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AN EFL Student-Generated Syllabus

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AN EFL STUDENT-GENERATED SYLLABUS

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Supervisor: Hilário I. Bohn, Ph.D.

Abstract

The aim of this study is to look at input a foreign language group generates when learning English through a non-traditional approach. To address this issue, I taught a group of eleven English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at the Extracurricular Course of Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC) for 38 hours, during two months. The research paradigm applied was a case study, and the methodology used was the Community Language Learning (CLL). This study provides insights to the way students approached the target language. The data show that students gave little attention to expanding vocabulary and analysing grammar structures. Looking for meaning during the generation of input, however, seemed to be stimulating to students. The results also show that the group of Brazilian EFL students were willing to take their own responsibility in

generating comprehensible input.

Um Programa de Língua Inglesa Gerado pelos Próprios Alunos

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Resumo

O objetivo deste estudo é obervar o insumo que um grupo de alunos de língua estrangeira gera quando aprende inglês através de uma abordagem não-tradicional. Para tratar desta questão, foi ministrado um curso de língua inglesa de 38 horas/aula para um grupo de alunos brasileiros na Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina durante dois meses. O paradigma de pesquisa utilizado foi o estudo de caso, e a metodologia utilizada foi o "método comunitário". Este estudo revela o modo em que a língua alvo foi abordada. Os dados indicam que os alunos deram pouca atenção à expansão de vocabulário e à análise gramatical de estruturas. A troca de informações durante a criação de insumos lingüísticos, no entanto, mostrou-se bastante estimulante para os alunos. Os resultados também apontam que o grupo de estudantes brasileiros de língua inglesa queria assumir

suas próprias responsabilidades na criação de insumos lingüísticos compreensíveis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....1

Chapter 1- Second Language Acquisition.....4

1.1 Language acquisition: how does it happen?.....4
1.2 Approaches and methodologies.....7
1.3 Optimal input: has it been meeting students' interests?.....8
1.4 Language acquisition: what does the present study aim at?...9

Chapter 2- Setting the experiment.....13

2.1 An EFL student-generated syllabus: how was it done?.....13
2.2 Subjects.....13
2.3 The CLL approach.....15
2.3.1 Design.....24
2.3.2 Demonstration.....28

Chapter 3- The Development of the Experiment.....32

3.1 The experiment.....32
3.1.1 The role of the teacher and new challenges.....32
3.1.2 The assistant teacher.....35
3.1.3 Student-teacher-method interaction.....36
3.1.4 The method adapted to the experiment.....38
3.1.5 Students' responses to CLL.....41
3.1.6 In-class conversational management - a diary.....51

3.2 The data collected.....74
3.2.1 Functions generated.....75
3.2.2 Structures introduced.....87
3.2.3 Students' questions.....92

Chapter 4- Findings and applications for TEFL classrooms.....100

4.1 Input generated in the CLL experiment. Was it 'comprehensible,natural and relevant?'.....100
4.2 Research questions.....103
4.3 Evaluation.....106
4.4 Pedagogical recommendations.....109

Conclusion.....111

Bibliography.....115

List of Tables

Table 1. Imparting and seeking for factual information.....76

Table 2. Expressing and finding out about emotional attitudes.78

Table 3. Expressing and finding out about moral attitudes.....79

Table 4. Making communication work.....80

Table 5. Finding out and expressing reason.....82

Table 6. Functions used in the conversations.....84

Table 7. Difficulty order of functors.....94

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to analyse input generated by students and the interaction of three classical elements of the classroom - teachers, students and materials - when following a non-traditional teaching method.

To approach the issue in question an experiment was set up. A group of students enrolled in the Extracurricular Course of UFSC was taught a two-month English language course applying the Community Language Learning (CLL) methodology. The CLL methodology fitted the objective of the study proposed because in this methodology learners conduct their own learning.

The study has been divided into four chapters and a conclusion. In chapter 1, I bring to discussion some variables raised in SLA studies as pointed out by researchers such as Krashen (1982), Pienemann (1984) and Ellis (1987). I also point out some issues related to approaches and methodologies, and finally, I establish the objective of the present study.

In chapter 2, I describe the design of the experiment, the setting, the subjects and I make a detailed description of the approach used in the teaching.

In chapter 3, I discuss the roles of the teacher and students; the interaction between teacher and students and among students; the adaptation process of teacher and students to the approach, the responses of the learner, and a diary of the experiment. Additionally, I analyse the data collected in terms

of functions, structures generated, and students' questions.

In chapter 4, I analyse the adequacy for acquisition of the input students produced. This analysis is done in the light of Krashen's (1982) definition of comprehensible input. Besides, I answer the questions proposed in chapter 1. Based on the findings of the experiment, I also make suggestions and explore the inplications of such findings for the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). Closing up section, I present some final remarks.

This study seems to be justified because my own previous experience as a teacher has indeed shown me that learners seem to be able to assume a conducting role in their learning process. More than showing the importance of gearing the learning process to students' own responsibility, the relevance of this study also lies in the fact that this is the first time the CLL approach has been applied to a Brazilian group of learners.

Additionally, this study seems also relevant because it may bring an important theoretical contribution signalling the interests' route that Brazilian students tend to take in the learning process of the English Language. Finally, there is also practical relevance. The results of the study can also reveal the peculiarities of the Brazilian group. That is, the input emerged from the students internal agenda and their interests' route can be used as a first step, as Meisel (1981) proposes, in confirming and reanalysing the sequencing of items in the development of syllabi.

CHAPTER I

Second Language Acquisition

1.1 Language acquisition: how does it happen?

The question why some learners are higher achievers and why some situations are better suited than others for language development has been a crucial issue of debate in second and foreign language learning and teaching. Scholars in the area of language teaching have tried to point out the causative variables involved in the acquisition process.

For Krashen (1982), comprehensible input is the primary causative variable in SLA. He states that the quality of input seems to be the primary source and cause of successful language development/learning. Only comprehensive input can be processed by learner's internal mechanisms, transformed into intake, and eventually utilized in the generation of output. Moreover, Krashen claims that linguistic competence in a second language can be developed through two processes: learning and acquisition. Learning, as Krashen puts it, is a conscious process. Learning is knowing the rules of language, developing an awareness of the structures of the language. Acquisition, on the other hand, is an uncounscious process and only develops a feel for accuracy. Learning is typically developed in classrooms, guided learning, while acquisition is the result of language exposure in naturalistic environments, informal and natural learning. Krashen believes that the only way to develop conversationally competent learners is through acquisition, and

that acquisition is the basis for fluency.

Several researchers have found that learners follow a natural order in the development of a foreign language. More recently, Pienemann (1984) claimed that learners follow their internal agendas in the language acquisition process. He also introduces the **teachability hypothesis**, which states that there is an implicational order of acquisition and an optimal order of presenting input in language instruction. Because of the internal agenda, input provided by instruction may affect learners differently. The same input, for instance, in Pienemann's view, may be effective for one learner but not for another. This occurs because one learner may have already acquired the prerequisites for the structure to be learned, while the other one has not. From this conceptualization stems the notion of a state of readiness to the acquisition of the language structures. The assumption underlying this hypothesis is that learners acquire only what they are ready to process in regard to their natural acquisitional order.

Krashen (1982), after reviewing research in SLA, had already proposed the natural route theory applied to SLA, when he introduced the five hypotheses of his Monitor/Input language acquisition model. Krashen, however, questions the proposal of presenting the input based on a syllabus constructed on the students' natural route. He suggests that a sequenced syllabus based on the students' natural route is not a good solution because it violates the Monitor Model in two aspects:

1) we still do not know the acquisitional order, 2) we would be focusing on form, not on communication. An additional difficulty for sequencing materials, according to Ellis' (1987) observations, is that the natural route does not establish clearly defined stages. He believes that each stage overlaps with the preceding and following stage in a continuum, and that individual differences, like age, aptitude, cognitive styles, motivation and personality, also account for the process.

For Ellis (1987) SLA happens in the presence of two variables :1)some L2 data made available to the learner, and 2) a set of internal mechanisms to account for how the L2 data are processed. The focus on variable 1 and 2 have historically generated different ways of looking at acquisition, language teaching methods, and language instruction. The behavioristic view (Skinner,1957) of language acquisition sees learners reacting to external stimuli, the nativist view (Chomsky,1965) in turn emphasizes the learners' internal mechanisms, and the interactionist view (Flanders,1970) sees SLA as a result of an interaction between the learners' internal factors and the linguistic environment in which they are engaged.

Returning to the initial question in the search for the causative variables for SLA, one can notice from the studies here presented that input plays an important role. Having in mind the importance of input in SLA, this research aims at throwing some additional light on the question of input in SLA.

1.2 Approaches and methodologies applied to TEFL

In an attempt to run parallel with the theoretical studies about second language acquisition, language teachers and researchers have been dedicating much of their time trying to organize input for SLA through effective syllabi. Also, they have tried to find means of implementing the syllabi through efficient methodologies of language teaching.

Syllabi and methodologies have been extensively discussed in the area of language teaching (Stevick, 1976; Brumfit, 1984; Candlin, 1984; Yalden, 1984; Prabhu, 1986; Richards and Rogers, 1986; and Nunan, 1988).

According to Candlin (1984), the types of syllabi encountered in the literature can be divided ideologically in two types: first, the traditional type of syllabi based on the belief that learning happens through a bank of received knowledge. This type of syllabus sees learning as intrinsic, idealistic, as a static process, and as a result of teaching. The second type of syllabi, on the other hand, states that learning occurs via knowledge exploration. According to this view, a syllabus takes into consideration students' interpretation of how learning is conducted, the organization of content, and their interests.

The history of language teaching shows a variety of methodologies and approaches used to implement syllabi aimed at facilitating the learning process. They can be broadly divided into two groups. In the first group we can name: the Grammar Translation, the Oral Approach and Situational Language

Teaching, the Communicative Approach, Total Physical Response, and Suggestopedia. They all emphasize cognitive development in language acquisition. In the second group, we can mention Moskowitz (1981) who introduces the Humanistic View of Education. This view leads more towards a whole-person development, as can be seen in the following quotation from her work: "the Humanistic Education is a way of learning that emphasizes self-discovery, introspection, self-esteem, and getting in touch with the others." (p.14) In line with the Humanistic View of Education, is Freire's (1976) problem-solving approach. This approach emphasizes group and social interaction, demonstrating the relevance of conflict and emotions in learning. From these humanistic perspectives spring the Humanistic Approach, the Natural Approach, and the Community Language Learning Approach.

Thus, from a range of methodologies and syllabi types, the literature offers to language instructors the choice to direct the learning process according to their beliefs.

1.3 Optimal input: has it been meeting students' interests?

Despite the updated conceptualization of syllabi and a variety of methodologies used in foreign and second language teaching, all claiming to provide optimal input, both methodologies and syllabi are still controversial issues in the field of second language learning/teaching. One of the reasons for this problematic situation is the fact that often syllabi and methodologies presented to students do not match their needs, aspirations and interests.

Krashen (1982) addresses this issue when pointing out the problems in providing learners with optimal input:

> It is very difficult to present and discuss topics of interest to a class of people whose goals, interests, and backgrounds differ from the teacher's and from each other. I also claim that relevance and interest have not been widely perceived as requirements for input, since so many materials fail to meet this requirement! (p. 67)

Moreover, besides the mismatch between students' interest and relevant teaching materials, an additional problem for teachers and syllabus designers is to define what comprehensible input and good quantity are. The (i+1) formula Krashen (1982) presented for comprehensible input offers some difficulties. It is hard to define the current competence (i) learners bring to class to provide the(1) that is the next level. In other words, how one can determine the current linguistic level of a group of students, for example, where different learners may acquire structures in different moments. It can be assumed that a more individualized approach can clarify these issues.

1.4 Language acquisition: what does the present study aim at?

Having in mind these problematic issues, I propose to verify what happens when the generation of input for learning is left in the "hands" of the learners. In other words, the idea of developing this study emerges from the need to research a situation in which students would not be constrained by a

traditional syllabus or an imposed methodology. Rather, this study explores a situation in which the students can generate their own linguistic input, according to their own needs, expectations and as determined by their own agendas or internal syllabi. It is assumed that students would be producing in this way what Krashen (1982) and the pertinent literature have defined as "comprehensible input."

Krashen (1982), when discussing the quality of good input, has additionally pointed out that students should not be put "on the defensive" when learning a second language. That is, as Stevick (1976) has defined it, "methods and materials should not be a test of the students abilities or prior experiences, should not merely reveal weaknesses, but should help the students to acquire more."(p.73) It seems that this requirement can also be fulfilled in a situation in which learners generate their own input. It is the assumption of this study that the Community Language Learning (CLL) approach[1] can create such a teaching/learning evironment.

The CLL approach, as described by Curran (Stevick, 1976), has the student as the center of interest and this can be highlighted in two respects. In the first respect, the teacher sees the student as a "whole-person." That is, the teacher considers not only the students' intellect, but also tries to

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1.In this study, approach and methodology are not considered separately. Experts in CLL claim that CLL is an approach because of its amplitude, not restricted to a set of techniques of a methodology. For this reason the methodology used is an application of the CLL approach.

understand their feelings, their physical and instinctive reactions to protection, and their desire to learn. Moreover, the teacher plays the role of a "counselor" rather than of a "knower," according to Curran's words. Instead of playing the role of the ones who dominate the situation because they know about the language, teachers take into account the personality, motivational, and emotional factors that lead learners to the process of acquisition. The second respect refers to the fact that learners generate their own input by communicating with one another in the target language. Through this procedure students have in every class a conversation in the target language which emerges from the interaction within the group. After they have had this conversation, students identify the component parts of the conversation which are of special interest to them. A central feature is that students have a reflection phase to comment about their feelings concerning the experience they have just had.

I have chosen the CLL approach to develop this experiment because it is student-centered, following the humanistic view of education, and the syllabus is generated by the students. The significance of the CLL approach to this experiment lies in the fact that students do not have teacher-fronted classes, and do not simply follow a book or a pre-established syllabus. Moreover, this method takes into consideration the "motivational-personality-social variables" (Ausubel, 1978, p. 117) which are considered to deeply affect the language learning process.

