

l'existence de tant de différences entre apprenants découlent quelques conséquences pratiques dans la programmation des activités d'apprentissage et dans la conception des systèmes de formation. Dans le domaine des activités d'apprentissage la variété la plus grande est de rigueur, non pas pour satisfaire à quelque désir ludique de changement, mais pour fournir aux différents types d'apprenants des activités susceptibles de leur assurer la meilleure approche possible pour l'apprentissage. Fournir des occasions diverses de mettre en pratique, et en question, les activités devient un impératif d'enseignement de première priorité. La conséquence sur les systèmes de formation est l'orientation vers l'autonomisation qui représente un moyen privilégié de rendre accessibles et praticables les différents types d'activités, et ainsi de permettre la mise en activité de tous les potentiels de l'apprenant, condition de l'exercice d'un choix individuel et responsable.

BIBLIOGRAPHIE:

- DICKINSON, Leslie (1987): *Self-instruction in Language Learning*, Cambridge University Press.
- DUDA, Richard; PHILIP, RILEY (1990): *Learning Styles*, Presses Universitaires de Nancy.
- ELLIS, Gail; BARBARA, SINCLAIR (1989): *Learning to Learn English*, Cambridge University Press.
- NARCY, Jean Paul (1990): *Apprendre une langue étrangère, didactique des langues: le cas de l'anglais*, Paris, Les Editions d'organisation.
- OMALLEY, J. Michael; ANNA UH CHAMMOT (1990): *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition*, Cambridge University Press.
- WILLING, Ken (1989): *Teaching how to learn, Learning strategies in ESL*, Sidney, Macquarie University.

COMMUNICATION, STRATEGY AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

ODILE RÉGENT

MY TOPIC today is vast and complex: the terms in the title are widely used, sometimes misused or even abused in the field of applied linguistics. So I will first try and clarify the terms and see how they relate to self-directed learning. Then I will be dealing with learners' representations which are the starting point of any learner-centered approach. Thirdly, I will analyse three examples of teacher/counsellor-learner interactions focusing on the roles of teacher and counsellor and to conclude, I will endeavour to draw up a tentative profile of the good counsellor in a self-directed learning scheme.

CLARIFYING TERMS

The word strategy has been used in many fields: games, business, politics, not to mention its first military use. In applied linguistics, we find it associated with communication and learning, and also in other expressions such as reading, listening strategies, or cognitive, social, conversational strategies. Let us look at the definitions we find in the most common desk dictionaries:

strategy: the science of planning and directing large scale military operations, of maneuvering forces into the most advantageous position prior to actual engagement with the enemy.
a plan or action based on this.
skill in managing or planning. (Webster's)

Generalship, the art of war. (lit. and fig.); management of an army or armies in a campaign, art of so moving or disposing the troops or ships or aircraft as to impose upon the enemy the place and time and conditions for fighting preferred by oneself. (COD)

These definitions have interesting semantic features: strategy is a science, an art, a skill. It involves a conflictual situation with a declared enemy. But the war metaphor should not be taken too far, especially in uses in a communication or

learning context. The most relevant feature is that of a large scale operation, involving conscious planning, with a view to imposing one's preference.

communication strategy: a way used to express a meaning in a second or foreign language by a learner who has a limited command of the language. (Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics)

In this definition, the word strategy is somewhat inaccurate as it does not imply a large scale maneuver. Tactics would be more appropriate («art of disposing military or naval or air forces in actual contact with the enemy; procedure calculated to gain some end; skilful device(s)» COD)

Some authors widen the definition to «denote the planning strategies that we use in interaction to reach our communicative goals in the best way we can.» (Willems: 68). «Strategies may be used for getting our way in the interaction with our interlocutor, for trying to make him positively or negatively inclined towards us or to prolong or break off our discourse.»

Thus, we may talk about strategic competence which is useful in L1 as well as L2. That competence may be innate, natural, acquired or altogether absent in the mother tongue.

learning strategy: a way in which a learner attempts to work out the meanings and uses of words, grammatical rules, and other aspects of a language. (LDAL)
cognitive strategy= cognitive style = learning style: the particular way in which a learner tries to learn something. (LDAL)

Cognitive strategies and tactics are special cases of information processing and management.

