could be argued that in the case of class 2, an overriding agenda by the teacher has dominated her course design, which also included cross-cultural workshops for interview panellists.

The teacher is a very experienced one and evidently her knowledge of the educational background of the learners and their respective positions in the public service, would lead her to conclude, rightly, that all the learners in the class were 'underemployed' in terms of their technical skills. However, it is clear from the comments of both learners and supervisors that their English language skills may not be adequate even for the positions they are holding down, let alone higher ones. The response of the teacher was to address this as a social and cultural system flaw, ie the unfairness of the interview and focus on developing the skills of these course participants to manage the Public Service job interview including researching the position and writing application letters. She did not appear to directly address the stated issues of learners and supervisors which related to grammatical, accent and idiomatic concerns of their workplace communication, ie there's a downplaying of the language dimension.

It could be argued that the focus of the course overemphasised the 'apparent' hurdle to promotion ie the 'unnaturalness' of the job interview possibly at the expense of the language difficulties learners were assessing themselves as having and which supervisors were confirming. This approach was observed in the lesson where the

focus was on the cross-cultural inferencing, the social and cultural rules and the power relationship with a minimal focus on how these power relations are achieved through the language of the interview.

Two evaluations of the course sighted were positive and both learners felt that the objectives of the course had been achieved. These included the linguistic outcomes of writing effective resumes and cover letters. Three of the other learners indicated in their interviews that the course had improved their confidence. This concurs with findings of class 1, where both supervisors and learners mentioned increased confidence levels.

Evaluations from the supervisors were not sighted but the teacher mentioned in her final report that evaluation of the course was by means of:

- *on-going teacher monitoring*
- *peer evaluation in the areas of cover letters, interviews and presentations*
- *evaluation reports and/or questionnaires completed by each participant*
- *measurable outcomes including:*
 - *rotation/promotion*
 - *number of students applying for positions*
 - *number of students gaining interviews*
 - *number of students gaining work experience placements*

Again the focus of the teacher is evident in the above report. Numbers are not provided for the measurable outcomes, yet this is a major indicator. Also peer evaluations were carried out at the linguistic level, item two above, despite stated inadequacies by learners in this area. This begs the question, to what extent can learners evaluate the language performances of others when they themselves have inadequacies in skills and knowledge for the tasks undertaken? Text or task assessment according to explicit criteria are not evident.

In the absence of comments from supervisors on the level of their met needs, it is difficult to assess how much they would have been satisfied by the above course. What may be said however, is that without such comments from supervisors and their input into the formation and development of the course (identified as a problem by the teacher as well) it is possible for the teacher to 'superimpose' her own approach which is to be expected (Breen, 1990) but without checks and balances to incorporate the needs of the other stakeholders. Clearly, the teacher was not constrained as rigorously as the teacher in class 1 who, despite her own agenda, was obliged to cater more overtly to the needs of the supervisors and the learners.

What this finding presages then is the need for a framework which could harness a range of assessment criteria, which could relate to all stakeholders and which could constrain the teacher from entirely overriding other stakeholders.

(c) Class 3

Eleven learners in class 3 responded to their questionnaires on their perceived English language difficulties in the workplace. Overwhelmingly, the learners in this group were concerned with knowing more about Australian colloquialisms and slang, and were equally concerned with their accents and their pronunciation and understanding the accents of a range of Australians and other English speakers. As mentioned in research question 1, this preoccupation of the learners could be due to the influence of the teacher or the nature of the workplace of the class, ie working with the public on a daily basis.

The students will be analysed individually. The first student indicates that she would like to know more idioms, which concurs with her supervisors assessment and with the importance ascribed to this aspect of language by her teacher. She does state however that *my English language skills although far from being excellent is almost above average and a very few clients or my workmates are having difficulties understanding me*. This is in contrast to her supervisor who says of her, *She sometimes has difficulty making herself understood to staff and clients. Sometimes I cannot follow what she is saying, clients find her accent a bit hard to understand too.....* The question of accent and pronunciation was addressed later in the course.

The second student wished to improve her writing ability, although the class was one dealing with spoken language development. The supervisor's comments were referring to three learners of whom she was one and stated that it appeared her confidence had increased since starting the course.

The third and fourth students also saw 'colloquialisms' as a major issue which as discussed concurs with the perceptions of supervisors and the teacher. What bothered the supervisor about them was their inability to understand *a lot of things I guess, or humour*, (Supervisor meeting). It was clear from the comments of both the students and the supervisor that inability to understand departmental jargon or slang and jokes were a major problem for these learners.

The fifth student was concerned with her own accent, her lack of clarity and lack of knowledge of slang, which was also recognised as a problem by the supervisors. Both

the student and the supervisors made comments which indicated they were acutely aware of the social isolation in the office resulting from the inability of the non-English speaking learners to understand and partake in casual conversations.

The final student for whom there was comparable data, was again very concerned about slang and idiomatic usage in the office, but the supervisor focussed more on grammatical factors like 'confusing gender' an aspect of language with which she, as a native speaker, had difficulty dealing.

The teacher of class three rated the importance of idiomatic expressions very highly in response to questions 1 & 2 of the teacher survey. She considered difficulties with accents and pronunciation as important too. Both these aspects indicate that she was in agreement with both learners and supervisors relating to her course. She considered grammatical knowledge not significantly important (in line with the communicative approach) which would have been acceptable to the majority of learners in the group who did not appear to have major problems in this area.

Where this teacher appears to have fallen short of satisfying stakeholders, is in the area of execution rather than intent. She addressed idiomatic language, but as we have seen in research question 2, in a decontextualised way, and in a way which would not be relevant to the workplace context of the learners. She also addressed their text difficulties, ie client enquiries, but focussed mainly on the strategic and procedural management of these exchanges rather than on the language and the likely use of colloquialisms by native speakers in these exchanges. In that sense her teaching activity, which looked at the exchanges in a problem solving way, could well have been done by the workplace trainers in the office as many of the issues dealt with in the lesson had to do with policy and procedures rather than with language.

This teacher declared at her post-transcript interview that she felt very inexperienced and unsure of herself when she taught this class. This was her first high level oracy class, and she stated she knew she was not directive enough. *It was the first time I had a high level class, I have now developed more strategies and feel more confident about the language they use. My teaching would be more explicit.* (Final interview). The teacher of class 3 did not foreground her theoretical underpinning in her response to question 4 of the teacher questionnaire when asked to be explicit about her view of language and how it impacts on her teaching. In her final interview however, she did talk about *'communicative competence and stuff which I was more into then, and said I wouldn't rely on communicative competence so much now, there would be something more coming from the teacher to the students'*. Her teaching practice and class

materials also manifest strong 'influences from 'communicative language teaching methodology' and *AMES* organisational influences, such as the focus on workplace texts, the use of the proficiency scales and the use of Gubbay & Coghill (1987) materials.

The teacher's agenda and approach to language learning in class 3 reveals a mix of approaches. The use of literature, poetry, problem solving and *Aussie Talk* confirms the teacher's incorporation of a range of methodologies. It is still the teacher's overall approach which dominates, all be there several. This is in contrast to the more focused pedagogy of the teachers of classes 1, 2 & 4.

Supervisors did comment on the apparent increase of confidence of the learners, although formal mechanisms for evaluation of the course were not sighted. Without such comments it is again difficult to assess the extent to which supervisors were satisfied with the outcomes of the course. Statements prior to the course indicated that there was potential for considerable agreement with the students about areas they were having difficulty with in English and from the course proposal and the lesson it appeared that the teacher was trying to satisfy supervisor and learner needs. However, the absence of formal mechanisms to achieve appropriate and quality delivery make it difficult for all to evaluate outcomes in tangible ways.

(d) Class 4

Ten of the students from class four responded to their survey questionnaire. Their concerns were primarily focused on colloquialisms, accent, grammar and register considerations. Interestingly, several of the comments from their supervisors mentioned as aspects of the learner language which concerned them, 'accuracy' and what I have termed as references to 'cultural literacy', Hirsch (1987) as mentioned under research question 1. The focus of the learners on accent and pronunciation is in agreement with the teacher's overall approach who sees the 'expression plane' (her wording as noted in the teacher questionnaire) as the place where all the other components of language proficiency come together. However, the teacher of class 4 did not rate idiomatic expressions as particularly significant. This could be attributed to her interpretation of the word 'idiomatic English' in its traditional meaning as a list of peculiar expressions rather than as context-specific language with pronounced cultural, ideational content.

Student one was concerned with her accent, grammar and colloquialisms. Accent was assessed as a bit of a problem by her supervisor but grammar was seen as more

important. Reference was made by this supervisor for the need to be accurate. Overall there would have been a match between the supervisor, the teacher and the learner in this case, except for the colloquialisms and accent, which was not addressed in the course as it was a writing course.

Student two again mentioned colloquialisms, pronunciation and grammar. This was similarly assessed by the supervisor with grammar causing the most concern, and idiomatic expressions the second greatest concern. Again the supervisor mentioned the learner's need to determine 'accurately' what clients were requesting and the problem of the lack of cultural literacy.

Student three spoke about her desire to improve on colloquialisms and register inadequacies. There was not much agreement from her supervisor who saw her lack of confidence and softly spoken voice as the most concerning issues and her lack of understanding of idiomatic expressions as relatively unimportant. The supervisor again mentioned accuracy as a requirement.

Student four found difficulties with the Australian oral style and pronunciation to be major problems. His supervisor was most concerned with his lack of confidence and shyness and his lack of knowledge about idioms. For this student and the one above, the issues of confidence were not addressed by the teacher in the course, nor were they a part of her overall approach.

Student five mentioned grammar as her major difficulty in the workplace whereas her supervisor rated this as the least concerning aspect of her language behaviour, although she did talk about her written grammatical skills as being a problem. Again as with the learner above, her low confidence and lack of knowledge of idioms and cultural literacy were very concerning.

The final student mentioned accent and colloquialism difficulties which were not rated at all significantly by his supervisor. The supervisor focused on grammar, accuracy of communication and cultural miscommunications.

As the class was a writing course, the issue of accent was not addressed by the teacher in the course. The teacher's overall approach however, based on systemic-functional grammar, would adequately address the register and grammatical concerns of the learners, and possibly too their inadequacies with 'colloquial' speech if it could be argued that 'slang' and "colloquial" speech are in fact just realisations of contextually-defined and contextually specific lexico-grammatical options, particularly field

(processes and participants). The teacher when filling out her teacher questionnaire, did not rate idiomatic concerns very highly, and this could be attributed to a traditional language interpretation of the word colloquial. However, if the word 'slang' or 'colloquial' language is analysed from a systemic-functional viewpoint, it is no longer a separate 'kind of language' but rather one which can be described in terms of its contextual variables and tied to specific social purposes such as maintaining interpersonal relationships, achieving solidarity and ideationally interpreting the reality of certain groups of individuals.