So the point of interest of this study is to verify the kind of input that a group of Brazilian students choose when learning English as a foreign language in a CLL approach.

This study concentrates on the following questions:

1- What does a group of Brazilian EFL students choose to learn when exposed to the CLL approach: vocabulary, grammar structures or functions? How do they do this?
2- What is the relationship between the input that is generated by the students and what is learned ?

Thus, this study will provide information about how a group of Brazilian students perceive the language in terms of vocabulary, grammar structures and functions when exposed to a non-preestablished syllabus. More important than this, the present study tries to reinforce the right students have to follow their own ways of learning which has been denied to them by most methodologies/approaches.

CHAPTER 2

Setting the Experiment

2.1 An EFL Student-generated syllabus: how was it done?

In order to address the questions stated in the previous section, I decided to gather a group of Brazilian students and teach them a 38 hour/course of English in the Extracurricular Program at UFSC, applying the CLL approach. It was a group of eleven (teenagers and adults) false beginners learning English as a foreign language. I taught them for two months, twice a week for two hours, in the second semester, in 1991. An assistant teacher transcribed the data of the conversations produced in class, as the CLL approach requires.

2.2 Subjects

The group of students participating in the experiment were five men and six women.

Maristela (M1), 13 years old, and Maria (M2), 12, are both elementary school students. Eight students are undergraduate students: Verônica (V), 32, and Alberto (Al), 23, take engineering; Inácio (I), 19, takes physics; Roberto (R), 19, takes chemistry; Tânia (T), 22, takes computer science; Mariana (M3), 25, takes philosophy; Antônio (A), 25, takes ecomomics; Fernando (F), 19, takes history and Denise (D), 32, is a social service graduate student.

With respect to the students' language background, from a test I applied in the beginning of the experiment and from my own observation, I could conclude that students were all false beginners.

From a questionnaire that I applied to the students, I could observe that most of them wanted to learn English for four major reasons: all of the students needed English for reading papers, all of them wanted to learn English to understand songs and films, nine students wanted to learn to speak English in order to talk to foreigners and eight students wanted to improve their English to travel abroad. The group as a whole, in spite of the age differences, was quite homogeneous in terms of interaction, although students had individually their own grammatical / lexical / functional background and focus for learning.

Also, the group was a very receptive one. They responded to the experiment with enthusiasm in all classes and showed confidence in their learning.

In the first conversations students would focus on and respond to their own individual opinions and interests. However, as the group became integrated, students understood they had to work in a cooperative way, as suggested by Curran (1976). So they started asking questions about their classmates' positions towards the situations presented. They demanded consistent explanations about attitudes and ideas.

2.3. The CLL approach

The text that follows describes the approach, design and procedures of Community Language Learning. A one-class description of CLL is also provided in order to illustrate the approach with my own experience.

The CLL approach was introduced by Charles A. Curran, a psychology professor from Loyola University, U.S.A., in his book **Counseling-learning in Second Languages**, published in 1976. Curran presents his research on the "unique manner in which each person responds to life" as a member of a larger community. From Curran's studies regarding learning, the educational process is intellectual, abstract, reflective, yet, largely removed from personal engagement. In the Cartesian paradigm, as Curran defines it, learning is an exclusive problem-solving, mathematical problem in which the teacher is the one who has all the answers. Such cold relationship between teachers and learners, then, seems to foster depersonalization.

As a consequence of the mathematical cartesian paradigm a process of depersonalization occurs and thus opposing feelings may emerge. That is, on one hand learners want to apprehend new knowledge, but on the other, in the meantime, they want to protect their self. Thus, these two opposing forces, apprehending new knowledge X protecting the self, develop feelings of hostility, anxiety, and conflict which impede or block the learning process. Therefore, for Curran, learning is a complex

process in which people can not be considered as isolated elements. He states:

> The learning process is [ ] not thought of as simply an acquiring of defined bodies of knowledge and skills, nor as a `games-we play' adversary relationship, but as an interaction or `interflow' of persons. (1976, p.2)

In Curran's point of view, language acquisition is a holistic process. That means, this process is the result of cognitive and affective factors, which take into account the development of skills used in the most constructive way, thus, avoiding opposing forces for learning. The process of learning is a "unique journey for each learner." Thus, the "psychizing process" (acquisition in Krashen's terms) is the result of a continuum which starts somatically (physical domain) and is fulfilled "psychically." By "psychize," Curran means that the learning material has been internalized, and since it is stored in the long-term memory, it can be retrieved without effort.

Curran, perceiving a lack of personal commitment in education, tries to fill this gap by bringing in the case of language teaching basic concepts and awareness from the field of counseling and psychotherapy. From these findings emerges the Counseling-Learning approach (C-L), and as an application of C-L to language learning Curran has proposed the Community Language Learning (CLL) approach.

Curran in his attempt to describe the language learning process points out the several psychological stages in language counselor-client relationship. The stages are described as:

STAGE ONE: Total dependency

Learners are totally dependent on the teacher. At this stage, the counselor must establish a secure atmosphere, because students are insecure and dependent. As Rardin (1988) observes, these feelings emerge from "not only a lack of knowledge but also from a feeling of inadequacy about the self as well as from a sense of being an outsider, not part of the group (1988, p.83)."

STAGE TWO: Kicking out dependency

At this stage, learners are still dependent, but can say some words and sentences without the help of the teacher. Learners have the need to use what they already know without the help of the teacher. If the teacher, however, provides some meaning or explanation learners already know, they instinctly "kick" the teacher away for the unrequested help.

STAGE THREE: Functional dependency

At the functional dependency stage students are still making mistakes but can function communicatively. Students depend much less on the teacher than in the previous stages. Thus, as learners build confidence, they may start "rejecting" the teacher. In other words, students are less motivated to correct their language, because they feel they can function adequately.

At this stage most learning stops for most people and fossilization may happen. However, in order for the students to

learn more they have to move to the next stage, opting out for independence.

STAGE FOUR: Opting for independence

If students understand that although they can function communicatively they still need the teacher's help, they get mature, they grow, and move a step further in learning. Therefore, once again they accept the dependent relationship between student and teacher, through their understanding of the teachers' role to "teach" in the process.

STAGE FIVE: Total independence

At this final stage, learners have learned enough to operate autonomously in the foreign language. Learners can become counselors of their classmates.

Through the stages of the learning process Rardin (1988) identifies three identity crises:

First crisis: Existence

As learners start to learn a foreign language, they are firmly identified with the ego of their native language. Once learners try to identify their ego with another language, they face a confrontation. On one hand they try to identify with the target culture, but on the other, learners feel that they are denying their own identity.

Second crisis: Loving for the New Self

The second crisis happens in stage three. Learners are proud of how much they have learned up to this point, but, meanwhile, there is still a great deal that they need to know. Therefore, learners will improve only if they realize that they have to focus on what they still have to learn and not on the knowledge they have already acquired.

Third crisis: Authenticity and Aloneness

The third crisis happens in stage five. Learners are faced with the following question: "Will I ever achieve the native or near native proficiency?" As a consequence of such questioning, feelings like inferiority may emerge due to learners' dependence on the teacher. Another cause for the feeling of inferiority is that learners realize that they can not exactly be the native speaker they have been trying to imitate or idealized. Therefore, a feeling of loneliness may develop.

For the learner to move through the different psychological stages and overcome the crises mentioned above, Curran (1976) has proposed six interrelated elements essential to the language learning process. These elements are noted by the acronym SARD (Security, Attention-Assertion, Retention-Reflection, Discrimination), described as follows:

S/ SECURITY

Curran (1976) claims that security is central in the learning process. Ryding (1991) also emphasizes this by saying that "students are afraid of making mistakes, being judged by the teacher, sounding phony, disappointing themselves or their parents, or failing." Thus, learners need a secure atmosphere to engage in the process of language acquisition, to relief their fears. Security may refer to four areas, as Rardin (1988) points out:

1) between the learner and the teacher (the learner trusts the teacher);

2) among the learner and the group (the learner feels accepted by the group);

3) with the language itself (the learner gets acquainted with the sounds of the language), and

4) with the tasks (the learner knows what he is expected to do).

According to Curran (1976), some people can learn under emotional stress and get good grades. However, the learner may develop negative feelings about what s/he has learned, and therefore, "he may turn away from the whole area of knowledge that this negative learning experience represents for him." (p.1)

A/ ATTENTION

Attention refers to the students psychological and physical space in the classroom, i.e. attention in a psychological domain and in actual space in time in the classroom. So the approach asks a full engagement in the process from the students.

Since the CLL approach promotes real-world communicative situations, students are attentive and become engaged in the learning process, once they are working on something they have produced.

In line with Curran (1976), Ausubel (1978) also points out the importance of having students working with relevant material. He states that one of the conditions for learning to happen is that learners should relate the new material to specifically relevant existing aspects of the learner's cognitive structure, such as an image, a symbol, a concept or a proposition. This process of learning is defined as meaningful learning sets.

Moreover, attention seems to be the result between boredom and newness. That is, students are put off before any too familiar activity material is processed. Similarly, activities/materials that do not provide any anchoring idea based on previous knowledge turn student's attention off because they are too strange to be hold in one's memory.

A/ ASSERTION

As learners become confident, they become assertive of their need to know. That is, because students feel that they are gaining control over what is learned, they feel like teaching back their classmates the knowledge they have mastered. Such need of assertion seems to be necessary for internalization because learners create certain space to explicit their knowledge.

R/ RETENTION

According to Curran, retention involves not only immediate pure meaning retrieval. It seems that for an effective retention of the linguistic features, a learner of English, for instance, needs also to have a total identification with the English self. So, retention is a psychizing process. In other words, in SLA new concepts pass through an integrative process, which involves the control between the linguistic features and the learner's target language self.

R/ REFLECTION

-Linguistic reflection: After students have had a conversation, first they listen to the sentences, and then they look at the transcriptions of the sentences as the teacher writes them on the board. Then the teacher establishes some time for the students to reflect upon the sentences and sounds they have produced. The intent of this period is to allow students to have time to make the material produced in class their own.

-Experience reflection: Students have a few minutes to think about what happened in class, what they are learning, what they have done. It is a period of absortion. During this period students are not only encouraged to focus on themselves reflectively but also to make comments about their reactions and feelings toward the conversation and the class.

D/ DISCRIMINATION

The teacher encourages students to speculate about the language. They may, for instance, inquire about vocabulary, grammar, sounds, culture, confirm hypotheses, or anything that may have triggered their curiosity. Curran (1976) considers the linguistic meta-awareness that emerges at this point a very important element in learning. As Curran says "without conscious concentration on such discrimination, persons may assume they know something, when in fact, they still do not" (1976, p.8).

2.3.1 Design

Towards a more updated operational concept, CLL followers have defined language acquisition as a social process, in which communication is not restricted to sending and receiving messages. More than this, communication has to take into account the feedback reaction of the message received, at the cognitive and affective level (Richards and Rogers, 1986). From this design results the elaboration of a personalised syllabus.

a) Syllabus Model

Following Allen's (1984) syllabus classification, CLL follows a non-analytic, experimental or "natural-growth" approach which tries to create real life situations without any preselection or arrangement of items.

The syllabus in CLL is defined as topic based by Richards and Rogers' (1986) and it emerges from a social interaction of learners. Students may develop conversations about any topic they choose.

b) Learners' Role

Learners are responsible for their learning as well as for the learning of fellow members of the community. Learners suggest topics for the conversations, provide meanings they wish to express, ask questions about the language, repeat utterances, listen attentively to the teacher, report deeper inner feelings, and eventually become counselor of the other learners.

However, if a student does not feel comfortable in

participating in the first class conversations, s/he may participate just as an observer, not producing any utterance. As the learner gets acquainted with the methodology, materials, sounds and the classroom procedures, s/he starts participating in the conversations.

The CLL approach, just like Total Physical Response (Asher,1977), proposes that the production skills like speaking should be delayed until the comprehension skills are established. Allowing students a period to get used to the sounds of the language is based on the assumption that "children develop listening competence before they develop the ability to speak" (Richards and Rogers, 1986).

c) Teacher's Role

The teacher has not only the traditional pedagogical responsibility, but also a counselor's role. As Rydin (1991) observes, the teacher has to consistently know "where your students are emotionally", such an understanding will provide the necessary elements for the teacher to comprehend learners' attitudes according to the psychological stage they are struggling in.

At the reflection stage, for example, the teacher should listen to the students reports and say back to them what s/he hears them saying. By doing this, students know that the teacher has listened to them and that the teacher not only knows what they are feeling but is also non-judgemental about it.

As a central point of the CLL approach the teacher has to relinquish dominance. Thus, the teacher directs the classroom procedures toward entering the "student's world" rather than the students entering the teacher's. Curran (1976) believes that it is only through the creation of such an environment that the teacher is fostering the learning process.

Besides this, at all stages, the teacher translates utterances, monitors utterances for appropriateness and correctness, provides idioms, presents points of grammar, pronunciation, or any other linguistic feature students might ask or need to know.

d) Activities-Materials

Some of the in-class activities, besides the conversation, are described as follows:

The conversation can be transcribed. The teacher can use the overhead projector to point out linguistic features of the conversation, learners may work in groups and produce their own material-scripts for dialogues or mini-dramas, language laboratory tapes emphasizing certain phonetic and phonologic features can help with rote drill and patterns. Moreover, it is observation, analysis and reflection about content and feelings that make up a CLL class.

e) Procedures

Students form a circle in the beginning of the class. They initiate a conversation by speaking in their first language to any of their classmates. Then, the teacher who is standing

outside the circle gives the message to the student in the target language next to the student's ear. The student repeats it in the target language to the addressee while speaking into a tape recorder microphone. After students have had some conversation, the tape is rewound and replayed at intervals. Subsequently, students have a reflection period to surface what they have learned and to express the feelings they have had during the class.