Communication strategies and learning strategies are clearly linked: we do need all kinds of large scale strategies and local tactics to communicate as well as to learn how to communicate, and indeed to learn how to learn. For instance, if a learner asks her interlocutor for help to find a particular word in a foreign language, she does so to be able to carry on communicating, and at the same time to learn a new word. Learning strategies as well as communication strategies can be conscious or largely automated. They can be learnt and acquired.

LEARNER REPRESENTATIONS

The communicative approach entails focusing on the learner. Taking into account various needs and learning styles leads to individualization and eventually to the idea of autonomy: the management of learning by the learner her-

self, as the only format capable of accommodating all the above mentioned parameters. In order to be able to engage in autonomous learning, the learner must review her representations of what a language is and of what learning a language is, so that she can move from the role of consumer to the role of producer of her own learning programme. She must switch from being taught to learning, which means undergoing a debriefing process followed by a reconstruction process (Holec, 1987).

From their previous experience, learners all have representations and beliefs about language and their perception of a communication situation is based on those beliefs which are largely culture-specific. They are social constructs rooted in the collective unconscious and ideologies. For instance, the French view German as a more grammatical language than English, Italian as more musical than Spanish etc. (Riley, 1993). The learners' belief system needs to be elicited in order to be modified to hopefully make learning easier and more effective. Here are some beliefs about language learning common in France:

- there's only one right way of learning a language
- a good teacher knows it
- you can only learn from a teacher who corrects your mistakes
- the teacher knows what you should learn and when
- learning a language means learning to think in that language
- the model is the native speaker
- only L2 should be used in the classroom
- learning a language means memorizing words
- you can never finish learning a language
- to maintain your L2 you have to continue to take courses

Helpers need to be aware of learners' representations in order to adapt their counselling strategies. Beliefs and representations should be viewed in the wider context of sociology of knowledge and knowledge management: the way we speak to learners and allow them to speak reflects the system of knowledge management in our society (Riley, 1993). There is often a misfit between institutional aims and discourse and learner aims and discourse. Self access implies a new way of speaking to learners.

To illustrate this we will study a few extracts from teaching and counselling discourse. The first example is a transcript of an English conversation class in a French engineering school. The teacher is a native speaker of English.

1. TEACHER right, let's er. Let's start a little late, er. So you've to continue the conversation. er. between this customer and assistant. in a shop. OK? So a customer buys, wants to buy some size 30 red cord jeans. What are cor jeans?

STUDENT 1 un jeans délavé

2. T cor, cord jeans. This this material... chance if anybody's got any on Yes er. Christelle has got some cord jeans on

S1 fais voir, fais voir

3. T cord, cord trousers, erm... alright, du velours, in French you'd say. The, the material with lines...

S2 that is not...

4. T that's that's not

S2 no

5. T mince alors! er. it's er. it's these trousers which er. have sorts of lines going down them. OK bumps. OK. that's what you call cord, corduroy... so (reading) Good morning, can I help you? Have you got any red cord jeans in stock? size 30... I'm afraid we've only got brown in that size. (end) er. Pascal, would you like to do, the next bit please.

S3 yeah. how much for a brown one?

6. T how much for a brown one?

S3 yeah

7. T er. how much for a brown one is er. is not wrong. B' I don't think you would say that, in this context. What did the rest of you put?

S2 how much are they?

8. T how much are they yes or...

S4 how much does, does it cost?

9. T not it

S4 do they

10. T yeah how much do they cost, alright er. plural alright trousers er are plural, how much do they cost? (reading) They are 15.95 Pounds a pair (end) er. the customer, the next bit er. Charles

S5 euh... when do you think you'll be delivered euh, some red ones?

11. T when d'you think

S5 you... will be

12. T when do you think you will be delivered some red ones.. tha that's. you might you might say that but I don't think it's. particularly correct. I was delivered something. something is delivered. OK but you aren't delivered something... OK er... what else did you put there, Sandrine, what did you put?

- S6 euh. when d'you think you will receive euh. some red ones?
13. T yes, yeah that'll be fine. er when d'you think you'll receive or. er when d'you think you will be receiving; OK you could use the continuous. er. or getting, when d'you think you'll be getting some.