This class reveals an interesting mismatch of stakeholders needs. Overwhelmingly, the supervisors, while concerned occasionally with aspects of grammar and accent, talk about the lack of assertiveness and confidence, 'cultural literacy' gaps (ibid.) and inaccurate communication style of the learners in this group. The first two components, ie non-assertiveness and 'cultural literacy gaps' are not really within the scope of the Skillmax language classes, particularly this class which was apparently initiated by the learners themselves as suggested by the teacher's course proposal. *'Several participants in the Skillmax in the Workplace Program requested a special course to be included in the program which addressed the needs of those employees who require additional support with the writing skills essential for the effective creation of documents such as reports and submissions'*.

Interestingly the teacher of class 4, as opposed to the teacher of class 2, sees the development of writing skills as 'the hurdle' to overcome promotion and says, *'Developing their ability to produce written documents of this kind will enable participants to overcome a barrier to promotion into the supervisory, professional and managerial positions appropriate to their qualifications and experience'*.

Clearly there are disparate views amongst the teachers as to what are the barriers to successful workplace communication, evident in their practice, despite their apparent agreement on question two of the questionnaire which surveyed this belief. However the teacher of class 2, did see inappropriate strategic management of their jobs as the greatest barrier, whereas the teacher of class 4 saw the 'expression plane', ie accent and pronunciation when speaking as the greatest barrier. *Expression plane is where all language skills and knowledge come together. If a speaker no matter how high level is not intelligible then none of their other skills with English can be revealed or exploited. Stress and intonation are equally if not more important than pronunciation to achieve intelligibility*, (Teacher questionnaire).

In the absence of data from the supervisors after the course, it is difficult to assess their level of satisfaction with the course, but clearly two of their major concerns, ie confidence levels of learners and cultural literacy gaps would not have been addressed directly by the course, but may have been indirect spin-offs from the lessons. This is evident from the content of the lesson observed which spoke extensively about local institutions ie Canterbury Council, the Universities of Technology and Sydney, the school holidays and other cultural phenomena. In the other three classes, the simple fact of attending an English course at work increased levels of confidence, noted by both supervisors and learners. It is possible that levels of confidence would have increased as a result of the learners doing this course as with the others.

The teacher's approach is once again dominant in the course design and in the methodology. The absence of rigorous input from supervisors or their apparent acquiescence to the direction of the course has resulted in having only a portion of their concerns addressed. The fault could be equally attributed to the setting up of such courses where learners 'grab at straws' and do any course which is available, rather than enrolling in courses which are targeted more specifically to their needs. Also, provider management procedures which do not ensure consistency in the incorporation of stakeholder needs could be improved. In either case, while there will be linguistic and 'associated' outcomes, it is not clear to what extent all parties would be satisfied.

The notion of the 'culture of compromise' (Breen, 1990) which has been discussed in chapter 3 is relevant to the satisfaction of learner needs in the language classroom. What his theory might mean in the context of this study is that while learners evidently bring their own notions of their language deficiencies to the language classroom and while clearly teachers superimpose their own approaches on classroom practices, and while supervisors have their own idea of how they see the language performance of workers, 'a culture of compromise' develops both within the (successful?) classroom and without, ie once the class is evaluated by the stakeholders.

In those classes where supervisor comments were available, ie class 1 & 3, they all focused on the increased confidence levels of learners as did the learners across all four classes. These so-called 'outcomes other than language gains' ie increased confidence, have in fact been shown to be primarily linguistically based (Jackson 1993).

5.4.2. Summary and Conclusions

In answering research question 3 about how teacher methodologies relate to stakeholder perspectives, it would appear from the above analyses that in some cases it is very difficult for the teachers to satisfy all the other stakeholders. Reasons for this are numerous and may include:

- a) the classes are the wrong ones for the needs in question
- b) the needs are more concerned with cultural and behavioural factors which cannot be addressed in a short language class and which should not necessarily be changed anyway
- c) learners will be able to superimpose their own personal theories about language learning and still gain from a particular approach even though it may not coincide with their own needs
- d) in any one class there may be complementary needs of learners and supervisors which fit with the teachers, or equally there may be those which don't.

What is a logical conclusion to draw from the above is the recognition that the teacher's approach will dominate and what may be useful for teachers is reflection on their approaches and methodologies through observation and recording, as well as strategies to assist them to incorporate more overtly the needs of learners and supervisors into their course design and methodologies.

They need in effect strategies for developing the 'culture of compromise'. In order to do this however, they need knowledge of the variables which may impact on their provision including the roles of teachers, learners and supervisors, their needs and frameworks and instruments and reporting mechanisms which incorporate a range of stakeholder concerns. This takes us on to the final question of the research.

5.5. Research Question 4

5.5.1. Introduction

The question posed by research question 4 is: *What are the curriculum implications that emerge from an analysis of the relationship between classroom practices and stakeholder perspectives and theories about the nature and assessment of spoken and written language proficiency?* These include 'general' proficiency as measured by the *ASLPR* (1984), 'communicative competence' as outlined by Canale and Swain (1983), 'communicative language ability' (Bachman, 1990) and more recent developments in theories of language and instruments used to measure language proficiency based on systemic functional grammar such as the competency-based English language framework in *AMES (NSW), The Certificate in Spoken and Written English* (Hagan, Hood, Jackson, Jones, Joyce & Manidis, 1992) and *The English in the Workplace Competencies Framework* (Baylis & Thomas, 1992)?

This question will explore the role of existing and developing theoretical approaches including currently used assessment procedures and instruments to language and literacy assessment and debate the introduction of the workplace competency-based model, focussing in particular on the ways that the *Certificate in Spoken and Written English* and the *English in the Workplace Competencies Framework* might address the issues raised in this research.

Findings from research question one indicate that teachers, learners and supervisors bring different perspectives to the conceptualisation of language proficiency. The evidence of stakeholders bringing individual criteria to the language assessment process as well as displaying subjective variation on the same criteria is conclusive in terms of this study and this is also well supported in the literature.

The findings for research question two demonstrate how the classroom practices of the four teachers could be linked systematically to their stated views on language and language proficiency and how the approach of the teacher is superimposed on the learners and the supervisors. Teacher's approaches to language and language proficiency were also shown to be grounded in current linguistic theories and organisational policies and priorities. The findings of research question two however demonstrate that teacher beliefs, while grounded in similar theory or organisational influences, may not necessarily result in similar practices.

The findings from question three have suggested that the incorporation of other stakeholder needs into course design and teaching practices in *Adult Migrant English* classes and by association, *English in the Workplace* classes while the primary policy in the organisation for the past decade is achieved with varying levels of success.

Research question three illustrated how complex the relationship is between teacher, learner and supervisor or employer needs in the realm of language learning. It is not a clear cut case of this approach satisfying this kind of employer or this kind of learner. Rather it is a case of some methodologies used by teachers satisfying some learners and equally some supervisors. Learners too will apparently enter into the '*culture of compromise*' (Breen, 1990) created within classrooms and be satisfied with some learning outcomes while others may not be met.

The findings of research questions one to three have indicated the need for greater awareness and understanding by all stakeholders of the processes involved in language teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in a competitive environment. There are competing models of language proficiency, imprecise terminology and disparate conceptualisations which cause confusion amongst theorists, practitioners and lay persons alike.

The onus however is clearly on the professionals in this context, ie the teachers and the providers, to translate for the learners and the supervisors the parameters, components and complexities of their technical field of expertise, ie language education. It is also the responsibility of the professionals, the language theorists and language assessment theorists to devise accessible measures of achievement which have meaning for workplace supervisors, even though this too may be fraught with difficulties. What common ground exists for this to be done?

All three stakeholder groups in this study are ultimately concerned with the individual's ability to manage and control specific texts and or linguistic tasks, particularly in the workplace context. If a particular communicative context is defined, all stakeholders are interested in knowing what kinds of grammatical resources will be relevant to that context. The systemic theory of language has demonstrated the relationship between grammatical resources and context and this has been incorporated into a framework, *The English in the Workplace Competency Framework* (Baylis & Thomas, 1992) which embodies procedures and characteristics of type two proficiency by describing text level abilities in a range of workplace 'discourse sites'. Three primary discourse sites have been identified in the framework and they are:

- (i) the job specific discourse site

- (ii) the specific enterprise discourse site and
- (iii) the broader industry/training discourse site.

As outlined in the introduction of the framework,

the concept discourse site is an important (one) in the development of the EWP Competencies Framework. (because) it is based on the premise that the differing discourse sites in the workplace context construct differing ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking and reading and writing. In other words they construct different literacies. (ibid:vii)

Appendix 3 gives three examples of the different competencies which have been identified in relation to different profile employees and their likely text-level language needs.

This framework which addresses or incorporates the sometimes similar but sometimes varied needs of individual stakeholders would be able to provide a more comprehensive and consistent model of language teaching and therefore offer more guarantees of consistency of service by workplace language providers:

Employers' requirements, especially at entry level, are much more task specific than competencies operating at high levels of generality could ever be. Employers really do need competency descriptions that link directly into the nature of language and literacy requirements in the workplace (Cope, 1992).

The perspectives of employers are significant because they are primarily interested in how learners communicate with them and others in the workplace rather than with how they manage in classroom tests.. We are reminded:

The human aspect of that judgement is precisely what makes (oral testing) valuable and desirable.....we want to know how well they (learners) can communicate with other people, not with a language test. (Underhill, 1987:193).

The *English in the Workplace competency* framework addresses directly several principal issues raised by this study. These are:

- (a) The incorporation of different types of proficiency in one framework.

The framework incorporates linguistic criteria of type two and type three, proficiency, (Spolsky, 1985), (Brindley, 1989) in one measure. It does not cater for the generalised, global type one assessment statements made by supervisors and learners. However,

learners and supervisors can both relate to type two procedures as they are explicit and meaningful to them in functional, practical terms. The competencies incorporate type three 'grammatical' or structural components of proficiency which enables all stakeholders to analyse the relationship between the object of study, language, and the product of study, ie language texts.