2.3.2 Demonstration

In order to have a clear picture of the application of CLL approach and access to the literature, I decided to take a trip to Washington, D.C. where Professor Karin Ryding, a specialist in the topic from Georgetown University, accepted to advise my research.

A CLL Class Demonstration

Context: what follows is a description of a demonstration of CLL conducted in a methodology class at Georgetown University. The teacher who makes the demonstration is Prof. Karin Ryding. She was trained in a C-L/CLL institute and she has used the C-L approach and some CLL techniques in her Arabic classes. Besides this, she has been reading the literature, giving her contributions and being in contact with C-L/CLL followers. There are twelve students in class, five of them sit in a circle, and I am one of the five because I want to experience the methodology.

Target Language: Arabic

Procedures:

Step # 1

At first, the teacher asks for volunteers. As four students and myself raise our hands, the teacher makes a circle with five chairs. Since this is our first time experiencing the approach, the teacher tells us about the procedures. She says we are going to have a conversation in Arabic and that we can talk about

whatever we want. She advises us not to choose very long sentences at this initial stage.

We sit in a circle, next to each other. There are about five seconds of silence, when one student raises his hand and says to the group in his native language- English- "I just know Tamara (pointing to one of the students in the group), I'd like to know your names" , addressing the other students in the group. The teacher goes behind this student, places her right hand on the student's right shoulder and translates the utterance into Arabic just next to the student's left ear. As the student listens, he repeats what the teacher said addressing the group. Another student raises her hand and says "My mane is Jane." The teacher follows the same procedure standing behind the student and translating the utterance in Arabic. Yet, when the third student introduces himself, he does not ask the teacher's help and from the observation of his classmates he says straight in Arabic "My name is Paul." When I introduce myself, I break the pattern "My name is..." and I instinctively say "I'm Claudia."

Little by little the conversation seems to flow more naturally. We ask each other in English about our hometowns and cities we have lived and the teacher provides us with the corresponding in Arabic. This step takes about ten minutes.

Step # 2

In a normal class the teacher would have recorded the target language conversation. However, since this was our first experience, the tape recorder was not used, otherwise students

might get constrained. So the teacher asks a student from outside the circle who knows Arabic to transcribe the conversation in her notebook.

In this second step of the class, the teacher asks the student who transcribed the conversation to read it aloud. When she finishes reading, the teacher asks what we remember of the conversation and asks which sentences we want her to put on the board.

Step # 3

The teacher says we have three minutes to reflect on what is on the board and about the whole conversation we have had. We keep silently looking at the sentences on the board. I try to remember sentences and words of the conversation. As I see the sentences on the board I have the impression that although at the moment Arabic writing offers many difficulties, I can make a few generalizations from the sentences. For instance, each student produced in the conversation the sentence "my name is...." After having seen this sentence written on the board for the third time, I could recognize what signs standed for "my", "name", and "is." This impression seems to build up a sense of plausibility. In other words, I have the feeling that the situation makes sense, I can make a few analyses and I feel, therefore, that I am learning.

Step # 4

After this reflection time, there comes the descrimination period. The teacher says "What do you want to know about the

language?" During ten non-stop minutes the teacher answers all sorts of questions, like: "Does intonation go up in questions?," "Is it cursive writing?," "What register did you use to translate our messages?," "Do these signs represent the Arabic alphabet?," "Do you always write from right to left in Arabic?," "Does the verb go to the beginning of the sentence in questions?"

Final Step

Finally, the teacher says that we have some time to reflect upon the experience we have just had and to comment about our feelings to the group. These are some of the comments we made:

"I could remember the dialogue. I don't know if I remember that because it was in English."

"When somebody broke the pattern 'my name is...' I realized that that was a real conversation."

"I thought I would never be able to pronounce those sounds, but I heard some of my classmates pronouncing the sounds very close to what the teacher was saying. I was surprised."

"This resembles a dialogue you find in a book, but since we have created it, it is much more interesting."

There is a general feeling of accomplishment at the end of the class among the students.

Participating in a CLL class as a student was very insightful because I could experience the method in a real situation. I was a lot more confident to apply CLL in the experiment to the students in Brazil.

In order to implement the approach to the group of Brazilian students, I needed to adapt the approach to the reality of the students. The full application of the CLL approach to the Brazilian group of learners will be described in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

The Development of the Experiment

3.1 The Experiment

3.1.1 The Role of the Teacher and new challenges

As the teacher in this experiment I had to give up the traditional "giver" position in the classroom. I had to perform several different roles that I was not used to. The most demanding one was to be a spectator.

I had to wait for students' initiative. They had to think of a topic, start the conversation and tell me their language points of interest.

It took me around seven classes to get used to the process. Although I knew I had to change my teacher-fronted position, the one who knows and does everything in class, to play the new role was not easy in the beginning. The first classes were very demanding on me because I had to face the newness of the methodology and at the same time to build students' confidence.

It is also important to point out that patience was crucial for the experiment to produce good results. So I had to wait for the students to get used to the process. That means, I could not expect too much from their participation, and had to respect their periods of silence. As they started participating I had to give them extra time for their responses, more than the

usual time we would give students in activities in traditional classes. Also, since the classes were not based on the "structure of the day," I had to be open to explain the same grammar point more than once through the course.

The teacher being a spectator also meant that I did not have the right to choose or say what a good topic to talk about was; I could only invite students to have a conversation in English about a topic they were going to choose. Sometimes I told them to think about a topic at home for the following class, at other times students would briefly negotiate a topic they wanted to talk about before having the conversation. I also asked them to bring an object from their homes to have a "show and tell" activity. This would serve as an initiator of the conversation.

The first classes also made me feel rather anxious because I was collecting the materials for the first time from the first conversations and therefore there was no way of preparing the class in advance. I used to carry a bunch of ready activities in case students would refuse having a conversation or whether we had some extra time at the end of the class. This way I would be prepared to have ready material to give them if they would ask, but I prefered not to use it. I wanted to interfere the least I could.

As time went by, I realized that just part of the class was unpredictable, i.e., the conversation and students' questions. The rest of the class we spent reviewing previous class materials, correcting homework, and practicing dialogues. My confidence, then, grew as I could detect what the major

difficulties were.

The task of immediate translation seemed quite difficult for me in the beginning. In order to make it easier, I read books about the functions in English, like **Function in English** (Blundell et al, 1982) and **English in Brazil**. Having to study the functions was a very good activity for the improvement of my conversational ability, since my whole education in English was structuralist. The readings put me in a state of alertness about language use.

Furthermore, in the first classes I myself felt the process of the CLL conversation rather strange since the whole group and myself were not used to it. Desides, there was a new student joining the group every class in the first two weeks. This made me explain the process over and over again. To apply the CLL implies a total investment, not only on the student's part, but also on the teacher's. The teacher must be ready to face a non-imposing position and unpredictable moments.

3.1.2 The assistant teacher

In order to transcribe the dialogues students produced and providing me help in translation at difficult points, I decided to have an assistant in class, as Prof. Ryding personally suggested me. So I invited my M.A. classmate Paula Fatur Santos to participate in the experiment.

The process happened like this: while the students were producing the conversations, the assistant teacher sat near the semi-circle and took notes of every students' utterance. Later on, I would take the assistant teacher's notes and rewrite them. Moreover, she would assist me when I had difficulties with vocabulary; she would provide me with lexical items or structures I could not recall at the moment the conversation had to be translated into English. Also, she would take notes of students' questions and comments about the class and help me in editing the transcripts of the conversations.

At first it was not easy to define our roles and set boundaries. That is, the meaning of a word, or a grammar explanation, or the interpretation of students' questions and feelings sometimes were understood differently by me and the assistant. This situation demanded certain adjustments in our roles and responsibilities.

One positive aspect of the presence of the assistant teacher was the provision of scruting, sharing of knowledge, doubts and in-class behaviors. Thus, this co-work between teacher and assistant seems profitable to both teacher and students who have another source of input in class.

3.1.3. Student-teacher-method Interaction

a) Student-teacher interaction

The student-teacher interaction happened easily. It seems that the teacher's role and motivation have contributed to such an appropriate environment for learning. The teacher's role in this approach asks for a frank relationship with students. I would listen to the students' comments and feelings about the class and give them immediate feedback. This procedure developed into a mutual trust. A student, Tânia commented: "O relacionamento [professor/aluno] é bom, havendo oportunidades para ambos os lados opinarem e se expressarem." Motivation in turn seems to be kernel in the learning process. To define it, I think one student, Verônica, puts it well : "as pessoas tinham vontade de aprender e o professor de ensinar."

b) Student-student interaction

The student-student relationship was also a very positive. The individual differences were taken into consideration during the process. Most students, for example, would respect each other's pace of learning and different opinions during the conversations. While some students participated very actively from the very beginning, others got the rhythm of the group as the experiment developed. Common likes also seem to have played a positive role in the student-student interaction. According to the students' evaluation, the group got along well because it was a group of people that matched as a group. Roberto commented that

"O relacionamento entre os estudantes é bom pois o grupo é pequeno e as atividades envolvem todos, promovendo assim um maior entrosamento."

c) Student-method-teacher interaction

In the first classes, putting the method into practice seemed somehow difficult for me and for the students. That is, although I had the concepts and activities of how to conduct the class clear in my mind, it took me some time to familiarize myself with the procedures of the approach and the teacher's role. I had to control my uneasiness in dealing with the approach in the first sections, while I also had to concentrate on the steps of the class to build confidence in the students.

Similarly, the students needed some time to understand exactly what I expected from them at each stage. Students, for instance, in the first conversations addressed the target language utterance to their classmates looking at me instead of looking at their classmates. Also, students asked questions during the reflection period instead of asking them during the discrimination period. Tânia commented in the mid-term evaluation about the period of adaptation to the CLL procedures: " Os procedimentos em classe estão sendo adequados; houve uma gradativa adaptação dos alunos ao método."

3.1.4 The method adapted to the experiment

Although I had in mind all the procedures to be followed in a CLL class process, I needed to make some adjustments in the methodology to the group I was teaching. These adjustments concerned the number of participants in the conversations, the recording of the conversations and the in-class activities.

For example, up to the third conversation I would ask four students to participate in the conversation. However, since not much interaction was happening and students from outside the group would address questions to those in the group, I decided to make some modifications. I allowed anyone who wanted to participate to break into the conversation. As the students started participating more, I restricted again the conversation group to five students. We had an average of four students participating, yet in the last conversation there were only two students.

Also, different from what the approach requires, I did not record students' utterances on the tape during the conversation for two reasons: first, not to inhibit students and second, because I tried once and the experience was not a very rewarding one. The school did not have the right apparatus with a microphone available and taping was taking my attention away from the content of the class and overloading me. I decided to focus on what I considered more important, aspects like topic choice, students' questions and comments. This was only possible because my assistant took notes of the conversation so we would have the structures available for the reflection period.

From the in-class activities CLL proposes, the following activities were adjusted to the experimental group, focusing on the four abilities: speaking, listening, reading and writing.

The speaking ability was regarded as a major concern, because speaking was the starting point and primary source for students' learning. The activities students performed were:

-generating the conversations;

-performing guided dialogues;

-selecting functions and developing dialogues;

-interviewing classmates.

The listening ability was regarded as the second major concern, due to its interaction with the speaking ability. The activities included:

-trying to identify words and sentences of the conversations which were first transcribed and then recorded by myself and other English teachers;

-completing missing information on a transcript of the conversation.

Reading was used for reviewing and consolidating. The reading activities I gave to students comprised:

-organizing scrambled sentences of the conversations;

-playing "concentration game" (finding correspondent answers-questions/English words-Portuguese words on cards);

-reading texts to extract specific/general information.

Writing as well as reading served as a review and consolidation source. Some of the activities were:

-taking notes of words/sentences students could understand during

the conversations (for the students who were not in the semi-circle generating the conversation);
-writing down the exponents from some given functions in a review type of activity.

A very positive aspect of the approach was that students had some time to tell others how they were feeling, what they liked/did not like in class or simply comment about what was going on in class. This reflection period was very important because it established an additional channel of communication between teacher and students.

In the next sections I will present students' responses to the method and some of the characteristics of the conversations generated.

3.1.5 Students' Responses to CLL

In this section I point out students' reactions towards CLL. Firstly, I present a short analysis of the stages as presented by Curran (1976) and Rardin (1988) and discussed in the previous pages, and secondly, I describe how students formed the whole picture of the process, conversation after conversation, and I touch on some of the insights revealed by the students' reactions to the approach.

From an analysis of the psychological stages based on Curran (1976), I noticed that students moved from stage 1, total dependency, to 2, kicking out dependency, and one reached 3, functional dependency.

In the first classes almost all students were in stage 1, in a total dependency on the teacher. Students were not able to take the initiative of starting a target language utterance by themselves. They would rather wait for my provision of the target language input. Mariana was an exception. She was from the very beginning in stage 2, kicking out for dependency, because she already had some background knowledge in the target language. So Mariana at certain moments tried by herself to direct the questions to her classmates already in the target language without my interference.

As the experiment developed, approximately from conversation 8 on, the group as a whole moved from stage 1 to stage 2, kicking out for dependency. Just like Mariana in stage 2, students started addressing questions to their classmates in the target

language, questions like "Why?," "Why is it important for you?," "What is it?" Mariana also moved, forward into stage 3, to functional dependency. That means, she could communicate functionally, producing chunks of sentences but still needed help in specific vocabulary and syntactic aspects.

So in this 30-hour experiment the group as a whole reached stage 2.

With respect to the identity crisis, I could observe that the motivation of the group was so high that the crisis period Rardin (1988) describes did not seem to occur, except for Mariana. She seemed to have the "loving for the new self crisis." As I see it, Mariana could not move a step further in the initial classes because she may have thought she already knew enough for that purpose. It seems she moved into fossilization and did not make much progress in this sense.

For a better understanding of the students' behavior and attitudes along the experiment, I will present in the following pages a short description of each of the conversations.