COMMENTARY

1. Beginning of a lesson. Teacher initiates, sets the task, imposes a situation. Asks question to check students' knowledge of words.
2. Explains. Exemplifies
3. Translates
5. Gives a model. Requests student to take speaking turn
6. Assesses correctness of form
7. Gives information on language use. Asks other students
8. Approves
9. Signals a grammar mistake
10. Gives grammar rule. Calls on other student
11. Repeats, tries to elicit correct form
12. Explains rule of use. Checks other students' work
13. Assesses. Gives alternative form

In terms of teaching acts, we find setting task, distributing speaking turns, which fall in the category of classroom management, (interactive zone), giving information, explaining, clarifying, signaling errors where the teacher assumes the role of knower of the language (cognitive and metacognitive zone); criticizing, approving, assessing, which could be classified as social-emotional cooperation (affective zone).

As for learner strategies, not much is apparent in this particular extract where learners do not have much choice. Objectives, time, place, procedure and assessment are all imposed by the teacher. Learners merely answer questions and resort to French when they do not know.

Extract n.° 2 is a conversation between a learner and his counsellor in our self-directed learning scheme (see S. Bailly's paper for description). The learner has been working on a course with a strong focus on grammatical progression.

1 LEARNER Enfin j'arrive à peu près à faire 2 heures par jour
2 COUNSELLOR Ah quand même

3 L Hein et puis alors après, quand j'ai vu des leçons, alors je tâche de le remarquer comme ça (ah oui...) par coeur ..(hum hum...) oui.

- 4 C vous révisiez alors
- 5 L oui je révise
- 6 C et ça vous fait du bien de reprendre ça?
- 7 L ben oui. Et puis là ..euh..et puis quelquefois c'est désolant parce qu'on a l'impression qu'on savait bien et puis après euh.. 8 jours après on le sait plus. Oui.
- 8 C oui mais ça, c'est parce que vous ne pouvez pas l'appliquer. Il faudrait que vous voyiez un anglophone plus souvent à ce moment là ..(oui...). Qu'est ce que vous en pensez?
- 9 L oui il faudra que.. ben.. alors après c'est.. dans un bout de temps, dans 3 semaines et puis après je reverrai ça avec un américain.
- 10 C oui parce que c'est là qu'on se rend compte finalement si on y arrive ou si on n'y arrive pas. L'inconvénient de ces méthodes là, c'est qu'ils sont extrêmement détaillées, c'est à dire qu'on y fait attention à tous les détails, on met un *-ing*, on met *that* ..(oui..) alors euh.. ben en fait on s'aperçoit dans la conversation courante, si on oublie un *-ing*, ben c'est pas dramatique ..(oui..) la personne en face de vous aura compris ..(oui..) autrement dit, ben, une démarche comme ça c'est très perfectionniste et ça vous retient par moment, hein ?
- 11 L Je sais bien oui
- 12 C Hein? ça vous bloque parce qu'on se dit ah! je sais plus ce qu'il fallait mettre, alors on est 2 secondes en train de chercher ce qu'il faut mettre et s'il y a quelqu'un en face de vous, ça va l'ennuyer parce qu'on est si longtemps. Vous comprenez, vous, vous ne voyez pas faire de faute mais..
- 13 L Oui par exemple, oui c'est vrai (...)
- 14 C c'est pour ça que je vous dis qu'il faudrait équilibrer un peu de temps en temps avec un anglophone, pour vous décontracter vis à vis de..
- 15 L oui par exemple il est écrit *he is jumping for joy* (..) he's jump for joy, ça, ça se voit pas ..(non..) oui.
- 16 C on entend à peine hein. De toutes façons l'anglophone entendra même pas puisqu'il supposera qu'il y a un *-ing*, hein alors euh..
- 17 L oui oui parce que l'autre jour à la télévision il y a eu, ah je sais plus quoi, un Iranien, je sais plus, qui parlait très très bien le français ..(oui..) et tout d'un coup, je sais pas pour quoi, j'ai fait attention, je me suis aperçu qu'il ne disait pas *tu* au féminin, qu'il disait toujours *le*. Et c'était vraiment passé inaperçu parce qu'il parlait très vite

- 18 C oui oui parce que nous on les entend parce que si on les anticipe hein ..(oui..) on les remet. Si on dit le chaise, on sait que c'est la en français, on ne fait pas attention.. (le chaise..) on dirait le.. chaise au bout de 2 secondes, on les entendrait, mais quand on parle vite..
- 19 L Oui oui il parlait très vite. Oui ben c'était le nouveau président de la République Iranienne, je ne sais pas si c'est (Bani Sadr) Bani Sadr, il parlait très vite et puis oui, eh bien je me suis dit, ben oui, tiens, il a mis tout au masculin.