As general educational research and theories on learning and skills move towards recognising skills as context-specific rather than 'innate capacity' represented by measures such as I.Q. tests, more and more educationalists are recognising the validity of measuring skills in an aggregate way relating to specific tasks, rather than as a general level. Recent test research has compared kinds of writing tasks engineering students were required to do and types of essays they were set in the Michigan Battery used for assessing students' 'language proficiency' on entry to university. Findings were summarised in support of context-specific skill measurement (Wall 1982 in Weir 1990) as follows:

Free uncontrolled writing would seem to be an invalid test of the writing ability requires by most students. It is easier to extrapolate from writing tests where care is taken in specifying for each task: the media, the audience, the purpose and the situation in line with target level performance activities (Weir, 1990:61).

These attempts at conceptualising and measuring general proficiency are also challenged by others as outlined in chapter 3.

First, since language occurs only in situations, and the situations in which it occurs determine the language forms that occur, it could be argued that one cannot speak of "general proficiency" so much as proficiency in this situation or that, in this register or that and that one can speak only of specific purposes proficiency (Ingram, 1990:50).

These trends are supported by others in the field of language proficiency testing including Shohamy (1988), Olin (1987) and Swain (1993) cited in Swain (1993) where the type of 'text' used to test language came out as the main effect. Nevo (1986) (ibid.) in writing tests found again that the type of writing task, ie 'text' had a significant impact on students' scores. The costs of doing this kind of testing where each kind of text needs to be assessed are however enormous and there is always the temptation to opt for cheaper, less valid yet more reliable means of testing. In an article in the Sydney Morning Herald entitled *Multiple Choice:HSC the fast way* (1993) arguments were being put forward to test 'essay-type' questions with multiple choice texts *to reduce costs and eliminate inconsistencies.* The competency-based movement in

workplace skills should assist with this movement as skills have been divided into specific tasks and carpenters for example are not tested on their general carpentry skills but on a range of specific base tasks in an aggregate way.

By encapsulating effectively the full range of grammatical knowledge and skills required through text, teachers can 'find' their own particular approaches within the framework. It provides a checklist for them to consider for example, not only strategic competence, but also the linguistic resources needed for specific contexts.

The teachers of classes 1, 3 & 4 all acknowledged the applicability of the framework to their approach of teaching. The teacher of class 1 stated that it *highlighted different aspects and gave different stress to (other aspects of language)...the framework enabled me to have a more systematic approach...it would not necessarily alter what I would teach but it would give me a mental checklist on what to focus....*

The teacher of class 3, while seeing the benefits of the underlying theory of language which gave rise to the framework, did not agree with the overall focus on the assessment of outcomes of learners. *My teaching would be more explicit, but now that there are competencies I don't feel as relaxed re assessment and reporting...AMES has taken over a big brother role and I'm really thinking whether I'd want to be a part of it.*

The teacher of class 4 had no difficulties with the framework *because the framework was the same as my approach.*

The teacher of class 2 who stated *I hardly know anything about the framework* and who is more interested in the approach to teaching derived from pragmatics, could incorporate aspects of cross-cultural communication into this kind of text competency. It is possible that for teachers like her the framework could act as a checklist to ensure other aspects of proficiency are taken into account and thereby that classes address the non-teacher focus needs of other stakeholders.

(b) The increase in reliability in assessment

In making explicit assessment criteria which indicate how linguistic resources are configured in contexts and making these available to all stakeholders, increased objectivity can be achieved in the language assessment process. The reasons for this are as follows. Traditional testing of language has a high degree of reliability and objectivity but a narrow view of language; more recent assessment procedures take a broad view of language, but at the expense of reliability and objectivity.

The problem is that while one can have test reliability without test validity a test can only be valid if it is also reliable. There is thus sometimes said to be reliability-validity tension...this tension exists in the sense that it is sometimes essential to sacrifice a degree of reliability in order to enhance validity (Weir, 1990).

The arguments in favour of increased validity at the expense of reliability are strong: as shown below:

Rea (1978) argued that simply because tests which assess language as communication cannot automatically claim high standards of reliability in the same way that discrete-item tests are able to, this should not be accepted as a justification for continued reliance on highly reliable measures having very suspect validity. ...subjective judgements are indispensable if we are to develop testing procedures that validly reflect our current understanding of the nature of language proficiency and our contemporary goals in language teaching (Weir, 1990:33).

Current theorists continue the debate on the pursuit of reliability according to psychometric measures when high validity tests are devised, ie tests which aim to capture the complexity of different interactions.

A highly internally consistent test of sociolinguistic or grammatical behaviour, given our present knowledge, would be difficult to devise and, most importantly it would not be reflective of language use in complex and diverse social situations (Swain, 1993:204).

She goes on to say that

A challenge for second language test researchers will be to rethink the concept of consistency of second language measures. Perhaps we may have to begin a search for 'meaningful quality criteria' for the inclusion of test tasks rather than rely to heavily on a measure of internal consistency (ibid.).

Increased objectivity is difficult to achieve however unless without a theory of language which allows us to analyse it objectively. The theoretical basis of the competency framework is based on systemic functional grammar which explains *the functional basis of form and the formal realization of function* (Matthiessen et al. ,1990:152) and so allows grammar to contribute towards objectivity and hence increased reliability.

This objective is strived for in other descriptive models of assessment where more recently, these models have acknowledged the obvious relationship between the context and form:

This context includes both the discourse of which individual sentences are part and the sociolinguistic situation which governs, to a large extent, the nature of that discourse, in both form and function (Bachman, 1988:155).

Yet the relationship between form and function or how the components of proficiency relate to context, cannot be addressed by theorists without a theory of language to explain these relationships.

Precisely because we are concerned with stakeholders who are likely to bring different criteria to judgements on language proficiency and because even teachers, while more streamlined in their judgements than non-teachers are likely to vary in their interpretations of the language process (Brindley, 1989) this framework presents a common mechanism in the assessment process which encourages objectivity, validity and increased reliability. Evidence on the latter are still being documented within the *Adult Migrant English Service* in various projects.

(c) The incorporation of colloquial language into workplace teaching

The framework takes account of contextually-based spoken and written texts. A great deal of the comments from both supervisors and learners surveyed in this study was to do with the inability of non-English speakers to understand and partake in colloquial workplace exchanges. Until recently the primary focus of mainstream linguistics was based on written language (Halliday, 1985). When analysed, these texts are immediately recognisable as very different from naturally occurring spoken language. Overseas grammar books, which would have largely informed the learners in this study, are usually informed by grammars based on written language and therefore they don't take account of the features of spoken language, (Hammond et al., 1992). When observing the teachers in classes 1, 2 & 3, it is evident that situational context, ie the job interview in class 2, the workplace request in class 1, the client enquiry in class 3 *is reduced to a vehicle for the target function or structure* (Slade (1986:69). The examples in this study emphasise in addition to functions and structures more 'global' targets such as the development of assertive behaviour, conformance to interview norms and appropriate procedures in work exchanges.

this reverses the role language has to play in real communication. It (language) is not decided upon first and then made appropriate to the situation, it is in fact the embodiment of the situation (Slade, 1986:69).

This is in contrast to the use of situational context in class 4 where the language was the observed focus of the situation, the starting point of the teacher and the lesson. However, as pointed out earlier, although the language was the starting point of the teacher the text on which the lesson was based was a school child's text and did not relate immediately to the workplace context of the learners in the class. This was noted by the teacher and pointed out to the learners, but it does indicate that even with this kind of approach, where the type of text in this case an exposition, can be the source of teaching, the way this is done can differ and therefore have consequences for meeting the language needs of the learners.

Learners surveyed in this study appeared to lack the 'colloquial' spoken lexico-grammatical options available to fluent or native speakers in their workplace contexts, ie. they lacked vocabulary, ie. field knowledge, such as participants, processes, and a lack of knowledge about spoken language features in these contexts Slade (ibid.) identified a range of topics commonly occurring in casual conversation in the workplace such as 'sending up', telling personal anecdotes, gossiping and talking about leisure and entertainment. These topics would cover adequately all references to 'idioms and slang', mentioned by learners and supervisors and would include the 'cultural literacy' gaps (Hirsch, 1987) mentioned by several of the supervisors.

The inability of this group of learners to cope with these texts in the workplace is identified by the *AMES Oral Proficiency scale* as mentioned earlier. But the inability of high level learners to understand 'colloquial register' is not explained by the scale, and as an instrument of assessment has no 'washback' effect on teaching to assist these learners to manage the language of these contexts. The efforts of the teacher of class 3 indicate clearly how her approach to teaching idioms resulted in a decontextualised look at idiomatic language with a class of this level of oracy which she had never taught before.

The *English in the Workplace competency framework* (Baylis & Thomas, 1992) identifies the role of casual conversation in the workplace, identifies it as a spoken language text and identifies the lexico-grammatical choices which are the *embodiment of the situation*. Learners ought to be able to access the knowledge of how English functions in these contexts through specific configurations of field, tenor and mode in their different workplace contexts and how these are realised through casual conversations. The framework assumes that with casual conversation, topic selection, generic types of spoken interactions, eg. anecdotes, recounts etc., and their linguistic features, can be explicitly taught and then assessed. It should be pointed out at this stage however, that the *AMES Competency Frameworks* have not been extensively

trialed, but related work has indicated extensive gains in particular text type proficiencies for large groups of learners with such a model (Disadvantaged Schools Project - Metropolitan East Region, 1988).

(d) The need to be contextually relevant to workplace developments

The framework allows teachers to select a range of workplace texts from three 'discourse sites' as identified in the framework. These discourse sites are job-specific, enterprise specific and industry specific and the categories relate to texts workers may need to deal with for different purposes and at different levels of 'detail and abstraction' depending on the context. This increase in abstraction is based on the identified trend towards more abstract and less concrete language as one moves through the discourse sites. The framework also recognises the *similar movement towards more abstract and dense language in (the) three Employee profile areas as (a) particular job which is the context in which the language is constructed is located higher up the Australian Standards Framework.* (ibid:xi).

(e) A new phase in historical developments in language testing theory

The framework attempts to incorporate some of the more recent developments in language testing theory. It addresses in concept one of the requirements of current assessment theory which recognises that (we are) :

now for the most part working within an expanded framework of communicative language ability, of which the major distinguishing characteristic is its recognition of the importance of context beyond the sentence level to the appropriate use of language. This context includes both the discourse of which individual sentences are part and the sociolinguistic situation which governs, to a large extent the nature of that discourse, in both form and function (Bachman, 1988:155).