Conversation 1

VerÔnica, Maria, Roberto and AntÔnio volunteered to participate in the first conversation. I explained the procedures involved in a CLL conversation, however, the students, as well as myself, had difficulties in synchronizing the Portuguese utterance-translation-English utterance. Moreover, although I told students they had to look at their classmates while

addressing questions/answers, they tended to look back to me.

Conversation 2

During the second conversation, students seemed to have a better understanding of how the approach worked. They knew what I expected from them and what they could do. They talked freely. Fernando, for example, although not dominating the conversation felt free to change the subject. In line 33, he said "can I change the subject?" Also he openly said that his father had problems with the income tax.

It is my hypothesis that CLL creates an atmosphere of security that makes students talk without hesitation. However, I observed that, it seemed difficult for students to express their ideas in short sentences as I had suggested. It seems that utterances had to be short, as suggested by Professor Ryding at Georgetown in the demonstration class, for two reasons: it would make the task of translating easier and it would also facilitate students' production at early stages.

Conversation 3

One interesting point in this conversation was that students talked about themselves and gave their contributions spontaneously. For instance, Inácio, when hearing from Maria that she believed in all religions, said straightforward: "It's cool!," commenting ironically on Maria's belief.

Compared to the previous class, the third class seemed quieter. Perhaps having four new students and the presence of the assistant-teacher made the other students feel a little

embarassed. I was having the feeling students were being put off by the experiment. Yet, I realized later I was wrong. During the reflection period students had time to say how they were feeling in class. A general comment was that they thought the conversation process was improving.

Conversation 4

The CLL approach enables real communicative situations to occur. Inácio, for example, asked Roberto about the kind of music he liked. This question had already been asked in the first class when Inácio was absent. Roberto then was able to answer the question without my help in translating.

The CLL approach also makes people feel comfortable in class. Inácio, for instance, was a shy student and this was his first day of class. Even so he seemed to feel at ease to comment on Verônica's apperance without bothering about the coherence of the conversation:

I- She looks like Rita Lee.
V- Oh, thank you.

Conversation 5

In conversation 5, I felt students were somehow waiting for some change. I mean, at a certain point of the conversation students just did not know what to talk about. There were periods of silence. Students like Roberto did not bother about silence, as he said. Mariana, on the other hand, demanded the conversation to be continued, as she said, "this is supposed to be a

conversation."

R- Sometimes silence is good.
F- But not in an English class!

From class 6 onwards I decided to restrict the number of participants in the conversation and to ask students to define a topic before starting the conversation.

The periods of silence in the CLL approach seem natural and the whole procedure involves a lot of attention, concentration, pace and reflection. Besides silence and reflection that are not very usual in "traditional classes," students were required to be initiators; they were generators of their syllabus and speculators about the points which interested them. Altogether, we had four new elements in the experimental class, unusual to traditional classes: reflection, silence, students' input initiators and language speculators. Students were getting used to their new responsibilities.

In the class of conversation 5 Mariana got anxious because they were not having a dymamic conversation. Tânia suggested that we establish a topic for the following conversation.

Even not having a very exciting conversation in this class, students' interactions always introduced some amusing parts. As a result of spontaineity there was frequent laughing. For example:

F- You don't believe in witches! Poor boy.
(laughs.)

F- Do you know that there are many witches on the island?
(laughs)

F— You don't know women...Don't look at me!
(laughs)

Conversation 6

Having restricted the number of students and having introduced a topic, conversation 6 started lively. The conversation was both easy to translate at the linguistic level (students can convey information clearly and objectively) and at the interactional level (students look at each other while talking and are synchronized with the translation). There was a general feeling of acomplishment from the whole group. It was interesting to notice that students' lack of embarassment or the confidence they were building was leading them to produce English utterances by themselves without my help.

Conversation 7

By conversation 7, students and I had a full picture of the classroom procedures, we were aware of our roles and we felt "good" about it.

Students made some comments about the class. Maria commented that the process was easier than in previous classes. Verônica said "we are getting less embarassed." Alberto said he liked having a limited topic. Tânia, on the other hand, found the topic too restricted. Inácio pointed out that it was good that today I gave a task to the students who were not participating in the conversation. In this class, I asked students outside the semi-circle to take notes of what they could understand from the conversation. They promptly did it. Roberto also said he felt good in this class because the conversation seemed natural. He

said, "I felt relaxed even though there was a camera video-taping us. It seems contradictory but I thought I had to control myself and relax, and that was what happened." He says he felt like in a "roda de amigos."

It seems important to say that as far as I am concerned the topic was not very interesting. However, later on I realized the topic was just one factor in the whole process. Students like Verônica and Roberto felt emotionally better in this conversation. Antônio and Inácio said they became motivated while taking notes during the conversation. Antônio additionally mentioned that he liked some of the written exercises I gave them in which I provided the functions and asked them the exponents we had studied so far. From students comments, I could conclude that they got used to the approach and realized the importance of being involved in different tasks.

Conversation 8

This CLL conversation was quite exciting. One student (Alberto) brought a crystal pyramid and the topic seemed very attractive to the students. The questions were so many that there was not even a pause between the turns.

Using the "show and tell" activity for the second time (also used in conv.7) created an opportunity for learners to use some of the structures generated in the previous conversations, like "what is it,"and "do you believe in it." Moreover, this technique resembles more real life situations like the use of some conversational devices. Alberto, for instance, started

talking about the pyramid. He enumerated "first, it was my girlfriend's present." His enumeration created expectation and Mariana immediately said, "and second...." Furthermore, having an object created a certain curiosity among the students. They wanted to see it, and touch it.

It was interesting to see that one of the students outside the semi-circle of the conversation group (Inácio) sent a question on a sheet of paper to one of the participants (Verônica) to be asked to Alberto. He said, "has anybody tried to explain it scientifically?" It seems Inácio was really curious to know about the object.

A positive aspect of this class was that both learners inside and outside the semi-circle had active roles and tasks. Students that were not participating in the conversation had to take notes again today, but besides this task they had to put on the board, during the speculation period, the sentences they had heard. As I can see, they could get 7 to 10 sentences and the majority of the students did not have major problems in performing this task. From these sentences on the board, students moved to the questioning period. In fact, they asked very few questions.

Here I present some of the comments students made:

-At the end of the class Verônica commented she thought the technique of bringing something to class to start the conversation was very good. She said it would be good if this had been done since the very beginning.

-Maristela also commented that now she understood the "structure of the language" better and that therefore she understood the "language better."

-Roberto commented that he thought it was important to him to put his notes from the conversation on the board. He said he would probably not forget about it.

-I had some problems with the translation. At the end of the conversation Alberto joked with me and the assistant teacher. He said, "hoje mexeu com o vocabulário de vocês!"

Conversation 9

It was surprising to me that students could produce quite a few sentences without my help, even students like Roberto who often needed help. He started the conversation by saying "what do you suggest?"

At this point it seemed that students had reached a full picture of the approach. They had a clear grasp of their roles, teacher's role and the objective of the different steps. They knew about the procedure and they started expressing their opinions and questioning their classmates' opinion. Just like in a community, people feel responsible for what they say, questioning facts, sharing opinions and clarifying concepts.

Conversation 10

As in conversation 7 and 8, bringing an object motivated students to talk. Although Mariana was not able to give precise

information about the object (an Aztec sculpture), learners became involved and wanted to know what she had to say about it. Roberto started kicking out my help during translation and tried by himself to ask questions like "where did you get it?" and "why is it important for you?"

Mariana had a good command of English. In the first conversation it was hard to work with her because she would try to say the sentence in English straightforward but with grammatical inaccuracies. Since she was absent for some classes, it took her some extra time to get used to the CLL approach. At first, she would not even notice that she had to repeat the sentences I had rephrased for her. In conversation 10 the whole group, as well as I myself, seemed to manage the process.

Conversation 11

There was a full understanding of how the CLL process had to take place: students seemed relaxed, the turn-takings occurred in a synchronized manner, the topics seemed interesting and the conversation, coherent. All these factors seemed to have been the causatives of a lively conversation.

3.1.6 In-class conversational management

-- A Diary --

In this section I present the conversations generated by the students and I try to point out some of their characteristics. They consist of the interaction of the teacher with the students during the conversations, the activities used in class, the students' participation, the development of topics, the CLL as a personalized approach, the point where students understand CLL, the task of translations, and the characteristics of a good conversation.

Departing from these main points of interest, I now point them out as the conversations chronologically unfolded such characteristics.

I think it may be important to say that in the first two conversations students and I got to know each others roles.

Conversation 1

[partcipants: 4 students]
[topics: names, nationalities, likes, dislikes]

1.V: Where are you from?
2.M: I'm from Florianópolis. Are you from Florianópolis?
3.V: No, I'm from Criciúma.
4.A: Why English? Why are you studying English?
5.R: Because you need it everyday. I want to travel abroad.
6. Do you like music?
7.V: I like classical music, rock and Brazilian Popular
8. Music.
9.R: I like all kinds of music, except country music.
10.A: I like rock, MPB and "progressive" music.
11.M: Have you ever been abroad?
12.V: Just Paraguai.
13.A: Not even Paraguai.
14.M: I have been to the United States, United Kingdom, India,
15. Spain, and other countries.
16.V: Are you Indian?
17.M: No.
18.V: Are your parents Indian?
19.M: No.
20.V: Tell us something about India.
21.M: "....." *, what's your name?
22.V: My name is VerÔnica.

* This is a sentence in Indian language that means "what is your name?"

In conversation 1 the first issue to be highlighted is the fact that from the very first conversation I told students that I would just translate what they would say. That is, I would not interfere with questions or suggestions during the conversation. They really had to get engaged in the conversation because I would translate even their misunderstandings. In line 20, for

example, Verônica asks Maria to tell her something about India. Maria, however, understands Verônica is asking her to say a sentence in the Indian language. Maria says in Indian "what is your name?" and translates it into Portuguese, "qual e o seu nome." Verônica says her name because she understands she was being asked about her name.

They both, later on, realized the misunderstanding and became aware of the fact that they had to communicate clearly during the conversation because I would not interfere.

Conversation 2
[participants: 2 students]
[topics: nationality, occupation, sports, likes, plans]

1.F: Where are you from?
2.M3: I'm from Florianópolis. Were you born here?
3.F: Yes. Besides English what do you do?
4.M3: I take Philosophy and I work with journalism. Do you
5. understand?
6.F: Yeah.
7.M3: What do you do?
8.F: I take History and I work with my father.
9.M3: What does your father do?
10.F: He has an office.
11.M3: Are you a salesman?
12.F: No! I make many things there. I type, I use the computer,
13. I mail letters, I do everything.
14.M3: Why are you studying English?
15.F: It's a general necessity, for a trip, for my job or
16. anything else.
17.M3: Do you like other things besides History?
18.F: Of course!
19.M3: What do you like studying?
20.F: History is my second option. My first option was Law.
21.M3: Do you intend to study Law?
22.F: At the moment no.
23.M3: So you like History very much.
24.F: Yeah...
25.M3: I thought of studying History. I thought of studying
26. History, Journalism and Psychology, but I didn't study for
27. 'vestibular' and I chose Philosophy because the demand was
28. very low. Now I like Philosophy and I will stay in this
29. course.
30.F: Where do you work?
31.M3: At the moment I am not working. I worked at the TV, and
32. now I intend to work at the radio.
33.F: Changing the subject, do you practice any sport?
34.M3: Yes, I play capoeira. And you, do you practice any sport?
35. Surf?
36.F: Of course, but I like 'capoeira' too.
37.M3: Do you know how to play it?
38.F: I have already tried it, but it didn't work out.
39.M3: Where did you try it? In an academy or alone?
40.F: With my friends. It's very difficult. Sometimes I play
41. it at the beach, but it is not real 'capoeira.'
42.M3: Do you intend to go abroad?
43.F: Yes, I was supposed to, but I had some personal problems.
44.M3: Where would you like to go?
45.F: I was supposed to go to the United States, but I didn't
46. have conditions. I tried Australia. I will try Portugal,
47. because you don't need a visa. My father had some problems
48. with the income tax.

In the second conversation, students once again became aware that I would not interfere in their conversation, even if the dialogues turned out to be an interview-like interaction (Mariana asks 14 out of 19 questions). I tried to make them see that they had to adjust themselves to the interaction.

Conversation 3

[participants: 4 students]
[topics:sports, classes, education, religion, weekends]

1.I: What is it about?
2.M3: Everything.
3.R: I don't understand.
4.M2: The question is "what is the topic about?"
5.M3: What is your opinion about last class?
6.R: I really liked it.
7.M3: And you? You were not here last class.
8.I: I was not here.
9.M3: Have you studied English before?
10.I: Yes.
11.M3: Was it a long time ago?
12.I: No, recently.
13.M3: And where did you study?
14.I: At the university. English for Special Purposes.

15.R: How was your weekend?
16.M3: My weekend? Very good.
17. I went to the beach far away from the pope.
18.R: I studied the whole weekend.
19.M3: You missed the beach and the sun.
20.R: Yes. Just Sunday was good.
21.M2: Why was it good?
22.R: Because I went to my relative's birthday party.
23.M3: Oh, I see. And you, how was your weekend?
24.M2: It was good, I stayed at home and I went to see the pope.
25.M3: Did you go to the `aterro' or did you see him on TV?
26.M2: I saw him on `Deira-Mar.'
27.M3: What do you think of him?
28.M2: He is friendly.
29.M3: Are you catholic.
30.M2: No, I'm Indu, but I believe in all religions.
31:I: It's "cool!"
32:M3: Are you catholic?
33.R: I am catholic, but I'm not a "church goer."
34. What about you?
35.M3: No, I don't have any religion. I prefer to read about
36. religion.

Conversation 3 is started by Inácio. It was Inácio's first day of class and he was expecting the kind of topic of the

day that they would talk about. The group provided a very quick answer and the conversation started rolling.

I- What is it about?
F- Everything.
R- I don't understand.
F- The question is "what is the topic about?"