COMMENTARY

- 1-5: Learner explains his work technique: learning by heart, revising. Courageous him to talk (yes, hum)
- 6: C questions technique used
- 7: L expresses disappointment with his technique
- 8: C explains. Suggests other strategy. Insists
- 9: L postpones, gains time
- 10: C clarifies her point of view, explains, analyses coursebook, explains drawbacks of methodology used. L agrees 11
- 12: C analyses communicative situation, reiterates suggestion 14, justifies
- 15: L reflects on C's explanation. C agrees, confirms 16.
- 17-19: L relates to his own previous experience. Takes in C's explanation. Interactional structure: L initiates. 8: C takes the lead, 17: L takes the lead.
- content structure: 1-9: work procedures, 10-19: representation of language

In terms of strategies and tactics, we can offer the following analysis: the learner has a representation of language as a combination of right words and correct grammar. The counsellor feels that he should focus less on grammar and more on actual communication and she suggests he make an appointment with a native speaker. The learner rejects the suggestion politely and uses procrastination as a tactic (9). The counsellor insists and clarifies her point. The learner agrees verbally but is clearly not convinced until he recalls his own experience (17). He remembers hearing a foreigner who spoke French «very very well» and suddenly realising that that person was deliberately avoiding the gender problem by putting all nouns in the masculine, and yet, because his French was so good and fluent, it went unnoticed. What we see here (17-19) is the beginning of a

process of change taking place through interaction and negotiation. Nothing is forced upon the learner and he could go on ignoring the counsellor's suggestion as he did before. While resisting the counsellor's suggestions, the learner has been processing the information given to him, and when he can relate it to his past experience, he starts taking in the counsellor's explanations. Of course representations do not change in a day, and it will probably be some time before the learner's representation is really changed and before he can act upon it.

Example 3 is a conversation between a counsellor and a group of students negotiating organisational details with one of the students (see S. Bailly for a description of the MIMAGE scheme).

- 1 COUNSELLOR Je..j'ai pas l'impression qu'il y a d'autres gens qui ont demandé de faire économie-informatique sur cassette. Ca va, t'étais pas..? t'as l'air vaguement déprimé. Si c'est le cas..
- 2 STUDENT ben oui, un peu, oui (rire)
- 3 C ben ça commence bien
- 4 S mais j'ai quand même bien compris euh.. (euh..) ça m'embête quoi.
- 5 C non mais attends attends, parce que.. ici le.. l'objectif c'est pas.. c'est pas d'être meilleur que les autres, c'est simplement de.. (oui, non mais) de faire des progrès par rapport à son niveau
- 6 S moi c'qui m'.. oui, bien sûr.. de comprendre quand même.
- 7 C Donc euh.. mais si ça te déprime d'être avec des super mecs qui comprennent tout, bon il vaut mieux que.. (rire) si.. si ils vont te foutre des complexes, ben lâche les tout de suite (oui) Enfin..non enfin.. sérieusement hein, parce que .. (oui oui oui) l'année dernière ya eu le cas de..bon d'une fille qui était avec des gens un peu plus forts que.. Dès qu'elle s'est mise dans un coin toute seule, ben elle est devenue normale quoi. Et puis elle n'avait plus de complexes ni rien euh...
- 8 S C'que j'pourrais faire la semaine prochaine, c'est peut-être d'essayer de.. de travailler seul (Mm) à mon rythme.
- 9 C oui OK ben c'est, tu fais comme tu veux
- 10 S avec la cassette euh..
- 11 C et puis si tu trouves que tout seul c'est un peu.. tu te trouves un peu isolé et.. tu manques de.. de punching comme ça, ben on essaie de trouver quelqu'un d'autre.. (oui..) Ne te désespère pas trop par.. (rire) non, non mais c'est normal, surtout dans les premières semaines qu'il y a des mecs qui.. qui arrivent à la fin

du cours courtés sous le poids de.. (rire) des complexes divers et variés pleurant un peu hein..Puis de toutes façons ben euh.. pour l'instant y a juste 9 groupes. Alors si y en avait 10 ce serait peut-être pas trop catastrophique. Mais si ça commençait à grimper en cours, ben j'dirais non, stop.