The framework integrates some of the earlier trends in assessment which focused on the grammatical rules of language, or the focus on form, as well as aspects of communicative language testing where aspects of *language in use* became important. It does this by making explicit the relationship between form and meaning in relation to specific texts, which systemic functional grammar enables it to do. The relationship between context and language as discourse is defined as

a way of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking and often reading and writing that are accepted as instantiations of particular roles by specific groups of people (Gee, 1986 in , 1992:vii.)

This is summed up by others similarly,

Now the context of situation, the context in which the text unfolds, is encapsulated in the text, not in a kind of piecemeal fashion nor at the other extreme in any mechanical way, but through a systematic relationship between the social environment on the one hand, and the functional organisation of language on the other (Hasan and Halliday, 1985:11)




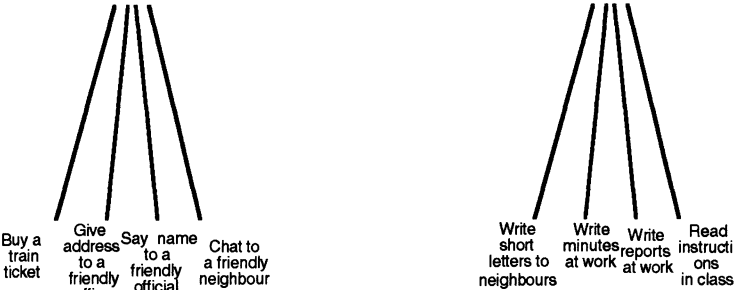
The relationship between text and context in terms of discourse sites is outlined further where it is argued that these discourse sites *are what construct different literacies and what is considered to be literate behaviour is then dependent on context* (Wickert in Baylis & Thomas, 1989:vii).

The *English in the workplace competency framework* also provides language in a competency-based format which marries well with current developments in the *National Training Reform Agenda* and workplace demands such as the move towards competency-based training and assessment.

(f) Bridging gaps in information about language to other stakeholders

By presenting each text competency in an explicit way, the framework can serve as a tool for explaining the complexity of language proficiency to non-teachers. It immediately outlines for stakeholders how complex 'looking at language' can be and although the competencies themselves are fairly technical, these can be explained by diagrammatic support as illustrated in the diagram below. This diagram was used to explain the different types of language proficiency to non-teachers as measured by current assessment instruments, namely the *ASLPR* to measure general proficiency and the competencies to measure text or task-based language abilities (DEET Workshop, 1992).

Language Assessment in AMES (NSW)

Type 1 General Proficiency	<p style="text-align: center;">Stage 1</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">ASLPR 0-0+ AMES O.P. .5-1 LAR 1</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Stage 2</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">ASLPR -1-1 AMES O.P. 1.5-2.5 LAR 2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Stage 3</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">ASLPR 1+2 AMES O.P. 3-4 LAR 3</p>	Measures	Stakeholders
<p style="text-align: center;">Type 2 Task and Text proficiency</p>				<p style="text-align: center;">C O M P E T E N C I E S (descriptive)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEARNERS • EMPLOYERS • TEACHERS • VOCATIONAL TRAINERS • DILGEA • DEET
<p style="text-align: center;">Type 3 Lexico-Grammatical Proficiency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the purpose of the task • understand their role and role of language • have the right vocabulary and grammar to choose from • pronounce and distinguish English sounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the purpose of the task • understand their role and the role of language • have the right vocabulary and grammar to choose from • 'write' and 'read' English graphic marks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INFORMAL MEASURES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEARNERS • TEACHERS 	

Manidis 1992

Diagram. 11. Language Assessment in AMES (NSW) {Manidis 1992 - based on Brindley (1989)}

What the framework does not do however is take account of the behavioural dimension on non-English speaking employees obviously seen as fairly significant by supervisors, teachers and learners. The need to incorporate a 'fourth dimension' into language

assessment or at least address this as a real concern of all stakeholder groups, ie that of cross-cultural communication issues and behaviour and how these impact on learners in the workplace, must be seen as essential to complete the picture of workplace communication in a multicultural workforce.

This aspect of cross-cultural communication 'beyond text level' abilities, was identified as a major issue by teachers, particularly the teacher of class 2, learners and supervisors and features as a very significant factor in workplace language proficiency assessment criteria.

5.6. Summary and conclusions

This chapter has reviewed the five research questions which have framed the study. Question one has confirmed that the teachers in this study are shaped by theoretical influences based on historical, linguistic and organisational developments. Question one also confirmed that the supervisors and learners in the study were concerned with aspects of language proficiency different from those of teachers and frequently different from each other as well.

Question two has illustrated how each of the teachers, in the lesson observed in the study, despite superficial agreement on the linguistic and cultural dimensions of non-English speakers in the workplace, teaches largely according to her own stated theory of language and beliefs about significant components of successful 'communication'.

Question three has highlighted the complexity of satisfying the needs of learners and employers in *English in the Workplace* classes because of the random aspects each individual stakeholder brings to their own assessment of language proficiency and how these may not always be in accord with others. Question three has also introduced the notion of the 'culture of compromise' which exists in the language classroom and which may go some way to satisfying the different needs of learners.

Question four has suggested that the currently utilised language assessment instruments may no longer be adequate to address the need for learners or supervisors to know more about text level progress. Instead the *English in the Workplace Competency Framework* has been examined to see how it addresses the issues raised in this study. This is consistent with the proposals of Brindley (1989) who advocated for the introduction of more type 2 assessment procedures to measure course by course achievement.

The findings from research questions one to three illustrate a very complex scenario of educational provision where current practices of teachers, learners and employers are meaningful only in terms of their historical sources and precedents and when looked at in terms of their interrelationships. This complete picture has come about through changing paradigms in educational and scientific research which have enabled the language classroom to be studied in its wider contextual setting, including the historical and educational influences impacting on this and the participants involved in this process.

6.0. CONCLUSIONS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter will summarise the findings of the data analysis of the study and relate these findings back to the background and the context of the study as well as the literature which has framed the theoretical underpinning of the research. This part of the study will be used to evaluate the current delivery of *English in the Workplace* classes. In other words, recommendations will be made on general principles for the interface between industry and education based on lessons which have been learnt from the research undertaken.

In looking back at the data analysis in chapter five, a complex set of variables was shown to be impacting on English language provision in workplace settings. These include factors such as professional training, previous educational and learning experiences, socio-cultural conditioning, theoretical developments in language teaching, individual biases, professional experience and organisational culture. When set against a background of rapid change in industry and education, involving new forms of assessment, a demand for a return to 'basics', demands for increased flexibility, and more stringent accountability, these variables take on an added dimension. They become increasingly important as variables precisely because they are the elements of change.

These variables in educational provision are the elements and the vehicle for change. If teachers are to be expected to adjust to new demands and provide a responsive service to their respective stakeholders, including maintaining their own professional integrity, they will need mechanisms which enable them to be as aware as possible of these elements of change and how to cope with them. These include identifying the elements of change, encouraging self-reflective practice through on-going action research and training which highlights the historical aspect of current practice.

In a recent contribution to the SEAMEO Regional Language Centre publication, *Language Teacher Education in a Fast-Changing World*, Saraswathi (1991) outlines a very valid case for current difficulties often experienced by teachers in the face of change. She says:

...teachers are not prepared for change. There are no orientation programmes to familiarise them with the new approaches. Teachers with a few years of experience develop a sense of

complacency and confidence. They feel that they have mastered the art of teaching and that there is nothing more for them to learn. They resist change as it shatters their sense of security. Often they fail to understand the rationale of suggested changes. They therefore reject innovations without making any effort to understand them..... (Saraswathi, 1991:76)

While she is clearly talking about teachers in India, the 'teacher resistance' she refers to in her paper is an on-going issue faced by teacher trainers from teachers in the *Adult Migrant English Service* when curriculum initiatives are introduced (Certificate in Spoken and Written English Competency Trial, 1992).

This research study has identified several elements of change involved in *English in the Workplace* provision. Research questions one and two have shown the link between teacher practices and their views on language which have been framed largely by organisational trends. These in turn are linked to changing theoretical developments in language and educational theory. Research questions one to three have also shown the variability of stakeholder expectations and the complexity of addressing these stakeholder concerns. Research question four has explored alternatives to current assessment instruments and has suggested a framework which could combine the full range of stakeholder perspectives excluding the behavioural, cross-cultural dimension.

There is substantial support in the literature to confirm the findings outlined above and these have been presented in chapters three and five. The idiosyncraticity of judgements on language proficiency is well documented as is the link between teacher beliefs and teacher practice. The classroom as a social context has been increasingly studied over recent years and support for the links between classroom discourse and wider social and organisational paradigms is substantial. The debate on language theory and language as object of assessment is on-going and curriculum initiatives outlined in research question four are gaining prominence in response to recent theoretical advances brought about by systemic-functional grammar.

Now that elements of change have been identified, and found to relate to previous educational research in the area, how can this research be used to assist teachers to cope with the new changes? Brindley in his paper (1991b) to the conference on *Language Teacher Education in a Fast-changing World*, argued that:

Action research obviously has the potential to be an intrinsic part of a teacher's professional growth since it is by definition carried out by practitioners and requires them to systematically investigate their own practice (Brindley, 1991b:2).

In his preliminary study undertaken to investigate the perceptions of the research process of fledgling teacher-researchers, three of the six participating teachers in the study mentioned that *they saw research as a way of systematically testing their implicitly-held theories and instinctive understandings of practice*. (ibid:4). Research questions one and two have demonstrated the link between implicitly-held theories and practice, but largely to the readers of this study. However, there were some inroads made with the teachers involved. While self-reflection as a teacher was not a formal part of this research, all four teachers found the experience 'illuminating' in terms of their own teaching practice. At the final interview with all four teachers, each teacher responded strongly to the transcript of her lesson and commented on the revealing characteristics of such evidence. In support of Sraswathi's comments above, the complacency of some of the teachers in the study was challenged by their lesson transcripts.

Where however does that leave the teachers? Adding to the insecurity of teachers is not the aim of such studies. The aim of this study is to reveal the relationships between practice and theory and suggest ways of reducing or overcoming the challenges placed on teachers and providers in the face of rapid change. Brindley suggests one way of doing this by saying:

By adding to teachers' knowledge of the theoretical foundations of their field, basic research can provide conceptual frameworks within which they can situate and observe their teaching. In this way, it can assist them to analyse and articulate the theoretical basis of their own beliefs and practice and thus add to their reflective capacity (Brindley 1991b::2).