A positive aspect in the CLL approach is that it propitiates information gap and task dependent activities (Johnson and Morrow, 1982). That is, in the first case, one student has an information the other does not have, and in the second, a student depends on some information another student has in order to perform a task. In this case, Inácio needed to know how dependent he was on the topic choice so that he could participate. He got this information from the group. This type of adjustment provided real communicative situations and it motivated students to participate.

Conversation 4

[participants: the whole group]
[topics: grades, school, strikes, a U.S. holiday, likes]

1.A: Who's participating?
2.M2: I don't understand.
3.A: Who's participating?
4.M2: I am.
5.M1: I am participating too.
6.M2: Are they participating?
7.M3: No, I'm not.
8.R: No, I am not either. Today I will only listen.
9.M2: Ok.

10.A: Is it a semi-circle? It would be good if it were a semi-
11. circle. People have to see each other.
12.M2: What are we going to talk about?
13.A: Anything.
14.M2: Give a suggestion.
15.A: Did the strike disturb your classes?
16.M2: More or less.
17.M1: Yes.
18.M2: I will have classes in December, January and February. I
19. will have just a week off in January.
20.M2: What grade are you in?
21.M1: 8th. What about you?
22.M2: I am in 7th grade.
23. Where do you go to school?
24.M1: Instituto.
25.M2. I study at Colégio de Aplicação.

26.A: What's your name?
27.I: Inácio. What is yours?
28.A: My name is Antônio.
29.I: She looks like Rita Lee.
30.V: Oh, thank you.
31.I: Sing a song for us.
32.V: My voice is terrible.
33.M2: I don't think so.
34.V: You sing it.
35.I: I am embarassed.
36.V: What are you going to do for your holidays?
37.M2: I don't know.
38.M1: I will go to São Paulo.
39.I: I am going home in Mato Grosso.
40.A: Nothing special.
41.R: I will rest. And you?
42.V: I don't know.
43.A: I will go to the beach.
44.T: I am going home.
45.V: Where is your home?

46.T: In Nova Trento.
47.I: What kind of music do you like?
48.A: I like rock, "progressive" music and MPB.
49.R: Why do you wear long hair? Are you being influenced by
50. somebody?
51.A: I don't have any external influence. I wear long hair
52. because I like it. That's it. I think long hair fits me
53. well.
54.V: Do you like movies?
55.A: Yes, I do.
56.V: What kind of movies do you like?
57.A: I like all kinds. And you?
58.V: I like love stories, adventure, terror and science
59. fiction.
60.R: What kind of adventure?
61.V: Indiana Jones' movies.
62.A: I like thrillers and love stories.

Similarly to conversation 3, in conversation 4 students started trying to organize the speech event. Antônio wanted to know who was going to participate and asked for a semi-circle so that they could see each other. In other methodologies these classroom arrangements would be made by the teacher. I decided not to limit the number of participants in the conversations since we were still getting used to the process.

It is interesting to notice that Roberto said he was not going to participate in the conversation, but as the conversation got interesting to him, he naturally got involved in it. As the examples below show:

1.A- Who is participating?
8.R- Today I will only listen.
41.R- I will rest. And you?
49.R- Why do you wear long hair? Are you being influenced by

50.somebody?
60.R- What kind ofadventure?

Conversation 5

[participants: 5 students]
[topics: class, holiday, god, witches]

1.R: Was there a conversation last class?
2.M2: No, there were some other activities.
3.R: What kind of activities? What happened?
4.I: I don't remember.
5.M2: We read some articles from the newspaper.
6.V: Today is Halloween. Do you believe in witches?
7.M3: Why is it Halloween today?
8.V: It's an American and British tradition.
9.M3: Yes, I know it, but why is it today? I thought it was
10. Friday 13.
11.V: I thought it was today.
12.R: For me it can be any day. I don't believe in it.
13.M3: You don't believe in witches! Poor boy.
14.R: No, I don't.
15.M3: Do you know that there are many witches on the island?
16.R: There are many?!
17.V: Yes, and `lobisomen' too.
18.R: Have you ever seen any?
19:M3: You don't know women...don't look at me!
20.I: I just believe in Santa Claus.
21.M3: And you, what do you believe in?
22.R: I believe in what I see.
23.M3: So you don't believe in god.
24.R: My god?
25.M3: Yes, do you see your god?
26.R: My god, yes.
27.M3: And who is your god?
28.R: It's hard to explain.
29.M2: But who is your god?
30.R: I don't really like to talk about it.
31.M2: Sorry.
32.M3: I think you believe in many things you don't see. Your
33. god, for example.
34.R: Yes, maybe the only thing.
35.M2: How silent...it is still silent.
36.R: Let's make some noise.
37. Sometimes silence is good.
38.M3: But not in an English class.
39.R: Yeah...it is hot today.

As in the previous conversations, starting the conversation by recalling the previous class created a real communicative moment; students actually seeked for unknown and necessary

information.

An interesting feature of conversation 5 is that it showed how people go over a certain topic. VerÔnica, for instance, introduced the topic not even having much information about it. She tried to overcome the lack of information by providing some type of data she was not asked, for example:

Γ- Why is it Halloween today?
V- It's an American and British tradition.

VerÔnica's answer really did not fit the question.

Another interesting aspect is that it seems some of the language produced, instead of being directed to a specific person in the conversation, played the role of fillers of the periods of silence, like in lines 33 to 37 in which students talk about silence in class and about the weather. It seems that whenever language was not directed to a specific person in the group, it was time to stop the conversation.

It can also be noticed that at a certain point of the discussion about God, Roberto signalled he did not want to talk about that topic. However, Maria does not realize it and asks him again about the topic. As a positive aspect of the CLL approach Roberto had the chance to say clearly and objectively that he wanted to change the topic. The target language was not a barrier for such change.

Conversation 6

[participants: 5 students]
[topics: hobbies,favorite singers,likes]

1.V: My hobby is reading and gardening. What is your hobby?
2.M2: My hobby is swimming and watching TV.
3.M1: My hobby is sailing and reading.
4.M2: And I forgot to say that I also like riding bikes.
5.V: And what's your hobby?
6.A: My hobby is playing volleyball and watching movies.
7.R: I play the guitar, the electric guitar, and I also study
8. music.
9.M1: Who is your favorite singer?
10.M2: I don't have any preference.
11.V: I like Milton Nascimento and Caetano Veloso.
12.R: I like many singers, Tom Jobim and others.
13.A: I have many favorite singers and I also like to do many
14. things. Volleyball and watching films are some examples.
15.M2: I also like to go out.
16.M1: Can I change the subject?
17.group: Yes.
18.M2: Of course.
19:M1: If you were an animal, which animal would you be?
20.M2: I don't have any idea.
21.V: I would like to be a bird.
22.A: Why?
23.V: I could make it more difficult, but to put it in simple
24. words I like the feeling of freedom.
25.M2: I would also like to be a bird to fly.
26.V: What about you?
27.R: A dog or a monkey.
28.V: Why?
29.R: A dog because it has an easy life, and a monkey because
30. it is intelligent.
31.V: What about you Antônio?
32.A: What is the question?
33.V: If you were an animal which animal would you like to be?
34.A: A man.
35.M2: But you are a man.
36.A: I still would like to be a man.
37.M1: I would like to be a squirrel.
38.R: What does it mean?
39.M1: It means `esquilo.'
40.R: Why?
41.M1: Because they are cute and because they like to climb
42. trees.

The CLL approach enables people to express their opinions, to complete the information conveyed or to clarify when necessary. People could reveal their personalities to the extent they wanted, rather than being covered (disguised) by the role of "Tom's" or "Mary's" character as books often present. The feature of CLL as a personalized approach got evident in this conversation.

In line 4, for example, Maria added that she had forgotten to say she also likes riding bikes, going back to her previous answer (line 2).

2. M- My hobby is swimming and watching TV.
4. M- And I forgot to say that I also like riding bikes.

In line 13, Antônio answered to the question about favorite singers and completed his answer about hobbies, going back to line 6.

6. A- My hobby is playing volleyball and watching movies.
13. A- I have many favorite singers and I also like to do many
14. things. Volleyball and watching films are some examples.

Maria also went back to her previous answer and also completed, "the same thing for me. I also like to go out."

It is my assumption that this flexibility of going back and forward makes the conversation enjoyable, since there is always the chance of clarifying something that was not very well explained/expressed. Very often, traditional controlled exercises frustrate students because their restricted knowledge forces them to say things they do not mean exactly, betraying their feelings and personalities.

Regarding the management of the conversation, students were more and more solving their problems within the group rather than with the teacher. For example, sometimes some students did not understand a word in an utterance. What they did in conversation 6 was to ask the meaning of the word directly to their peers in the group, as in line 30:

R- What does squirrel mean?
M- It means `esquilo.'

In the next conversation the speakers show a full command of the CLL approach.

Conversation 7

[participants: 4 students]
[topics: objects, an event]

1.M2: I bought it at `Feira da Esperança' last weekend.
2.R : What is it?
3.M2: It is a color pencil. Did you also go to `Feira da
4. Esperança?'
5.V: I didn't.
6.T I went on Friday. When did you go there?
7.M2: I went there on Sunday.
8.V: How did you like it?
9.M2: I loved it!
10.T: Did you see `Polegar'?
11.M2: Yes, I did.
12.V: Do you like them?
13.M2: Yes, I do.
14.T: The money collected in the fair goes to poor children, for
15. charities.
16.V: Were there many things to buy at the fair?
17.M2: There were many pictures, clothes and food.
18.R: Did you buy other things besides this?
19.M2: No, but I went to the park.
20.V: Did you buy anything?
21.T: No, I didn't. I just went there sightseeing with my
22. classmates.
23.V: Maria, whom did you go with?
24.M2: I went there with my family: my father, my mother and my
25. brother.
26.R: Was there any show on Tuesday?
27.M2: I don't know.
28.T: There were some typical `gaúcho' dancings.
29.M2: It would be good if you had been there, because it was
30. really good!
31.R: Has it finished already?
32.M2: Yes, it started on November 4th, and it ended on November,
33. 10th.

Today there was a full understanding of how turns should take place in the conversation. Students allowed themselves some time to listen to my translation and then to direct it to their classmates.

Conversation 8

[participants: 4 students]
[topics:an object]

1.M2: What is it?
2.A1: This is a crystal pyramid.
3.M2: Is it an ornament?
4.A1: Generally it is, but for me it is more than this.
5.M3: What does it mean to you?
6.A1: First, it was my girlfriend's present.
7.M3: And second?
8.A1: And second it is important for me because of the power it
9. has.
10.M3: What power does it have?
11.A1: It can give energy to some things.
12.M3: Can it give energy to anything here?
13.A1: For example, if you put an orange under it, the orange can
14. last for six months.
15.M3: Was there anything special that led you believe in
16. pyramids?
17.A1: I read about it. These pyramids are related to the
18. pyramids in Egypt on its dimensional relationship.
19.M3: Can that pyramid cure my cold?
20.A1: I don't know. Some people use it to work, to study, to
21. meditate.
22.M1: Do you keep it in this blue box?
23.A1: I put it on my bookshelf, under my razor blade.
24.M2: So you are saying this pyramid gives you luck and energy.
25.A1: Not because of luck, but because it is a gift.
26.M3: Did she buy it in Italy?
27.A1: No, she didn't. She bought it in Brazil.
28.V: Has anybody tried to explain it scientifically?
29.A1: Many people study the Queops pyramid and the other
30. pyramids. Do you believe in it?
31.V: Do you put salt on it?
32.A1: I just clean it.
33.M2: So you are saying it gives you good luck.
34.A: Not only this. For instance, somebody puts two plants
35. under pyramids. The one that was inside the pyramid grew
36. faster. Maybe it can cure some things faster.
37.M3: How much does it cost?
38.A1: It costs more than cr$20.000,00. Besides this, crystals
39. have their own power.
40.M2: Have you tried any experiment with the pyramid?
41.A1: I have already told you about my razor blade.
42.M1: Did it work out?
43.A1: Yes, it did.
44.V: Do you only have this pyramid?
45.A1: Yes. It doesn't need to be crystal-made, it can be paper-
46. made.

Students were all very interested in the topic. Moreover, students' familiarity with the CLL procedure has made the activity very easy for them. They have become used to saying in Portuguese-listening in English-and addressing the utterance in English. However, my translation did not flow very easily. I did not know exactly why the task of translating was rather hard to me: maybe because of the topic (kind of abstract), tiredness (difficulty in concentrating), or because of the specificity of the vocabulary.

Conversation 9

[participants: 5 students]
[topics:politics]

1.R: What do you suggest?
2.M3: The elections of the president of the university.
3. Who did you vote for?
4.R: I voted for Schmidt. How about you?
5.M3: My vote is secret.
6.A: I didn't vote.
7.M3: My vote was blank. Why didn't you vote?
8.A: I didn't know what the electoral programs were.
9.M3: I think it would be a good idea if candidates signed a
10. contract before elections. And if they didn't do what they
11. promised, they could be taken to court.
12.R: I think that the candidates are committed to a larger
13. structure.
14.M3: Of course, I'm tired of promises too.
15.R: Among the six candidates, it was hard to choose the
16. best among the worst.
17.M3: I don't like the worst ones. I like the best ones.
18.R: I voted for Schmidt, because I think his proposals were
19. the most suitable.
20.D: Do you think it is right to vote blank?
21.M3: I don't know. It was my protest.
22.D: Doesn't it cause the incubant candidate to win the
23. elections?
24.M3: I don't think so. It's just one vote. Some people told me
25. that Ronaldo `bought' many of the employees. And the
26. university has more employees than teachers and students.
27. Besides this, the majority of the students didn't vote.
28.D: Isn't it our responsibility to vote?
29.M3: Of course.
30:D: Was it a protest?
31.M3: Yes, I tried it. Do you know that there is a candidate
32. that is a student? Why didn't you vote for him?
33.R: I think that a student is not ready for the job to run a
34. university and because I think he is just a protest
35. candidate.
36.M3: What do you think of him? Do you think this was a good
37. or a bad idea?
38.R: ...maybe..it was a good idea.
39.M3: I think this was a good idea, but this candidate was my
40. classmate and I don't like him very much.