The problem dealt with here is only organisational. Self-directed learning in an institutional context entails a number of constraints: there must be strict organisation rules for everyone to work in satisfactory conditions. But flexibility is also necessary as learners should be given enough options and choices.

The whole of this extract is about management of the learning situation and socio-emotional cooperation. A student in a self-directed group is depressed because he feels he is weaker than the others. Yet he likes his group and is reluctant to leave. The counsellor suggests he tries to work on his own, and if he does not like it, he will then try and find him a peer.

The counsellor is caring (1) and supportive (11). He warns the student about possible problems if he tries to stick to the group in spite of the difficulties (7). He gives him advice and leaves him full choice (9, 11) but takes his own constraints into account (11): he can manage 9 or 10 groups, but not more, and therefore, would refuse to allow other groups to split.

COUNSELLING AND TEACHING

After this short survey of teacher and counsellor discourse, we may now draw conclusions as to what distinguishes counselling from teaching.

TEACHING	COUNSELLING
setting objectives	eliciting information about aims needs and wishes
determining course content	why, what for, how, how long
selecting materials	giving information, clarifying
determining time, place, pace	suggesting materials
determining learning tasks	suggesting methodology
determining use of L1/L2	suggesting other sources
managing class interaction	listening, responding
initiating	helping self monitoring
monitoring learning situation	interpreting information
keeping records	giving feedback, reformulating
allocating homework	suggesting organisation procedures

TEACHING	COUNSELLING
presenting vocabulary & grammar	presenting materials
explaining	analysing techniques
answering questions	offering alternative procedures
	answering queries
marking, grading	suggesting self-assessment tools
testing	giving feedback on self-assessment
motivating	being positive
rewarding, punishing	supporting
counselling	putting into perspective

Teaching and counselling are obviously entirely different functions. A teacher cannot be turned into a counsellor overnight. The switch from being in control and exercising authority to holding back, listening and avoiding imposing one's ideas may take some time and in some rare cases prove unattainable (people who chose teaching because they like to be in full control).

The top of the chart is concerned with the management of the learning procedure: whereas the teacher takes most decisions, the counsellor elicits information from the learner and suggests learning procedures. Feedback, mostly through reformulation, is especially important: it helps the learner see herself as a learner in the mirror of the counsellor's interpretation.

In the second part, we clearly see two different roles: the teacher acts as a knower of the language to be learnt, the counsellor as an expert on language learning. (It is not necessary to master the target language perfectly to be a good counsellor). Assessment is carried out by the teacher, while the counsellor only helps in self-assessment.

The last part shows the zone of socio-emotional cooperation. More generally, teaching is on the prescriptive side while counselling is more supportive. Of course, there are many possible in-between situations. As there are degrees of learner self-direction, there are degrees of teacher directness. A teacher can decide to do less teaching and more counselling, and shift gradually from one role to another.

THE GOOD COUNSELLOR: A TENTATIVE PROFILE

The good counsellor is: **communicative and interactive**: she/he is a good listener and a good responder who finds ways of making people talk. Interactional order is of the essence. The learner should always have precedence. The counsellor suggests and does not impose her categories on the learner.

pertinent: she/he offers techniques that suit learners' representations and learning strategies
flexible: she/he can adapt to any new situation created by the learner or his personal development
supportive: she/he encourages the learner and takes a positive line.

CONCLUSION

Research in applied linguistics in the 1960's focused on the good language teacher. In the 70's 80's, the focus shifted to the good language learner, often leaving the teacher in a most uncomfortable situation, constantly wondering whether he was doing enough to facilitate learning, feeling guilty if the learners did not learn enough. No clear guidelines were issued on how to be a help and not a hindrance to learning. This paper is a modest step in that direction.

RÉFÉRENCES BIBLIOGRAPHIQUES

HOLEC, H. (1987): «The learner as manager», in WENDEN, A. & J. RUBIN (eds): *Learner Strategy and Language Learning*, London, Prentice Hall.
 RULEY, P. (1992): «A language is a liquid: Learners' representations of language and language learning». Paper read at the CLT, *Conference on Self-Access in Adult Language Learning*, University of Cambridge.
 WILLEMS, G. M. & P. RULEY (1989) (eds): *Foreign Language Learning and Teaching in Europe*, Amsterdam, Free University Press.