Teachers would find useful a perspective on their practice. They would find it useful to make explicit the theoretical foundations of their approaches, ie what is the language proficiency model which guides their classroom practice? Why is that relevant or not relevant in terms of current theoretical developments? How can their theoretical framework relate to newer ones such as the competency-based movement? How can their theoretical and practical approach be situated in its historical context? How has language been viewed, taught and assessed over time? How can their particular approach be incorporated into current assessment instruments? How can their approach be incorporated with the approaches of the other stakeholders in their teaching practice? How can their approach be explained to the other stakeholders in their teaching practice?

As a conclusion to this study the above recommendations can be summarised as follows:

- (1) Make explicit the context within which teachers work in order to assist them in the process of educational change and professional development. This includes taking a complete look at the background of the context, the stakeholders in these contexts, observing events within these contexts and examining the skill and theoretical elements which operate on teachers in their practice. In reference to today's work-based teachers this is critical as suggested in the recent work on the pedagogical relations between Adult ESL and Adult Literacy teaching:

Initial findings suggest that such a teacher requires a strong theoretical and practical understanding of language as well as the management, counselling, advocacy and other skills to undertake competently the job of adult literacy teaching. (Hammond et al., 1992:48).

- (2) Incorporate more substantial components on language assessment into second language teacher training programs. The absence of language testing theory particularly the construction and validation of standardised tests taught as part of under and post-graduate study in the field of ESL has been noticeably absent from such courses in Australia (Brindley, 1989) in the past. In more recent times, this component has been included in graduate and post-graduate courses at the University of Technology and Macquarie University. The situation in other parts of the world is similar:

most teachers...have very little background in testing...very little explicit attention is paid to issues of reliability and validity (Akoha, 1991:203).

- (3) Assist teachers to develop the skills to do this themselves on an on-going basis by encouraging the development of action research skills, by situating current practice within organisational and historical developments and by providing theoretical knowledge which informs their practice and allows them to understand their own approach and respond intelligently to change.

Differences in viewpoint are not given, but socially and historically explicable (Cope 1990:33).

- (4) Assist teachers to 'explain' their technical expertise in lay terms to non-teachers. As educators and communicators, the responsibility is clearly with teachers to

translate the technical expertise they have in language to other stakeholders. This may involve firstly an understanding of their own approaches, and then looking at ways to get information from supervisors and learners in a consistent way and then explaining to them why there may be differences in their expectations.

- (5) Assist teachers to develop strategies to promote the 'culture of compromise', (Breen, 1990) in their language classrooms. Language is a field of knowledge which everybody knows something about, but this knowledge is clearly layered in terms of whether it is regarded from its technical base, user-base or judgement-base and depends on previous learning and socio-cultural experiences. Language teachers are in need of organisational support to assist them to incorporate the layers of knowledge about language into their classrooms and into the workplace context in consistent ways.
- (6) Find ways to incorporate the fourth dimension or socio-cultural factors into the assessment of language proficiency, or at the very least, clearly separate such judgements from task-completion in the workplace context. This may take the form of giving very strict frameworks to supervisors about task completion rather than asking them to comment broadly on the 'language' of the learner in question. It may also take the form of allowing supervisors to comment on prepared 'attitudinal questionnaires' their beliefs about the language and behaviour of non-English speaking learners in the workplace. A third approach would be to incorporate cross-cultural training into workplaces to inform workplaces of the complexities surrounding second language learning and minority cultures as has been done in *AMES (NSW) English in the Workplace Program* for a long time.

In summary, the different perspectives of workplace English language teachers, supervisors and non-English speaking migrants on language proficiency have been examined and compared. These have been interpreted within an historical educational and organisational background. Conversational data of workplace language classes has been analysed and interpreted against this background and against the needs of the different stakeholders. Finally the findings of the research have been used to explain why some methodological and curriculum changes may need to be implemented to address gaps in service, need and knowledge.

There are still gaps to be addressed as research question four has illustrated. The role which affective factors play in language assessment remains beyond the realm of current researchers. This question, whether:

or how far, can extra-linguistic (that is non-text) parameters properly be incorporated into language assessment? (Porter, 1991b:32, 33).

has occupied theorists for quite a while but it still remains unanswered.

It is appropriate to conclude with the words of, arguably, one of the most concerned language testing theorists, who is well aware of the arbitrary nature of assessment and its impact on both teachers and learners:

“What we should encourage, I believe, is the development of a gentle craft of diagnostic testing, closely related to our teaching, and intended to provide the kind of feedback between student and teacher that will enable each student to develop his or her own personal maximum. We should use tests that make clear the complexity of individual variation and the multitude of factors determining language behaviour. Our tests should be functional reports of how a subject is able to perform under certain conditions, and avoid the claims of absolute prediction that so many tests would seem to be dressed in. We must be as modest in reporting measurement of people’s language abilities as we are careful in making any other predictions. Whether we choose to be artists or scientists, craftsmen or technicians, language testers must remain sensitive to the needs of the human beings we test and responsible to the societies in which we live and work. (Spolsky, 1975:24).

APPENDIX 1

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE TO TEACHERS, LEARNERS AND SUPERVISORS

APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire on teacher perspectives of spoken language abilities in the workplace

Please complete the questions as indicated

1. Recognising that **language proficiency** is made up on many different component parts that differ in importance depending on the contexts in which learners find themselves, from your experience, how would you rate the following in order of importance for **high level speakers (AMES O.P. 3-4) to have control of in the workplace?**

**Most Important 1
10**

Least Important

- (a) knowledge and control of the technical vocabulary in the workplace?
 - (b) knowledge of and control of idiomatic Australian English?
 - (c) control of grammatical forms, e.g. tenses, word order, prepositions, clause formation, definite/indefinite articles etc.?
 - (d) control of pronunciation/stress/intonation, i.e. general intelligibility?
 - (e) control of discourse skills, i.e. knowledge of appropriate turn-taking mechanisms, knowledge of feedback, clarification and challenging techniques, discourse cohesion, e.g. appropriate staging for say a formal oral presentation, appropriate use of conjunctions etc.?
 - (f) knowledge of cross-cultural **linguistic** differences and consequences of these, between L1 and English?
 - (g) knowledge and control of specific language tasks or texts, (i.e. contextual skills), i.e. handling clients on the telephone (e.g. DSS), clarifying queries (e.g. ATO), job interview language skills, managing supervisor's meetings etc.?
 - (h) other (please specify)
2. **Workplace performance** depends on more than English language proficiency. The following factors are cited by both workplace supervisors and learners as barriers to successful workplace performance by **high level oracy learners**. From your experience (and in your opinion) rate these according to how **you perceive** these factors operating in the workplace to disadvantage workers.
- Most likely to act as a barrier 10**
- Least Likely to act as a barrier 1**
- (a) inappropriate strategic management of their jobs, i.e. not following procedures correctly - *when this happens, they should talk to their supervisor..... ?*
 - (b) perceived cultural differences that may create difficulties, e.g. having a different way to solve a problem in their previous work life?

- (c) personality factors, i.e. *too shy, doesn't speak up at meetings etc?*
- (d) inability to 'do the task', e.g. '*Can't understand instructions*'.
- (e) phonological language difficulties, e.g. 'accent', pronunciation, stress patterns?
- (f) not having understanding/sympathetic supervisors/colleagues?
- (g) little knowledge of and practice in colloquial, idiomatic Australian speech? (fast speech included)
- (h) lack of spoken language negotiation techniques, e.g. giving feedback, asking for clarification or repetition
- (i) unfamiliarity with contextual features of an exchange, e.g. amount of formality or informality required when addressing colleagues/supervisors?
- (j) cross-cultural communication factors, e.g. intonation patterns that might send different messages to interlocutors
- (k) other (please specify)

3. Elaborate on any of the above factors if you would like to add anything.

4. What is your view of 'language' and/or 'communication' and how does this view impact on your teaching approach?

Second questionnaire given to teachers after reading their lesson transcripts

1. Read the transcript of your lesson.

2. Can you situate that lesson as:
 - (a) fairly typical for that course
 - (b) atypical for that course - why?

3. Does it represent a good example of your general approach to language teaching?

Why?

Why not?

4. Do you think the competency framework has/ or will alter your approach?
(What aspects have been/ or will be particularly affected?)

CONFIDENTIAL

Questionnaire for supervisors

Name of employee concerned.....

- 1. Please list recent (or erstwhile) areas of spoken communication difficulties with this employee.**

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

- 2. What do you see as the most essential spoken workplace communication skills for this employee?**

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

- 3. When communicating with this employee, what aspects of their language performance "concern" (i.e. that you focus on) you the most? Could you rate these from 1 - 5 (1 least concerned with, 5 most concerned with).**

aspects of grammar

.....(please specify)

accent/pronunciation.....

lack of confidence.....

inability to understand Australian idiom/speech and/or pace of colloquial

speech.....

other.....

.....(please specify)

- 4. Please add any additional comments that will inform me as to how you as a supervisor 'perceive' the spoken language communication skills of this employee and their impact on the workplace.**

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

.....
Thank you for completing the questionnaire. Please return it in the stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

**Marie Manidis
Curriculum Support Unit
Adult Migrant English Service
P.O. Box 1222
Darlinghurst 2010**

Marie Manidis

CONFIDENTIAL

Questionnaire (to be completed by class participants)

1. What do you see as your biggest difficulties at work with English language skills?.....

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

2. What English language abilities of native-speakers would you like to achieve most *in the workplace*? (or, in other words, what aspects of your English would you like to improve on most *-in the workplace*?)

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

3. Do you believe your English is good enough to engage in the following interactions adequately:

(a) talking to your subordinates?.... Yes/No.....Why/why Not?

.....

(b) talking to your supervisors?.... Yes/No.....Why/why not?

.....

(c) talking to your clients?..... Yes/No.....Why/why not?

.....

4. Do your work colleagues ever give you any feedback (information) about your English language skills? (*Please specify*)

.....
.....

5. How do you think your colleagues see your English language skills?....

.....
.....

6. Please add any other comments that will give me information about your English language skills in the workplace and how these might impact on your job performance.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for completing the questionnaire. Please return it in the stamped, self-addressed envelope to: Marie Manidis

**Curriculum Support Unit
Adult Migrant English Service
P.O. Box 1222
Darlinghurst 2010**

APPENDIX 2

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

APPENDIX 2 (TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES)

- Q.1. Recognising that **language proficiency** is made up of many different component parts that differ in importance depending on the contexts in which learners find themselves, from your experience, how would you rate the following in order of importance for high levels speakers (AMES O.P. 3-4) to have control of in the workplace?