In this conversation I have noticed that having to translate opinions made the conversation hard for me to translate. For example, in line 15, I had to translate "o menos pior" on the spot. I thought of the literal translation "the least worst," but

as it sounded awkward, the assistant teacher suggested me that we put in the transcript "the best among the worst." I suppose that expressing opinions in this conversation involved some Brazilian everyday expressions which made the translation difficult.

Conversation 10

[participants: 4 students]
[topics: an object, occupation, sports, free time, music]

1.I: What is it?
2.M3: It is a god. It's an Inca god. The god of the sun.
3.V: Which are its powers?
4.M3: I don't know. I don't remember. It's an Inca or Aztec god.
5. The female is the god of the moon. The male is the god of
6. the sun.
7.R: Do the Aztecs live in Peru?
8.M3: I don't know, but they live in South America. If I'm not
9. mistaken, this is the main god of the Aztec culture.
10. I bought it today because I had a History class and I
11. had to talk about the art of the primitive cultures.
12. The Aztec is an old culture.
13.R: Where did you get it?
14.M3: My father bought it in Mexico. I think that the Aztec
15. influenced many South American countries, for instance:
16. Chile, Bolivia, Peru.
17.V: And in Brazil, do you know any influence of the Aztec
18. people?
19.M3: I don't know.
20.R: Can I see it?
21.M3: Sure.
22.R: It's heavy.
23.V: What is it made of?
24.M3: Onix stone.
25.R: It is beautiful.
26.V: It's very beautiful.
28.I: Why is it important for you?
29.M3: It is not important for me. My father bought it because
30. it is beautiful.
31.R: Does your father study it?
32.M3: Yes, he likes studying other cultures. He is studying in
33. Mexico right now. It must have a special meaning for him.
34.V: Does he have other objects of this kind?
35.M3: Yes, he does. He likes to travel. He brings other things
36. from other countries.
37.V: Does he have anything from Brazil?
38.M3: Yes, a `pandeiro'.
39.V: Is he an anthropologist?
40.M3: No, he is a geographer.
41.V: Does he make excavations?
42.M3: Yes, he has already made some.
43.V: Did he find anything?
44.M3: Only stones. Changing the subject, what do you want to
45. do by the end of the year?
46.V: I'll go to Criciúma.
47.R: I'll stay in my house in São José.
48.M3: Aren't you going to the beach?
49.R: Although I went to the beach this weekend, I don't like it
50. very much.

51.M3: What do you do in your free time?
52.R: I like to play the guitar.
53.V: Do you play in any band?
54.R: Presently, I just study music.
55.M3: What do you usually do in the summer? Do you only play the
56. guitar?
57.R: I'm cancelling my enrollment at the university.
58.M3: Where are you going to study?
59.R: Here in Florianópolis at Academia Funcional de Música.
60.V: What kind of music do you like?
61:R: All kinds of music: MPB, classical music...I love it...,
62. except country music.
63.I: Did you go to the "Kid Abelha" show?
64.R: No, the show was vey late.
65.I: Do you like "Kid Abelha's" music?
66.R: More or less. Although "Kid Abelha" has great musicians,
67. I don't like it very much.

In conversation 10, studentes were used to the "show and tell" activity, and again the conversation flowed naturally. Students were, as in the previous conversation, saying some sentences by themselves, like "what is it," "why is it important for you." Students really got engaged in the conversation and produced a rather long interaction. It is interesting to notice that the topic about music comes up for the third time.

Conversation 11

[participants: 2 students]
[topics: ecological groups, an event]

1.R: Have you ever participated in any ecological movement?
2.I: What do you call an ecological movement?
3.R: People who meet to protect nature.
4.I: I've never participated. I think people don't need to
5. meet to protect nature. We can protect nature in our
6. everyday attitudes.
7.R: Not everybody thinks this way. That's why there are these
8. groups to protect nature.
9.I: By the way, have you heard about the international meeting
10. in Rio next year?
11.R: About ecology? I have superficial information about it. I
12. haven't read anything about it.
13.I: Where did you get to know about it?
14.R: On TV. Do you have any further information about it?
15.I: Many countries will participate.
16.R: Do you think that Rio is the ideal city for this meeting?
17.I: I don't know the criterion for this choice, but why not?
18.R: Don't you think Rio is a very violent city for foreigners?
19.I: I agree, but I don't think Rio is that violent.
20.R: There are many poor children in Rio. Don't you think it is
21. bad for visitors to see them?
22.I: I don't think so. I think that they have to see the
23. situation because this is also their fault.
24:R: Why?
25:I: Because of the economical exploitation.
26.R: I don't think this is the reason why we have so many
27. poor children. Have you ever been in Rio?
28.I: Yes, I have.
29.I: Was it a long time ago?
30.I: Three years ago.
31.R: I have never been to Rio.
32.I: So the images you have from Rio are from TV.
33.R: Not only, I also get information from "cariocas" who come
34. to live here and from friends who have been there.
35.I: I think that the problems of Rio have to do with ecology.
36.R: Yes, they do. Can you name some?
37.I: The concentration of the population without infra-structure
38. is one.

Before starting the conversation, the two participants decided on the topic. The conversation produced was rather well developed. Students were able to exchange information, give opinions, and examplifications based on facts and previous experience, producing this way an interesting and coherent

conversation. I think that the major factors responsible for generating such a conversation were:

1. Students were used to the CLL process, respecting each others' paces and pauses;
2. There were just two participants;
3. Students decided in advance what they were going to talk about;
4. They could contribute with some new information and bring into play previous experience.

From an analysis of the 11 conversations, one can observe that regardless of students' cooperation in the application of the approach every class offered a new challenge.

Now having in mind the role of the participants in this experiment, how students reacted and responded to CLL, I will point out what the conversations have produced.

As noted in the first chapter, students' major concern was conveying meaning. And this negotiation of meaning was done through functions as the next section will show in detail.

3.2 The data collected

In the data analysis, I concentrate my attention on the functions, structures and questions introduced by learners in the eleven conversations.

I analyse the functions used, classifying them into categories, their occurrence and the topics involved; I also analise the main grammatical points used in the application of the CLL approach, particularly the points necessary to the development of the conversation and the order they were required; finally, I analyse students' questions from which I draw parallelisms with Burt and Dulay's (1973) difficulty order of functors.

3.2.1 Functions generated

One characteristic of the language used by the group of learners was the variety of functions in the conversations. This had already been hypothesized by methodologists like Yalden when talking about the functional approach. She states: "the very basis of a functional approach to language teaching [...] derives from the conviction that what people want to do through language is more important than mastery of the language as an unapplied system" (1988, p.32).

In order to analyse the functions used by students in the conversations, I present in this section the frequency of occurrence of functions introduced by the learners. The functions are classified into: 1) imparting and seeking for factual information; 2) expressing and finding out about emotional and moral attitudes (Van Ek 1976); 3) making communication work; 4) finding out about language (Blundell et al 1982) and the function I classify as 5) finding out and expressing reason.

a) Imparting and seeking for factual information

Under this function students were basically trying to get information about their classmates' background. The table below shows the topics involved in the conversations and their occurrence.

Table 1. Imparting and seeking for factual information

topics	Conversations										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
origin	x	x									
previous experience	x										
occupation		x								x	
sports		x	x							x	
attendance to class			x								
education			x								
beliefs			x		x						
grades				x							
school				x							
names	x										
strikes				x							
U.S. holidays				x							
hobbies						x					
objects							x	x		x	
prices								x			
properties								x			
events							x				
previous class					x						
choices					x				x		
holiday					x					x	
plans										x	
free time										x	
show										x	
rock bands										x	
ecological groups											x

Students used "imparting and seeking for factual information" in an average of 3 times in each conversation. Generally, it was the starting point of the conversations, rarely occurring in the development. Present in all conversations, imparting and seeking for factual information can be seen as an attempt to frame the conversations. In some, a more rigid framing was used (conv. 7,8,9,10,11), whereas in others, various topics were introduced.

b) Expressing and finding out about emotional and moral attitudes

b.1 Expressing and finding out about emotional attitudes

A second function students used in the conversations is "expressing and finding out about emotional attitudes." Considering that "imparting and seeking for factual information" was primarily introduced as a device to frame the conversations, "expressing and finding out about emotional attitudes" can mostly be found in the development of the conversation. Students introduced this type of function after they had broken the ice and felt at ease to ask for more personal information about their classmates.

The topics involved in "expressing and finding out about emotional attitudes" and their occurrence are shown below.

Table 2.Expressing and finding out about emotional attitudes

Topics	Conversations										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
likes	x	x		x							
plans		x									
opinions			x		x						x
explanations						x					
importance of an object								x			
choices						x			x		
free time										x	
music										x	

This function was used less frequently in the conversations. The topics that mostly required the use of this function were "likes," "opinions'" and "choices."

Moreover, students used this function to elicit language which conveyed personal information from their colleagues. Through this exchange, more intimate relationships were created. It seems the group needed this emotional support to create an ideal environment for learning.

b.2 Expressing and finding out about moral attitudes

In this category students, did not only want to know whether their classmates liked or disliked things as expressed in emotional attitudes (b.1), here a more critical position toward facts was demanded. Some of the topics explored in the conversations were controversial ones. They involved discussions

on religion, myths, reflection, political positions and alignments towards facts.

The table below shows the topics involved in "expressing and finding out about moral attitudes."

Table 3. Expressing and finding out about moral attitudes

topics	Conversations										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
religion			x								
god					x						
witches					x						
silence					x						
politics									x		
allignments											x

It seems that after students had set the topic through "imparting and seeking for factual information," given some direction through expressing emotional attitudes, they felt like going deeper into the subject and asking for more personal views from the participants.

In an analysis of the four conversations in which this category appeared, I can see that "deepening the conversation" was not related to students' age. This means that to deepen the subject did not depend on students' maturity because these questions were addressed both to adult and adolescent students. As the table above shows, the topics in which this function appears are controversial ones, which were introduced in just

four conversations.

c) Making Communication Work

Another function students used in the conversations was "making communication work." Students used it to check understanding, to introduce a new topic, to find out about the content of the previous class, to adjust to the who-how-what to talk about. This function provides security to students because it creates the opportunity of checking whether the channels of communication are adjusted, like topic/word understanding.

The table below shows the frequency of use of this function.

Table 4. Making communication work

Topics	Conversations										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
check understanding		x									
ask for/introduce a new topic		x		x	x	x		x			
find out about previous class					x						
adjust who-how-what to talk			x	x							

As the table shows, students used this function mostly to introduce or ask for a new topic. Its major role is of requesting students' acceptance for a new topic. Students also used this function to slow down the pace of the conversation. Speakers asked for further explanations, propitiating students to get back on track again. However, this function was not used very often if compared to the frequency of topic change.

d) Finding out about language

Students used the "finding out about language" function to solve problems of understanding in the conversation, and to solve problems that occurred in the group itself . For example, in conversation 6, Maristela produced an utterance without the help of the instructor and Roberto asked her directly the meaning of a word he did not understand.

Students used this function just once along the conversations and it is a sign that they tried to work by themselves, just like Curran (1976) had idealized the CLL approach. It is one of the signs students were starting to be less dependant on the teacher, initiating what in the literature has been called "stage two", of kicking out dependency.

e) Finding out and expressing reason

A final function that occurred in the conversations is "finding out and expressing reason." Students used this function to ask for and give reasons for certain facts. It seems that as the conversation moved from factual information to emotional attitudes, a deeper analysis of the facts was made by the conversationsalists, and the function "finding out and expressing reason" was used to make such an analysis.

The table below shows the frequency of use of "finding out and expressing reason" in the conversations.

Table 5. Finding out and expressing reason

topics	Conversations										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
reasons for studying English	x	x									
a good weekend			x								
a holiday				x	x						
choices						x			x	x	
importance of something										x	
explanation about facts											x

As it can be seen, students used this function in almost all conversations. And an interesting aspect is that students in their very first contact wanted to know why their classmates had started studying English. I interpret this as students being looking for and finding out about the common objectives for being in the class and learning English.

Comparing the functions discussed above to the list of funtions Van Ek (1976) and Blundell et al (1982) present, students still need to develop some other functions in later stages. In a 38-hour course students used: "imparting and seeking for factual information," " expressing and finding out about emotional and moral attitudes," "making communication work," and "finding out about language." To develop threshold level competence students still need to develop: "expressing and finding out about intellectual attitudes," "getting things done"

and "socializing (Van Ek 1976)."

If there were a follow up of this experiment, these other functions could be either introduced naturally by other conversations or suggested by the teacher.

f. Distribution of the functions along the conversations

The chart below shows the functions students used in each conversation.

Table 6. Functions used in the conversations

	1	2	3	4	5	6
CØNV1	1	2				6
CONV2	1	2		4		6
CONV3	1	2	3	4		6
CONV4	1	2		4		6
CONV5	1	2	3	4		6
CONV6	1	2		4	5	6
CONV7	1					
CONV8	1	2		4		
CONV9	1	2	3			6
CONV10	1	2				6
CONV11	1	2	3			6

Functions used in the conversation:

1. seeking and imparting for factual information
2. finding out and expressing emotional attitudes
3. finding out and expressing moral attitudes
4. making communication work
5. finding out about language
6. finding out and expressing reason

From the analysis of the conversations, I could conclude

that there seems to be no relation between the number of functions introduced and the quality of the conversation produced. For example, conversation 8, although only including three types of functions ("seeking for factual information", "finding out and expressing emotional attitudes" and "making communication work") is a very interesting conversation. That is, students introduced a topic that really caught their attention and produced a lively interaction. The opposite happened in conversation 3. Even using 5 types of functions, students did not come to an agreement on a central topic to be discussed, and the result was an inconsistent conversation.

From an analysis of table 6 and of the conversations, it seems that the variety of functions provided a broader view in a discussion, however, what really influenced the quality of the conversation apparently was the interest in the topic.

It is important to point out that an interesting topic seems crucial for the development of a good conversation. It goes back to Grice's (1975) maxims of quantity and relation. That is, students made their conversational contributions as "informative" (quantity) and "relevant" as desired.

Nonetheless, from students' comments other issues may have motivated them to participate actively in the conversation. As table 6 shows, in conversation 7, for instance, students introduced just one function ("imparting and seeking for factual information"). They talked about the topic superficially. From my judgement as an outsider, the conversation was not motivating for the students. However, Roberto stated later that he was quite

satisfied with that conversation because he was able to control his tenseness and to get involved in the conversation.

As Nunan (1988) points out, the learner reacts to experience as he perceives it, not as the teacher presents or perceives it.

Therefore, the number of functions introduced in a conversation did not necessarily mean a motivated conversation. Factors like interesting topic, as well as affective filter and getting used to the CLL process were all important factors.

Summarizing, "seeking and imparting for factual information" was used in all conversations and "finding out and expressing emotional attitudes" was used in 10 out of the 11 conversations. "Finding out and expressing reason" was used in 9 out of the eleven conversations. These three functions were the most frequently used. It seems they were really necessary to the development of the conversations. "Making communication work," seems also to be an important tool for the conversations. This function was used in 7 out of the 11 conversations. "Finding out and expressing moral attitudes" was less frequent. It happened 4 times along the conversations. "Finding out about language" was used just once in the 11 conversations. It seems the learners were more meaning than language/structure oriented.

3.2.2 Structures Introduced

This section will deal with the recycling and novelty of structures, which were introduced in the conversations on the paradigmatic and syntagmatic levels. By recycling I understand structures which are frequent in almost all conversations, while novelty is the introduction of new structures along the conversations.

At the paradigmatic level, I will analyse the sentences students produced in terms of recycling and novelty of its components. I selected randomly articles, adverbs, numerals, interrogative pronouns and verbs for the analysis.

At the syntagmatic level, I will examine how students organized their ideas in terms of clauses.

Now, concerning the paradigmatic grammatical relations, articles are at stake. Indefinite articles surprisingly were not used in the first conversation and the definite article "the" just once. I say surprisingly because articles seem (at least to me) to be obligatory in almost any utterance. From conversation 2 on, however, students used an average of ten articles per conversation.

Adverbs and numerals only appear from conversation 5 onwards, when probably students felt more comfortable to elaborate their sentences, reinforced by the fact that topics required more detailment. That means, students did not restrict their questions to the "here and now" reference. For example, students used adverbs like "last class", "last weekend", and

numerals like "first" and "second."

I also noticed that students introduced interrogative pronouns through **WH questions** quite early. In conversation 1 students already used "what, where, and why." These three interrogative pronouns occurred repeatedly in the next conversations. Novelty was introduced at every other conversation by **how, who, when, whom, and which.**

Regarding verbs, students used verb **To Be** recurrently in all conversations; the Present Tense was also used in all conversations, whereas the Past Tense was used in 6 out of the 11 conversations. Having in mind that traditionally verb **To Be** is a starting point in English classes, it seems that my data confirm this early need in teaching the different forms of verb **To Be.**

If learning is related to the need in use of discourse (Hatch, 1978), verb **To Be** should be among the first items to be present in the input provided to learners.

By comparison, in all conversations students used the Present Tense of some main verbs. The Past Tense of these verbs appears from conversation 2.

In conversation 2, students started using the morpheme **s** for the 3rd person singular. It seems that they needed the form since the very beginning of the conversations, while in traditional sequencing of syllabi, 3rd person singular would only be presented to students in later stages, supposedly when students had mastered a series of "less complex" items.

The Present and Past Perfect, in spite of not being as

frequent in the conversations as the tenses presented before, were used surprisingly early. Traditionally they would be presented to students much later. Both of them were used basically in every other conversation. One of the advantages of a not linguistically ordered syllabus lies in the fact that students are in contact with only the structures required for the purpose of communication.

Modals were another verb form frequently used in the conversations. They occurred in 9 out of the 11 conversations, involving **can, could, would, and must.** Modals seem to be an important tool in students' conversations.

Less frequent than the previous verb forms was the future with **will and going to,** and the Present Continuous Tense. They come up in 4 out of the 11 conversations.

Some verb forms like **there was/were** and the Imperative were used more scarcely. The former was used in 3 and the latter in 2 conversations.

Thus, in terms of verbs, the data show that verb to be, the Present and Past Tense of verbs were recycled in all conversations. Novelty was introduced by the Present and Past Perfect, Modals, Future, Present Continuous Tense, there was/were and the Imperative. From the analysis of the data, it can be noted that in every conversation an average of three new elements were introduced. In conversation 1, for instance, students introduced the Present Perfect, the Past Continous Tense and the Imperative.

At the syntagmatic level, the majority of the clauses introduced were either independent or subordinate in all conversations, and in a smaller number, coordinate clauses. One characteristic feature of the last conversations was an increasing number of subordinate clauses compared to coordinate clauses. Also, in the last conversations students used embedded questions/answers. It seems that as students started deepening the subject of their conversations, they produced longer and more complex sentences. This syntagmatic elaboration seems also to be a result of students' closer commitment to the group. That is, the group demanded from each other clear positions towards facts, and the ability to use language that showed the interrelationship of facts.

However, if on the one hand at some moments students tended to elaborate their utterances, in many other opportunities they produced rather reduced forms of sentences. It seems that informality and characteristic aspects of spoken language were responsible for these types of sentences. Students, for instance, tended not to use verb connectors, but mainly content words, like:

> At the university. English for Special Purposes.
> In an academy or alone?
> In Nova Trento.

Bygate (1988) classifies these reduced forms of sentences as "satellite units." According to the author, oral language tolerates ellipsis due to speaker's and listener's reciprocal and mutual knowledge of the situation, and to the shared ability to

clarify any misunderstanding that may happen in the conversation. As the data from the experiment show, the satellite units include noun groups, adjectives, adverbial groups, prepositional phrases and subordinate clauses.

From the analysis carried out on sentences and clauses, it can be observed that the conversations provided rich input in terms of making available complex linguistic elements to learners. Novelty was added by introducing in every conversation an average of three new grammatical items.

3.2.3 Students' Questions

Students' questions constitute an essential part of the CLL approach. As highlighted previously in the description of the approach, after students had the conversation, there is a period of reflection, followed by a period of questioning.

In this section I will present the type of questions students asked during the questioning period and a comparison between these questions and Burt and Dulay's (1973) study about difficulty functors.

The questions students asked were of two main types.

The first type was about vocabulary, regarding the meaning of words. As I put the sentences on the board, students would ask the meaning of isolated words. In most of these questions students wanted to know the meaning of a word in the given context of the conversation. Some other times, they wanted to know whether the meaning could be extended to other contexts.

In the first conversations, there was a tendency for students to ask the meaning of every unknown word. As a result, the lack of objectivity in focusing on one or another aspect, generated insecurity. It seems that in the first conversations, some students were unable to use strategies which could help them to understand the meaning of the sentences written on the board. In other words, in the first conversations students did not know what they needed to know and what they wanted to know.

It is also important to point out that some students in the first conversations did not learn from their classmates'

questions. I would be asked to give the meaning of a word more than once.

So the majority of the questions students asked were about the meaning of words. The group, however, was not interested in paradigmatic expansions of the vocabulary. Considering all questioning periods, just in a few of them students asked for a paradigmatic relation. Maria asks "em `do you know her', como se diz `ele,' ` ela', `nós.'" Another type of expansion students made was in semantic field relations using some previous knowledge. For example:

-Antônio asks if "pictures" (out of the present context) is the same as "movies"(conversation 5);

-Alberto asks the meaning of "Blade Runner"(out of the present context) when we studied "razor blade"(conversation 7).

A second type of questions were about grammar. They were more frequent in the initial questioning periods.

Below are the examples:

- the difference between the indefinite article "a/an" (conv. 1);

- use of "going to," the "ing" gerund, the Simple Present and "will" the use of "too" and "either"(conv.4);

- use of the object pronoun and the verb form "seen" (conv.5);

- why [the noun] "reading" and "gardening" have the "ing", he asks if it is gerund (conv.6);

- the difference between "don't" and "didn't" (conv.9);

- 3rd person singular (conv.10).

Surprisingly, students' questions have a close relationship with the difficulty order of functors presented by Dulay and Burt (1973). In this study Dulay and Burt applied a series of tests and they came up with a list of the functors which the subjects had difficulties. In order to compare the difficulties the subjects in CLL had and Dulay and Burt study I organized the list below with the linguistic aspects which were questioned by the students.

A comparison of the categories in the two lists in the table below confirms this similarity. In a way, students' questions confirm Dulay and Burt's (1973) study.

Table 7. Difficulty order of functors

SLL-CLL SARDO 1991	SLL BURT and DULAY 1973
1. articles	1. plural
2. future/progressive	2. progressive
3. gerund	3. contractable copula
4. too-either	4.contractable auxiliary
5. object pronouns	5. articles
6. past irregular	6. past irregular
7. contractable auxiliaries	7. 3rd person singular
8. 3rd person singular	8. possessive

As the table shows, articles, the progressive, the past irregular, contractable auxiliaries and third person singular are

common in both studies.

I would also call attention to the fact that the questions the CLL group asked occurred in a similar order to the difficulty order of functors presented by Dulay and Burt (1973), even having both studies elicited the data through different means. Burt and Dulay (1973) elicited their data with the Bilingual Syntax Measure (BSM), producing the difficulty functors unconsciously, whereas I (1991) obtained my information through questions students addressed to me in the CLL experiment at a conscious level. This confirmation in Dulay and Burt's(1973) study seems to be of interest because it provides more support to the claim of a universal language learning route.

Besides the two types of questions presented, students also asked about the pronunciation of words and the production of sentences. An interesting point is that students frequently asked for the pronunciation of words they had produced during the conversation.

This reinforces the idea of the importance of the input students produced in the conversations. As Curran (1976) points out, the students' generated input is an essential element for learning when talking about attention in class. Students are fully engaged in the process since they are working with something they have produced.

A final point here is that students did not ask about other functions besides the ones they generated in class. In other

words, in this stage students did not ask for expanding the functions they had produced. They could have asked, for instance, "how you ask somebody's address, telephone number, etc."

However, from conversation 5 on, students started asking the meaning of whole chunks of language. I hypothesize they had realized that often the meaning of isolated words did not convey enough information to understand the utterance. The fact of not asking for expansion functions, however, may reveal that this type of questioning was too elaborate for the present linguistic stage.

As I could observe, their main concern at first was understanding words, then chunks, and finally the meaning of whole sentences.

This process of chunking seems to be related to the limitations of short-term memory. Smith (1981) in a discussion on the issue of how to improve reading comprehension by not overloading short-term memory says that the reading task is more efficient if "we can organize small detail into larger units." (p.40) It is also in line with the fact that short-term memory can hold about seven digits, which can be letters or words. So if elements are meaningfully organized in chunks comprehension is improved.

As far as I understand, the way students directed their learning is similar to Smith's (1981) description of chunking data for comprehension. It seems that students learned that the efficiency of their retention of information was related to chunking.

Interesting enough, students were not so much concerned about the comprehensiveness of the grammatical rule; a full understanding of the rule did not seem crucial to them. They did want to hear about the rule but they were not interested in an extensive explanation. It is possible that there are problems of readiness and students in a later stage will ask again for confirmation of their hypotheses.

From an analysis of the data I could conclude that:

a) Regarding functions:

I argue that functions generated in class are an encouraging feature of the language for students to study. It seems that students realized that through functions they reached their major objective, that was of exchanging meaning. Students needed the functions to communicate in the most motivating part of the class: the conversations.

b) Regarding structures:

Despite the fact that some structures are too complex/ difficult for learners, in a processing sense, experimenting a lot of language seemed not to have caused problems to students. What seems to have happened is that a rich linguistic environment offered learners opportunities of taking advantage of the instructional material according to their individual linguistic needs.

c) Regarding questions:

I could notice that students' questions revealed that they asked for clarification of items they realized they could handle at that stage. That is, students decreased the number of questions about grammar, for example, towards the end of the course. Probably students realized that the explanations about grammar did not help them much in the conversations at that stage. This is in line with the claim that teaching isolated

grammar points is not a useful activity in SL instruction since grammar/language is approached holistically by learners, and it is needed holistically. Similar strategies were used to clarify problems about pronunciation. Thus, I argue that students chose to get acquainted with the lexicon of the language by asking about the meaning of words/sentences in the conversations.

Was it too much input to be transformed into intake?

Did some of it become noise?

From the students development and achievement in class I could observe that input produced in class was not noise. I can support this view bringing Pienemann's (1984) theory to discussion. From this theoretical perspective students profit from the language environment according to their state of readiness to acquire structures. A lot of input was generated in the conversations, however, students picked up from the language

the linguistic aspects they were ready to acquire. For some students the exposure to the language through CLL might have overloaded them, but it is important to point out that they were not expected to learn everything that was produced in the conversations. This decision was made in order to respect students' individual linguistic stages of maturation. The individual stages of maturation could be observed through the modal would. This modal, for instance, was surfaced in some conversations. However, from my observations probably just one student learned the modal **would**. He was the only one to produce it in a test I applied to the group. It seems he had developed readiness for such a learning. Yet, the other students were not able to produce it in the situations it was required. According to Pienemann's hypothesis they had not developed the necessary prerequisites to acquire the structure. Nonetheless, they will have other opportunities to learn it because the CLL is not based on the "structure of the day." Another argument that allows me to conclude that input was not noise was the fact that students knew the content of the message they were saying.

So the CLL approach creates opportunities in providing the linguistic tools for students of different levels of proficiency to direct their learning and progress according to their current linguistic competence stage.

CHAPTER 4

Findings and applications for TEFL classrooms

After presenting the theoretical foundations, the description of the experiment, and its results, in this chapter I will point out some of the insights this experiment provided me on the type and effect of input generated in the CLL classes.

First, I will deal with the issue of the validity of the material produced in the process of learning a foreign language through the CLL approach; next I will answer the main questions proposed in the experiment and then I will make some proposals, and present some final remarks.