Most important = 1
Least important = 10

Question 1	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4
(a) Knowledge and control of technical vocab	4	6	5	10
(b) knowledge and control of idiomatic Australian English	3, ie casual conversation	7	2	9 (v)
(c) control of grammatical forms, eg tenses, word order, prepositions, clause formation etc	3-4, c & d linked	4	7	2
(d) control of pronunciation stress, intonation ie general intelligibility	2-3	5	3	1 (iii)
(e) control of discourse skills ie turn taking, feedback, clarification etc	1	2 (i)	1	2 (iv)
(f) knowledge of cross cultural linguistic differences and consequences of these between L1 and English	2, ordering & expression of ideas	2	6	2 (iv)
(g) knowledge and control of specific language tasks or texts ie contextual skills	1	1	4	2 (iv)
(h) other	Assertiveness (including cross cultural aspects)	1-3 (ii)		

Notes added by teachers:

Teacher 2 = (e), (i) *I feel that awareness of linguistic and cultural differences is essential to control of discourse, eg turn taking roles and strategies may be different across languages and cultures. In order to to control topic, hold ground it is essential to understand how behaviours might differ across languages and speech communities.*

(h), (ii) **Other** *Knowledge of appropriate roles, responsibilities, relationships in various workplace speech activities, 1 eg what is my role at a meeting, how should I address others, what should I say, how much should I say and at what level of deference solidarity, I'd weight this 1 as I see it as going hand in hand with knowledge of specific texts, Difficulties in inferring the intention, force of what is said & done dealing with the ambiguity which is part and parcel of cross cultural communication*

- Teacher 4= (d), (iii) *Expression plane is where all language skills and knowledge come together. If a speaker no makter how high level is not intelligible then none of their other skills with English can be revealed or exploited. Stress and intonation are equally if not more important than pronunciation to achieve intelligibility.*
- (iv) 2 *All the lexicogrammar and discourse levels are of equal significance and have to be employed simultaneously.*
- (v) 9 & 10 *These are sub-skills of those represented by 2, Clarification and challenging techniques can overcome gaps in linguistic knowledge here.*

Q.2. Workplace performance depends on more than English language proficiency. The following factors are cited by both workplace supervisors and learners as barrier to successful workplace performance by high level oracy learners. From your experience (an in your opinion) rate these according to how you perceive these factors operating in the workplace to disadvantage workers.

Most likely to act as a barrier = 10

Least likely to act as a barrier = 1

Question 2	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3	Teacher 4
(a) inappropriate strategic management of their jobs ie not following procedures correctly - <i>when this happens, they should talk to their supervisor</i>	10	10 (ii)	4	9, linked very closely to (h)
(b) perceived cultural differences that may create difficulties, eg having a different way to solve a problem in their previous work life	8	4	5	9
(c) personality factors, ie <i>too shy, doesn't speak up at meeting etc</i>	5	8 (iii)	2	7
(d) inability to 'do the task' eg <i>Can't understand instructions</i>	10	5	1	9, usually a result of (h)
(e) phonological language difficulties, eg 'accent', pronunciation, stress patterns	7	6	6	10
(f) not having understanding or sympathetic supervisors & colleagues	10, applies to ESB too	7	3	9
(g) little knowledge of and practice in colloquial, idiomatic Australian speech (fast speech included)	7, can be important for networking	3	9	6
(h) lack of spoken language negotiation techniques, eg giving feedback, asking for clarification or repetition	10	9	10	9
(i) unfamiliarity with contextual features of an exchange eg amount of formality or informality required when addressing colleagues or supervisors	7	8 (iii)	8	8
(j) cross-cultural communication factors eg intonation patterns that might send different messages to interlocutors	7 (i)	8 (iii)	7	8
(k) other	language factors may account for many of these factors	(iv)		

Additional comments made by teachers are included below.

- Teacher 1(j), (i) *Very important in some contexts eg TQM meetings, seems to be varying expert advice on this cf Crosstalk work vs attitude of Roach, would like to see or read more on research*
- Teacher 2 (a), (ii) *Could well be cultural, procedures, roles are different across workplace cultures.*
- (c & i & j), (iii) *Such factors can lead to misjudgements about abilities, personality, attitude. These misjudgements I've observed can mean exclusion from opportunities as well as day to day difficulties in getting on with colleagues.*
- Other, (iv) *Being marginalised from networks through which people find out about opportunities, trends, issues, buzz words etc. This marginalisation could be due to linguistic/cultural factors or attitudes of ESB colleagues.*

Question 3 of the questionnaire read: Elaborate on any of the above factors if you would like to add anything. Responses were as follows.

- Teacher 1: *For two, the culture of the workplace itself is vitally important- horizontal management, worker participation etc reduced many of these barriers.*
- Teacher 2: *One of the most important skills learners need to develop is inferencing. So much of what is said/done in workplaces is communicated indirectly. Many learners are inclined to go in at word level and process meaning "bottom up". They miss the real intention of the other. Knowledge of the scripts and schemas which are associated with speech activities and from which so much of the meaning of what is said is derived, is I think, critical for effective communication.*
- Teacher 3: *No comments.*
- Teacher 4: *No comments.*

Question 4 of the questionnaire read: What is your view of 'language' and/or 'communication' and how does this view impact on your teaching approach? Responses were as follows:

- Teacher 1: *Eclectic. Task oriented (goals targetted). Whole task, generally macro to micro. Influenced by Canale and Swain's competencies: grammatical, strategic, discourse and sociolinguistic.*
- Teacher 2: *I see effective communication as essentially a dynamic and collaborative process in which people create and negotiate meaning together. The ability to communicate effectively in any particular workplace speech activity (meeting, casual conversation, appraisal/promotion, interview etc.) requires shared understanding of the purpose of the activity as well as the sequence of events, roles, rules and norms associated with it. Misunderstandings and misjudgements are likely to occur when people do not share these "scripts".*

During a speech activity the ability to infer each others' intentions is dependent upon this shared knowledge as well as accurate interpretation of the cues which signal intention, attitude and perspective; how we intent our talk to be taken, moment to moment.

Communication also involves perceiving when and why we have lost each other and the effective use of clarification and repair strategies to regain our footing; to get back on track.

My teaching approach involves identifying critical sites of workplace communication through which immigrants of NESB may gain or be denied access to opportunities, status etc, (meetings, interviews, discussions etc.) It involves developing awareness of the scripts of these events; as well as how different communication styles can lead to miscuing and misinterpretation. Knowledge and strategies for inferring the other's intentions are developed as well as strategies for clarification and repair appropriate to the speech activity. My long experience in workplace-based teaching confirms that in multicultural workplaces, the collaboration that is integral to effective communication requires that ESB staff also develop awareness of the different expectations their colleagues may bring to an encounter and how their way of talking may miscue others. Through cross-cultural training they can develop skills to check judgements, and enter into the process of clarification and collaboration.

Teacher 3: *Language involves a number of aspects:*

- *cultural/social*
- *technical-manipulating grammatical and phonetic systems*
- *functional*

Teacher 4: *(I was referred to a recent assignment of the teacher from which the following extracts were taken relating to her approach).*

(My) curriculum framework has three organising principles:

- (1) a framework based on the writing process*
- (2) an event sequence framework for a longer text*
- (3) a genre-based teaching and learning cycle combined with the concept of macro-genre*

APPENDIX 3

EXAMPLES OF ENGLISH IN THE WORKPLACE COMPETENCIES

Competency 10: Write short simple procedural texts

ELEMENTS	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA	CONDITIONS/RANGE	EXAMPLES OF TEXTS/ ASSESSMENT TASKS
<p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> defines the function of written procedures in wider cultural, workplace and job specific contexts <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifies the situation requires procedural texts compares previous experience of similar procedural texts with current text locates models of simple procedural texts collects relevant information for text plans and organises information solves problems associated with task edits text identifies and selects appropriate method of disseminating procedures <p>Textual Elements</p> <p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> predicts purpose and audience of procedural <p>Text Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> structures text with appropriate stages for text type e.g simple , conditional procedures sequences information appropriately to produce coherent text uses cohesive resources appropriately e.g. reference, ellipsis, lexical cohesion, conjunction <p>Grammar and Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> chooses appropriate grammar and vocabulary for text, audience and purpose e.g. numbering, temporal connectives, imperatives, verbs of action, conditionals, technical vocabulary <p>Surface Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses layout and graphic conventions of procedure uses approximate spelling 	<p>1.0 identifies the function of written procedures in wider cultural, workplace and job specific contexts</p> <p>2.0 applies relevant skills e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> states that situation requires procedural texts relates previous experience of similar procedural texts to current text collects models of simple procedural texts selects appropriate information for text selects, sequences and drafts relevant information indicates solutions to problems associated with task edits text selects appropriate method of disseminating text <p>3.0 uses textual elements:</p> <p>3.1 identifies purpose and audience of procedural</p> <p>3.2 employs appropriate text structure :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> structures text with appropriate stages sequences information coherently uses cohesive resources appropriately to enable reader to follow discourse <p>3.2 uses appropriate approximate grammar and vocabulary</p> <p>3.3 employs surface features appropriately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses layout and graphic conventions of procedure uses approximate spelling; meaning is clear 	<p>Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> relevant to specific jobs relevant to ASF level/position simple procedural access to a range of models of procedural texts access to advice/discussion/support from teacher or other workplace personnel access to relevant references e.g. checklists, dictionary classroom conditions <p>Range</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> familiar content and context limited fields close to the action first hand here and now experience short texts close familiar audience concrete, everyday knowledge context dependent uncritical stance to subject matter 	<p>Texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> machine operating instructions instructions in notes process explanation safety code <p>Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> write machine operating instructions



Competency 17: Follow and deliver short spoken procedures

ELEMENTS	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA	CONDITIONS/RANGE	EXAMPLES OF TEXTS/ ASSESSMENT TASKS
<p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> defines the function of procedures in wider cultural and enterprise contexts <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> manages some strategies to deliver/follow simple oral enterprise procedures e.g requests for repetition, clarification and slower speech, checking back, use of non-verbal cues compares previous experience of procedures with current practice locates /devises appropriate models uses some strategies to accommodate varying cultural viewpoints organises/evaluates sequence of information <p>Textual Elements</p> <p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> states purpose of particular enterprise procedure <p>Text Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses/follows stages of procedure e.g. simple procedure, conditional procedure sequences information appropriately to produce coherent text uses cohesive resources appropriately e.g. reference, ellipsis, lexical cohesion, conjunction <p>Grammar/Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses/follows appropriate grammar and vocabulary for audience and purpose e.g. imperative verbs, temporal conjunction, use of pronouns, colloquialisms, technical vocabulary and jargon <p>Surface Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> follows/uses paralinguistic features such as pronunciation, rhythm, stress, intonation and non verbal cues to achieve outcome 	<p>1.0 demonstrates knowledge of function of procedures in wider cultural and enterprise context</p> <p>2.0 applies relevant skills e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates some of strategies to deliver/follow simple enterprises oral procedures relates previous experience of procedures to current practice collects/designs appropriate models uses some strategies to accommodate varying cultural perspectives organises/evaluates sequence of information <p>3.0 uses textual elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> identifies purpose of particular enterprise procedure <p>3.1 employs appropriate text structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> delivers/follows typical stages of procedure sequences information appropriately uses cohesive resources appropriately <p>3.2 demonstrates use of appropriate grammar and vocabulary so that procedure is unambiguous</p> <p>3.3 recognises/adopts paralinguistic features to extent necessary to achieve outcome</p>	<p>Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> relevant to enterprise relevant to ASF level/position with supportive co-workers, team leaders, supervisors with access to relevant references and other texts classroom conditions access to models access to advice/discussions/support from teacher/other workplace personnel <p>Range</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> familiar and unfamiliar content audience less close less first hand here and now experience concrete and abstract knowledge not characterised by everyday discourse critical stance to subject matter 	<p>Texts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> spoken instructions via P.A spoken instructions within meetings security instructions given orally <p>Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> deliver/follow procedure in roleplay or, where practical, in workplace



Competency 21: Read short transactional texts

ELEMENTS	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA	CONDITIONS/RANGE	EXAMPLES OF TEXTS/ ASSESSMENT TASKS
<p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> defines the function of the range of transactional texts in obtaining goods and services in the wider cultural and enterprise contexts <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a range of reading strategies to access information in short transactional texts compares previous experience of short transactional texts with current text <p>Textual Elements</p> <p>Purpose</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> predicts purpose and text from context <p>Textual Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> interprets structure of relevant short transactional texts <p>Grammar/Vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> follows grammar and key vocabulary of relevant short transactional texts e.g. present, past, future tenses, nominal groups, conjunctions, circumstances of time, place, manner, technical vocabulary, idiom <p>Surface Features</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> decodes letters/words as required in a variety of print or handwriting styles 	<p>1.0 demonstrates knowledge of function of the range of transactional texts in wider cultural context and enterprise contents</p> <p>2.0 applies relevant skills e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a range of reading strategies to access information in short transactional texts relates previous experience of short transactional texts to current texts <p>3.0 uses textual elements:</p> <p>3.1 identifies purpose and text</p> <p>3.2 identifies/follows structure of relevant short transactional texts</p> <p>3.3 demonstrates knowledge of key vocabulary and grammar of short transactional texts</p> <p>3.4 decodes letters/words as required for text, types of print, legible handwriting</p>	<p>Conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> relevant to enterprise relevant to ASF level/position simple, familiar transactional texts access to models has access to dictionary and other relevant reference material seeks assistance from others as necessary classroom conditions <p>Range</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> wide range of fields familiar and unfamiliar content distant audience little first hand here and now experience distant from action knowledge: concrete and abstract language not characterised by everyday spoken discourse critical stance to subject matter 	<p>Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> personnel notices union notice appeals e.g. blood bank social club notices <p>Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> read text and answers oral questions

APPENDIX 4

CLASSROOM MATERIALS FROM LESSONS

CLASS 1

CRITERIA FOR GOOD COMMUNICATION

ASSERTIVE
BEHAVIOUR

WIN/WIN
=
WIN

You are behaving ASSERTIVELY when you:

- put forward your own point of view (rights) firmly, but *without violating* the point of view (rights) of the other person
- express your thoughts and wants *appropriately* and *directly*

At the end of such an exchange there is a WIN/WIN situation, that is, each feels he or she has gained, or at least retained, something. Each feels reasonably content. The situation is in balance long term. WIN/WIN = WIN

AGGRESSIVE
BEHAVIOUR

WIN/LOSE
=
LOSE

You are behaving AGGRESSIVELY when you:

- put forward your own point of view (rights) but in doing so, *deny* or *violate* the point of view (rights) of the other person
- express your thoughts or wants *inappropriately*

At the end of such an exchange, you may feel (for a time) that you have gained something, but the other person will feel they have lost something - particularly self-respect or the respect of others. The situation is not in balance long term. This is a WIN/LOSE situation - and in the long term WIN/LOSE = LOSE

NON-ASSERTIVE
BEHAVIOUR

LOSE/WIN
=
LOSE

You are behaving NON-ASSERTIVELY when you:

- *fail to put forward* your own point of view (rights) or do so *apologetically* or in a way that can be ignored
- express your thoughts or wants in very *indirect* ways

In such an exchange, the other person may feel good (for a time) but you will feel bad for a long time. The situation is not in balance long term. It is a LOSE/WIN situation and in the long term, LOSE/WIN = LOSE

IN WIN/WIN SITUATIONS, RIGHTS ARE BALANCED WITH
RESPONSIBILITIES

BODY LANGUAGE

BEHAVIOUR

ASSERTIVE

NON-ASSERTIVE

AGGRESSIVE

Eye Contact

Direct but not staring.
Open and frank.

Looking away or down

Staring
Cold
Disinterested
Looking down nose
Narrow eyes

Facial Expression

Relaxed and attentive

Swallowing
Laughing or smiling when
expressing anger
Wincing
Biting or wetting lips

Tight lipped
Clenched teeth

Posture

Well-balanced, erect
Relaxed

Stooped
Head nodding

Rigid
Hands on hips

Gestures

Relaxed
Hands emphasising key
words

Fidgety
Covering mouth or hands
with hands
Nervously wringing hands

Finger pointing
Fist pounding
Clenched fist

Voice

Relaxed
Well modulated
Clear
Appropriate warm or firm

Overly soft
Mumbling
Running words into each
other
Gaps between words
Monotone

Loud or strident
Sarcastic
Condescending

CLASS 2

RULES OF THE INTERVIEW GAME IN AUSTRALIA

1. Sell yourself.
2. Answer questions directly
3. Maintain eye contact.
4. Know the job well, i.e. research the position
 - a) so that applicant can ask good questions.
 - b) knows what the company does, what its image is, etc.
 - c) appears positive and shows initiative.
5. Know the essential/desirable qualifications as stipulated.
6. Ask questions to be rephrased if not understood.
7. Bring along originals of references.
8. Show documents - don't just bring them and hold them.
9. Applicant should know positions/structure/function of the interview (should take time to find this out early on) Roleplay
10. State experience, skills, knowledge. Demonstrate in answers examples of work experiences, i.e. concrete examples.
11. Bring (exact) documentation of your work experience i.e. concrete examples.
12. Respond to hypothetical with concrete examples
13. If unhappy with one of your answers, ask to return to it.
14. Choose referees carefully and inform them - check whether it would be a positive one.
15. Expected to nominate your Supervisor as a referee (authenticity of this point to be verified)
16. Often NESB referees are outside the Public Service
17. Convenor must ask the same questions of all referees and questions must only be about the job.
18. Overseas referees: a problem as they would be discounted very quickly.
19. Say most important things first, i.e. within the first 30 seconds.
20. Dress appropriately i.e. a) to culture and b) to level of position.
21. Second-guess the questions to be asked.
22. Shake hands (if offered)

Handwritten notes:
1. *St. ...*
...
...
Watch ...

The Regent Melbourne Hotel, Melbourne's leading international hotel, wishes to make the following appointment:

DUTY MANAGER

This is an opportunity for a Hotel professional to fulfil this very exacting position. The appointee will need to have several years' experience in front office procedures as well as a proven record in supervisory duties in international hotel standards.

EDP experience will be well regarded as will appropriate tertiary qualifications. Being multi-lingual will be a distinct advantage.

The appointee will assist in all facets of day-to-day hotel operations including the handling of and reporting of unexpected problems, unusual situations and must be able to provide an efficient and courteous service to guests. The appointee must be able to cope with pressure and hard work, dealing with all situations with the required acumen as well as demonstrating initiative and motivation.

All applications should be addressed to:

The Recruitment Officer,
The Regent of Melbourne,
25 Collins Street,
Melbourne, Victoria, 3000.

An equal opportunity employer.

the
REGENT
MELBOURNE

00832

TASK ACTIVITY - Managing interview talk

The following interactions occurred in job interviews involving people from different cultural backgrounds .

Examine each interaction and discuss:

- how you could interpret or understand what is going on.
- *what advice you would give the applicant*

1. Interviewer: Can you tell us why we should appoint you to this job?
Applicant: Well I am qualified for the job. I have a masters degree in economics from the premier university in my country. Do you see from my resume I have very good qualifications?
2. Interviewer: Can you tell us about occupational health and safety principles and how they would relate to this position?
Applicant: Of course! I have studied much about occupational health and safety. I have read the Act. I know alot about these things. I was even nominated for the committee of course
- 3 Interviewer: Why do you think that your the right person for the job?
Applicant: I may not be the right person for the job , but I will do my best. I am a very humble person and I am very loyal.
4. Interviewer: What is your opinion of rotation as a means for developing skills?
Applicant: My management has introduced the policy of rotation..... they believe it is a good training method. I have been rotated to other positions.
5. Interviewer: What about the library interests you most?
Applicant: What about the library in terms of the books?
.....or the whole building?
Interviewer: Any point that you would like to make?
Applicant: Oh, the children's books, because I have child, and the children...you know there are so many you know books for them to read... you know, and little things that would interest them would interest me too.

from "Gungers"
6. Interviewer: Do you have any questions you would like to ask?
Applicant: Of course. Perhaps you could inform me of training opportunities. In my opinion training must be given when the organization is making changes.

Philippe

- Doesn't have managerial experience
- Lacked knowledge of Regent
- Demonstrated good knowledge of current issues/trends in the industry
- In depth awareness of customer's needs. ~~Not committed to this position.~~
- No EDP experience
- Difficulties with Aust. accent.
- Speaks French.
- Not researched position. Little knowledge of Regent
- Inappropriately dressed for the position
- Pleasing, relaxed personality
- Motivated but lacked experience
- Question his enthusiasm, commitment as asks for transfer.
- His approach was not formal... may be inappropriate in hotel.
- Open, honest in answering.
- "good background - French" (Delia) - advantage in hospitality industry.
- "accent will enhance hotel" (Delia).
- No proven supervisory experience
- No evidence of front office work
- No demonstrated initiative in solving difficulties.
- Good record in customer service
- Rated positive on interpersonal skills.
- No appropriate tertiary qualifications
- English/French skills
- Has appropriate supervisory training.

for a transfer.