4.1 Input generated in the CLL experiment. Was it comprehensible, interesting and relevant?

Initially one may ask whether students have profited from the experiment, in other words, whether the language produced in class was comprehensible input.

There are four points to be considered.

First, concerning the input generated by the learners, did it have the (i+1) quality advocated by Krashen (1982) in his Monitor Model for SLA? In the (i+1) formula, the (i) stands for the current linguistic level of students' competence and (1) a structure beyond this level. It seems that since the conversations were not based on the "structure of the day," any construction could have occured provided that it was useful to express students' ideas. The syllabus created was neither

grammatically sequenced nor determined by the language complexity criteria, both necessary conditions for comprehensible input. As a result of spontaneity, any structure necessary to express a required meaning could have been used by students over the classes. Possibly, some students might have felt overloaded. But considering that meaning was emphasized and not structure and the relaxed atmosphere, this should not have raised the filter of the students.

Second, during the questioning period students had the opportunity to ask relevant questions to the teacher and to each other. The questions comprehended grammatical, lexical, syntactical or any other linguistic aspects considered important to students' interests. They basically depended on their interests and/ or state of linguistic readiness. Moreover, the explanation of a rule depended exclusively on students' curiosity since various grammar points could be exploited in a single conversation. Therefore students would only ask about issues that were of relevance to them and relevance is a basic element of "comprehensible input."

Third, students in the CLL conversation had to talk about something that was interesting to them or that they were willing to talk about. The language generated had therefore the quality of spontaneous speech. Such spontaneous quality and "interestingness" of input have been shown by several researchers to be mostly suited for acquisition.

Fourth, if on the one hand the fact that students would

produce chunks of the conversation in Portuguese and then have them translated into the target language seems, at first, somehow artificial, on the other hand, students felt confident because they were communicating; they were negotiating meaning. And still more important, students were self-assured that they were expressing what they really wanted to mean since the very beginning of their learning, and that the teacher would support their utterances by providing the target language utterance.

Curran illustrates the process of L1-TLt-TLs (L1-first language, TLt - target language -teacher, TLS - target language-student) like swimmers that take their heads out of the water to take air. The teacher while providing the L2 utterance is actually giving breathing time to learners.

So, since the early stages the CLL approach assures students that they are conveying the message they want. Through this participating process, the learners get used to the sounds, to the rythm of the sentences and language and start to make sense out of them. Just like the Chinese speaker (Hatch, 1978) reported by Krashen (1982): the boy, the author says, had learned some sentences "as whole utterances without understanding their components. Just as time went by, the learner may have started to understand the meaning of words in other sentences and to use this language in a creative way" (p.26). A similar process seems to have happened with the Brazilian students in the application of the CLL approach.

4.2 Research questions

Having briefly discussed the validity of the input generated in the experiment, I will now concentrate on the questions this experiment was based on.

1- What do a group of Brazilian students choose to learn when exposed to the CLL approach: vocabulary, grammar structures or functions? How do they do this?

The CLL approach as outlined in the second chapter is divided in 4 main parts: the production of the conversation, the transcription of the sentences on the board, questions, and reflection period. As pointed out in the previous chapter, it can be noted that students took very little of their time expanding vocabulary and analysing grammar structures during the questioning period. During the production of the conversation, on the other hand, students not only seemed to be very stimulated by the conversation, but also introduced a good quantity and variety of material. Students searched for a holistic understanding, that is, an overall comprehension which seemed to be of major interest. From their choice to concentrate on the conversations, it seems that students chose to induce the rules of grammar examplified in the conversations.

Concerning vocabulary, students' questions were concentrated on meaning. It seems students were not interested in making paradigmatic expansions about vocabulary.

Grammar structures, in turn, were approached in several ways:

By confirming grammar relations:

For example:

- confirmation, "Is the **s**, in **watches**, plural?"

- confirmation about tenses, "what do you do?- o que você faz?, what did you? - o que você fez?"

By contrasting morphemes:

For example:

- contrasting, "why do you have **s** in **likes** and you don't have it in the next **like**?"

- contrasting,"what is the difference between **do/don't**?"

In the beginning of the experiment there were quite a few questions on grammar, however, as time went by students' grammatical curiosity dropped. Their focus of attention was on the elicitation of the conversation.

2- What is the relationship between the input that is generated by students and what is learned by them?

Instead of having evaluating instruments to measure what was learned by students, the data I presented in the previous chapters are a product of my own observation of the conversations and students' major recurrent difficulties.

From students' production, I could observe that, similarly to the formulaic speech in first language acquisition, students in the experiment used one word, two words and whole chunks of sentences to express meaning. They would say without my help **why**,

why not, what is it, why is it important for you. It seems that they learned it easily, produced it naturally or maybe they made an effort to produce them in an attempt to be independent from my translation. Therefore, they might have learned these sentences because they were necessary for immediate use, confirming Krashen's (1982) theory about relevant input.

On the other hand, it seems that some morphemes, although necessary, could not be learned in the beginning stages. The use of the modal **would** is one example. The conversation students produced required the use of this modal. In conversation 8, it was needed several times and in some other conversations too. Besides, students also asked for more explanations about **would** during the speculation period. So we spent some time over this point. Nonetheless, students did not use it spontaneously in a single conversation. Moreover, in a test I applied to students at the end of the course almost none of them used it properly. When I asked the students to invite their classmates to go to the movies ("would you like to go to the movies?"), however, the invitations were "Do you like to go to the movies?" or "You like to go to the movies?"

It is my assumption that students did not have all the linguistic prerequisites, as Pienemann (1984) hypothesizes, to acquire and use such structures. In order to take into account the different linguistic achievements in class, students were placed at differentiated levels at the end of the course. That is, the higher achievers, like Inácio and Mariana, were advised to go to level 3, while the rest of the group was placed at level

2.

In sum, I assume that the relationship between the input generated and the learning that occurred in the experimental group is:

1) students learned input that was relevant, for its immediate application and meaningfulness;

2) students learned with their affective filter low, that is a result of mutual trust between the teacher and the student;

3) students learned if the acquisition/grammatical prerequisites were met, according to their state of readiness. It seems that the natural route is one of the determinants that dictates the sequence of what is learned first. Similar studies to Pienemann's (1984), applied to the English Language, would point out these prerequisites.

4.3 Evaluation

Several issues relevant to SLA teaching/learning came up during the experiment. They are related to students directing their learning, working with students feelings and experimenting with the language as a whole.

Having students say what they wanted to learn was a unique experience for both the teacher and the students.

From the teacher's perspective, I question myself to what extent we teachers allow space for students to direct their learning. As far as I am concerned, very little. We prefer to adopt a paradigm and then tell students how to use it.

From the students' perspective, it seems they do not know what their needs are. Students do not know they have the right to choose what to learn, and that they can improve their learning if they participate more in terms of `what' and `how' to learn. In the CLL approach students learn to find out what they need to know/what they want to know in order to express their ideas in the target language. Students are encouraged and expected to ask questions. As a matter of fact, this initiative is the opposite of what happens in traditional classes where the teacher is the one who asks questions. Deen (1991) shows in a study that in a student-centered group the number of questions students asked excelled the number of questions students asked in a teacher-centered class. In the learner-centered class students asked 93% of the questions, opposed to 14% of the questions students asked in a teacher-centered class.

This experience of having students directing their learning shows that interests and learning routes may be different from the ones received from or imposed by the teacher. Tudor (1992) reenforces the benefits of CLL saying that it has stimulated linguists and teachers to reflect upon "an active participatory role for learners." As he puts it, learners should be motivated to grow in their "self-directive role."

Allowing students to say how they feel in each class regarding the activities, also showed me that there is so much `feeling' involved in the learning process.

Our everyday classroom shows that we, teachers, care so little about students' feelings or entirely ignore them. For

instance, at the end of every class I used to listen to students comments. In the following classes, I used to work with their feelings, like keeping up with activities they liked, going slower with difficult tasks, and learning from their metalearning.

This type of attitude created an atmosphere of mutual trust. I, as a teacher, was constantly reminded that, students get embarassed, they can overcome shyness, and they question the learning process all the time. With this open-mindedness it is a lot easier to understand why in some classes students can produce more, in others they will produce less, what their difficulties are, why they do not want to participate, etc. Very often, students' difficulties were only perceived by me after they had commented on them. In a CLL conversation students have a chance to have a whole picture of what they can do with the language. In other words, the starting point of the learning process encompasses the final one: to learn a language to communicate.

Through the CLL experience students are indirectly reminded that they can use the language functionally, because they are using it in actual communication. Students can search for factual information, emotional and moral attitudes, and they can and should be motivated to use a large variety of functions of the language. Instead of having a compartmentalized set of language to learn, students initiate by experimenting a bit of everything. Once the learner has somehow formed a frame about the language, the teacher can be in charge of enlarging the frames students

have built.

In this experiment, for example, students used in their conversations six types of functions. The teacher then would be responsible for the next linguistic stage providing sources/functions/strategies so that students could improve their communicative ability. For instance, the teacher could suggest certain topics which would surface functions not explored so far. Another way of expanding the material would be suggesting some other strategies besides the ones generated in a conversation during the analysis of students' utterances on the board.

Summing up, a CLL experience at early stages is of great value. It sets boundaries and objectives. It also situates the teacher in a more explicited way with respect to the type of group of students s/he has.

4.4 Pedagogical recommendations

I suggest that CLL should be used with students who are beginning to study a foreign language and I recommend it to teachers who are willing to know their students better and learn from their choices, questions and comments.

I must call the reader's attention, however, that teachers who would like to apply CLL are required to have: confidence in their conversational command of the target language, a full understanding of the approach and, willingness to live through a new experience. Students, likewise, must know they are going to experience a different type of class and accept to live through

this new situation.

For the time being, I suggest that teachers use the CLL process as an activity to alternate with other activities in a course. The teacher should adopt the CLL approach as long as the class seeks for a holistic understanding of the language. As soon as the class feels that the emphasis of study should shift to a certain specific aspect of the language, the teacher may propose other methodologies.

For the near future, I propose that formal learning should provide opportunities for students to trace their own route of learning applied in new tasks and roles. As a consequence, the

focus of teachers' attention should turn from the ending result to the 'in between' process. Teachers should learn from their students' choices.

CONCLUSION

The experiment with a Brazilian group of students learning English through the CLL approach provided me a better understanding of the type of input students generate and how teachers-students-materials interact in a non-traditional approach.

I could conclude that students were willing to direct their learning and learn what they wanted to learn at specific stages of learning. Brindley (1984) encourages this type of learning saying that "..one fundamental principle underlying the notion of permanent education is that education should develop in individuals the capacity to control their own destiny." (p.15)

Comparing to conventional textbooks, one can observe that the topics students introduced in their conversations when applying the CLL are quite common and some of them could even be found in materials available in commercial courses. Yet, what calls students' attention is that the conversations are spontaneous and present some of the characteristics of an unplanned spoken text: repetitious, sometimes incoherent, and chunky. The chunks of conversation are called "satellite units" by Bygate (1988). He points out the benefits of "satellite units" (chunks) in the language learning process because they help learners to cope with memory overload. By using them, learners decide by themselves the size of chunks they want to operate with.

The materials students handle, in turn, are a result of whole interactive processes. Students want to handle the materials because the topics are of their interest. The content generated in CLL classes differs from that of traditional materials in regard to the way it was produced: as an output of students' desire. Also the language used by this CLL group was a very informal one. There was no attempt to teach any specific grammar strucuture as traditional materials require it. However, the way of exercizing the materials depended on the teachers' creativity. CLL suggests some activities, as described in chapter 2, but they are very flexible ones.

A teacher in this approach needs to get rid of the "giver" position. This type of experience is very profitable because the teacher is forced to realize that s/he should not interfere. After applying the CLL approach one can notice the extent teachers try to interfere with learning, the dominant role they play in class, and the way and the language addressed to students. In traditional classes, for example, teachers mostly ask questions (sometimes ask and answer them), give orders, compliment and evaluate. In CLL classes, teachers take a total different role, i.e. teachers listen to students' utterances, provide the utterances in the target language, provide understanding about students' feelings, and provide explanations students ask for. The focus of attention is on the students, not on the teacher.

I could also conclude that from the interaction between

students and CLL result more conscious students. They give up their "receiver" position and actively participate in their learning. The CLL approach encourages the learner to: ask questions, talk about topics they like, express their emotional reactions and develop a closer relationship among their classmates. Students leave aside compartmentilized subjects, didactic organizations of syllabi and the feeling of competing with their classmates.

Moreover, I would suggest that teachers adopt the CLL techniques in class. However, I would call attention to what Prabhu (1986) has called "a sense of plausibility." He notes that adopting a new methodology/approach should not be an "intruder into teachers' mental frames" and a "threat" to students. So teachers and students should both be ready for new challenges. Prabhu recommends the "teachers' pedagogic perception" in the adoption of new methods and approaches.

Finally, besides providing an understanding of the interaction among student-teacher-classroom elements, this study showed that students are able to assume their role of conducting the learning process. It also surfaced the interests' route of students in their learning process, as well as genuine student generated input. The quality of this material can serve as a source of reference for further studies in the analysis and organization of syllabi.

Final Remarks

To conclude, I would like to say what induced me to carry out this experiment. I wanted the learning process to be in the `hands' of the learners as stated in chapter 1, but, in the meantime, I wanted to live through a situation in which I would not know in advance all that was going to happen in a class. As a teacher, I wanted to experience a situation in which I would not know the answers beforehand and from which I would learn something. An event that literature has defined as a **communicative situation.** I think that is what learning is about. I leave the final words of this dissertation to one of my students:

> Um estudante pode aprender inglês sozinho, autodidaticamente. Quando, no entanto, estuda em grupo apoiado por um professor realmente interessado em seu aprendizado, que não tenta lhe impor métodos acadêmicos prontos, o estudante sente-se mais motivado e o aprendizado é mais suave, mais rápido, mais eficaz. (Inácio)

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