Does have summer for position.
courteous, pleasing personality.

Rules of the Interview game

- Listen to the questions
 - Talk slowly
 - Give past experience and connect this with your wish to fill the position; with the requirements of the position
 - Prepare and rehearse questions related to essentials.
 - Do not interrupt the panel; wait your turn.
 - Answer questions honestly, to the best of your knowledge.
 - Be yourself
 - Be concise, direct, to the point and answer the questions.
 - Sell yourself and express interest in the position.
 - Try to understand the underlying intention of the question.
 - Be brief and specific
 - Be aware that overuse of gestures may have negative effect.
 - Be yourself and ~~be~~ confident in including relevant ~~anecdotes~~ experience in your answer.
 - Use concise, factual answers.
 - Answer questions using concrete examples.
 - Give positive answers.
 - Show ability to cope with unexpected questions. Take time to think.
 - Be prepared ~~through~~ research of company and duties
 - ~~Be~~ Be prepared to sell on tape
- write a good application
 - Know the techniques of the interview
 - Dress appropriately for the position and for the interview
 - If you get a double question, make sure the panel is aware you are answering both parts

Listen to the applicant for the position, Duty Manager, Regent Hotel
What rules of the interview game does he/she break?

Comment on the applicant's performance in relation to the criteria and qualities you developed as panel members.

ESSENTIALS	PANELISTS COMMENT.
Proven supervisory experience in hotels at an international level	
Several years experience in front office procedures	
Ability to meet deadlines	
Demonstrated initiative in solving unexpected difficulties	
Proven record in customer relations	
Excellent interpersonal skills	
DESIRABLES	
IDP experience	
Appropriate tertiary qualifications	
Ability to speak other languages	"he's got the ability"
QUALITIES	
Dedicated and diligent	
Sophisticated	
Well presented	
Curtious, pleasing personality	

CLASS 3

Australian Literature

Aboriginal

#Morgan, Sally My Place

Gilbert, Kevin (Poet and activist)

Walker, Kath (Poet)

Women of the Sun

Early Settlement

Clark, Marcus For the Term of his Natural Life

#Facey, A.B. A Fortunate Life

The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith

#Lawson ,Henry "The Loaded Dog" and other short stories

Contemporary

Astley,Thea It's Raining in Mango

Chatwin, Bruce Songlines

Carlotta,Nina They're a Wierd Mob

Corris, Peter Cliff Hardy detective novels

#Davidson,Robyn Tracks

Ireland,David Burn

Kineally,T Bring Larks and Heroes

Malouf,D Harland's Half Acre

Mc Culloch,C The Thorn Birds

*White,Patrick Voss

Ask other people to recommend a book.

Possible Holiday Tasks Which may help you Develop Cultural Awareness

1. Australian Literature

Read some Australian literature.

Write a brief synopsis. Include the following information:

- Author
- Title
- Level of English
- Subject Matter
- Cultural information

2. Culture Bump

Tell us about a 'culture bump' which you have experienced.

'A culture bump occurs when an individual from one culture finds himself or herself in a different, strange or uncomfortable situation when interacting with persons of a different culture.' (Archer 1986)

This would include misunderstandings that occur such as polite/impolite behaviour, correct/incorrect procedures at work and uncomfortable moments in social interaction.

When a culture bump occurs a person can examine the situation and gain new insight into their own and other cultural expectations.

The process can be outlined in 7 steps:

- a) Pinpoint the time when you have felt different
- b) Define the situation
- c) List the behaviour of the other person
- d) List your own behaviour
- e) List your feelings
- f) List the behaviour you would expect from someone of your culture
- g) What is the underlying value that prompts that expectation?

Write a brief summary of your observations.

Problem Solving

I had a phone call from a client asking why she is getting less benefit when her partner is unemployed. I looked on the computer - she is getting less, but it is the entitlement she is entitled to. I asked her whether she is paying rent. She said, "No."

CLERK: Sorry this is the maximum we can pay.

CLIENT: How come I know one lady who is staying with her children and getting more?

CLERK: They're circumstances may be different.

CLIENT: No . We are the same. Like them.

CLERK: I can't help more than this because this is the maximum we can pay you.

The client isn't worried about what she has to do next. She continues: "She is getting more. Why am I getting less? (She is being very polite and asking for help)

I couldn't do more than that. So I go on and say "I understand your problem but I can't help you"

She was talking to me for more than fifteen minutes. My supervisor got annoyed because there is so much work pending. But i couldn't break the conversation because the client was so polite and in need of help.

- 1.What does the client want?
- 2.What does the clerk want?
- 3.Was the clerk assertive, aggressive or non-assertive?
- 4.Was the client happy at the end of the conversation?
- 5.Was the clerk happy at the end of the conversation?
- 6.Was the supervisor happy at the end of the conversation?
7. What did the supervisor want?
8. Where did the conversation break down?
- 9.What strategies could the clerk have used to repair or avoid the breakdown?

Problem Solving

Dealing with Calls that go Too Long

Last week we discussed two enquiries which took a long time to resolve and were referred to other people.

The first was a counter enquiry.

A young man attended the counter to enquire why his payments had decreased. The clerk told the client that his rental assistance had been taken away. They then became involved in a heated discussion about computer and bank book records. The client then asked to speak to a supervisor who then referred him to a social worker. Later the supervisor arranged to have the rental assistance restored. All that was needed was proof of rental amount.

The second was a telephone enquiry.

The caller was adept with DSS jargon and wanted the Central Office telephone number. The Admin Officer gave the client the central office number. Central Office later called to say that the enquiry could have been dealt with at a regional level.

Reasons why the calls went too long

-Lack of clarification eg - get details about client identity or particular to the enquiry(eg Proof of rental payment).

Details which should always be clear

Establish the identity of the caller.

- Name, SSR number, Benefit, Date of Birth or Current Address

-Client or another officer?

Establish the purpose of the call.

What is the appropriate action to take?

Do not get distracted by irrelevant details.]

Feedback to the client to let him or her know that you have understood the main purpose of the call will help the call to run smoothly.

Clarification may be necessary if the details are not clear.

Idioms

The Play

In 'The Play' CJ Dennis uses idioms to describe:

- * people
- * love
- * fighting

What do the following words mean:

People

a barmy goat _____
the tart _____
a bloke _____
a crowd of crooks _____
narks _____
brute _____
a gorspil cove _____
a fair gazob _____
cobber _____
the cops _____
guy _____
the skirt _____

Love

to smooze or smooch _____
a slap up treat _____
two love birds _____
she feared he'd bolt _____
turns on the waterworks _____

Fighting

Don't sling that crowd of mine no lip!

a real ding-dong _____
put in the boot _____
to snuff it _____

Exercise 1
Conversation 1

AUSSIE TALK (Part 2)

A: "We're going to the snow this weekend."

B: " You lucky things, hope you get lots of snow. "

A: " Yeah, we're _____."



Conversation 2

A: "How was the class today?"

B: "Oh, only 4 people _____."

Conversation 3

A: "Are you worried about your new job?"

B: "No, I can _____."



Conversation 4

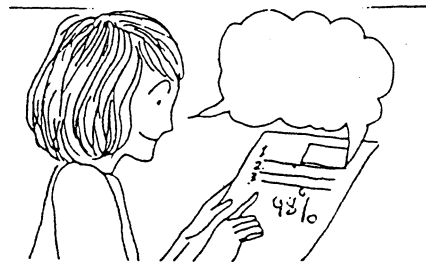
A: "How did you go with your loan application?"

B: "No good, it _____"

Conversation 5

A: "How was the exam?"

B: "Oh, it was _____."



Conversation 6

A: "Well then, Helen, _____ in your new job."

B: " Thanks a lot."



Aussie Talk (Part 2)

Conversation 7

A: "Are we still going out tonight?"

B: "No, _____, Arthur's sick."



Conversation 8

A: "You know how old he is?"

B: "No, how old?"

A: "52"

B: " _____!"

Conversation 9

A: "I dented my dad's car on Saturday night."

B: "Oh, did you, what did he say?"

A: "He _____!"



Conversation 10

A: "Where's Julie today?"

B: "Oh, she's probably _____"

Exercise 2 Aussie Talk (Part 2)

Match the Australian English term with the Normal English term.

Australian English

Normal English

We're keeping our fingers crossed

It's been cancelled

No-one turned up

It was easy

Do it standing on my head

Nobody came

It fell through

He was very angry

It was a breeze

Have a day off work

All the best

We're hoping for the best

It's all off

Do it easily, do it without any problem

You're kidding!

It wasn't successful, it didn't workout

He hit the roof!

Good luck for the future!

Take a sickie

That's not really true, is it?

CLASS 4

DSP Literacy Project
Met. East 1988.

Example of Exposition

I think the Canterbury Council should construct more Activity Centres in most local areas.

Firstly, children can keep busy as well as have fun in the holidays. Secondly, they learn a lot about how to do certain things. Finally, it might stop children vandalising properties that don't belong to them because they can go to the Activity Centres.

During the school holidays, many children who don't have much on their minds can attend their local Activity Centre. It will keep them busy and they can also learn to do lots of different things.

Another reason is children can encourage others to attend the local Activity Centre. This way children will not get so bored because they can have lots of fun.

Moreover, it could stop children from vandalising others' property because they have better things to do like going to the Activity Centre and having fun and enjoying themselves.

These are the main reasons why I think we should have more Activity Centres. It will be very educational and a very good experience for lots of children.

by Nha Vyem Chau
6C Lakemba.

REPORT PLANNING GUIDE

Preliminary

1. What sort of report is required for this project?
2. When must it be ready?
3. What do I want the report to achieve?

Audience

1. Who will be the main reader?
2. What does s/he already know about the subject?
3. What does s/he want to know?
4. What is his/her attitude to the subject?
5. Who else will read and respond to the report?

Planning

1. Purpose statement:
2. Scope statement:
3. Format:
4. Organisation/Structure:

PROJECT NAME:

DATE:

PROJECT BRIEF:

Broad Aim	Objectives	Strategies	Planned Outcomes	Evaluation

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