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## ***INTERACTION, ACCULTURATION, AND THE ACQUISITION OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE: A CASE STUDY OF AN ADULT***

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Research in second language acquisition (SLA) has to date typically concentrated on the acquisition of systems central to linguistic analysis, especially morphology and syntax. Indeed, SLA has virtually been defined (implicitly, in most cases) as the acquisition of linguistic forms, structures, and rules. Only recently has there been widespread recognition among SLA researchers that it is important to study the acquisition of other components of language ability as well, especially those interactional and social aspects of language ability that are frequently referred to under the rubric of "communicative competence" (Canale and Swain 1980, Habermas 1970, Halliday 1973, Hymes 1967, 1968, 1972, Savignon 1972).

Of course, the idea that we learn and use language for communication is hardly new. *Everyone knows* that we use language for a variety of purposes, for communication in the broadest sense: to convey to others what we have in our minds, not only information but also thoughts, feelings, desires, and intentions; to establish and maintain human relationships and gain the sympathy and support of others; to carry on conversations, both trivial and serious; to obtain goods and services and to get things done; in short, to carry on nearly all the ordinary and extraordinary business of life. Moreover, ever since Hymes pointed out forcefully that "there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless" (Hymes 1972 p. 278) and began to specify what it means to be able to use language appropriately, our technical understanding of what is involved in using language for communication and interaction has been broadened and deepened by theoretical insights and descriptive work from a great variety of language-related disciplines and subdisciplines, including (minimally) linguistic pragmatics, discourse analysis,

sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, anthropology and the ethnography of speaking, sociology and ethnomethodology, and the philosophy of language (Richards and Schmidt, forthcoming). This work has not been without impact on the language learning and teaching field but has for the most part resulted in programmatic statements of what the nonnative speaker needs to learn or be taught (e.g., Paulston 1974, Holmes and Brown 1976, Yorio 1980). What is new, in fact just beginning, is systematic study of the actual acquisition of communicative abilities by nonnative speakers (see Hatch 1978c, Larsen-Freeman 1980, and especially Larsen-Freeman 1981, for overviews of current research).

While the study of interactional and social abilities as what is learned (communicative competence as output or result) is still in its infancy, even within the relatively narrow scope of SLA as syntactic acquisition considerable attention has been devoted to social and interactional factors as variables which may foster or inhibit language acquisition, i.e., as the *why* or cause of SLA. The position that we learn a language by using it for meaningful communication rather than by studying it is shared by a great number of contemporary researchers (Rivers 1980). Indisputably true of children learning their first language, this seems to be the case as well for child SLA. Research by Hale and Budar (1970) and Fathman (1975) has indicated that for younger learners ESL instruction is less important than contact with the target language group. Fillmore (1976, 1979), in her case study of five Spanish-speaking children acquiring English as a second language in an American kindergarten, found clear evidence for a link between successful acquisition and enthusiasm for association with American children, coupled with uninhibited attempts to interact with them, focusing on communication rather than form.

For adult SLA, the relationship between interaction and acquisition is much less clear. Hatch (1978c), considering the hypothesis that syntactic structures are developed through learning to interact verbally and do conversation, concludes that the evidence is strong for children but much weaker in the case of adults. Evidence from studies contrasting exposure in informal environments with formal instruction is mixed, with studies by Upshur (1968), Mason (1971), and Carroll (1967) consistent with a hypothesis that informal interaction is as effective for adults as formal instruction, and studies by Krashen and Seliger (1976) and Krashen, Seliger, and Hartnett (1974) indicating that years of formal instruction in English is a better predictor of adult proficiency than years of natural exposure to and use of English. However, in interpreting these studies, Krashen (1976) has pointed out that years of exposure may not be an adequate indication of actual interaction, and stresses that active involvement rather than mere exposure is necessary. Krashen's monitor model distinguishes between language *acquisition*, similar to the process children use in acquiring first and second languages, and language *learning* or formal knowledge of the target language. While the monitor model recognizes that adults may be somewhat poorer acquirers than children, the fundamental claim of the model is that conscious learning is available to the performer only as a "monitor," used to alter the output of the acquired system, and that subconscious acquisition, requiring meaningful inter-

action in which speakers are concerned not with form but with the messages they are conveying and understanding, is far more important for adults as well as children (Krashen 1976, 1977, 1981).

Several studies in the adult SLA literature, focusing on unsuccessful acquisition, suggest that affective and social variables which lie behind and determine the amount and quality of interaction may be the root cause of adult acquisition or nonacquisition. Shapira (1978) has reported the case of Zoila, a 25-year-old Guatemalan Spanish speaker, who evidenced very little development in the acquisition of English grammar over an 18-month observation period. Shapira suggests that affect has played a decisive role. Zoila did not come to the United States out of choice, and Shapira hypothesizes that she had negative feelings toward all things American and limited instrumental motivation to learn enough English to communicate. Kessler and Idar (1979) have compared the acquisition of English by a Vietnamese mother and child. The lack of change in the mother's acquisition level, even during a 6-month period in which she was interacting daily in English at work, is hypothesized to be the result of affective variables operating negatively for the mother, who found adjustment to her new way of life difficult, and positively for the child, who needed English for peer relationships. Perhaps the best-known case of an unsuccessful adult acquirer is that of Alberto, a 33-year-old Costa Rican, the least successful language learner among six studied by Cazden, Cancino, Rosansky, and Schumann (1975). In follow-up studies by Schumann (1977, 1978a, 1978b), evidence is developed that Alberto's lack of linguistic development could be blamed largely on his social and psychological distance from speakers of the target language and the fact that his pidginized speech was adequate for his needs.

In all the above-mentioned studies and in our frequent assessments of nonnative speakers as having just enough English to communicate in limited situations, there is an assumption that if communicative needs were greater and psychological and social distance less, much greater control of the grammatical structures of the target language could have been acquired without formal instruction. This assumption is made explicit in Schumann's "acculturation model" (Schumann 1978b), which claims that two groups of variables, social and affective, cluster into a single variable of *acculturation* which is the major causal variable in SLA, i.e., that the degree to which a learner acculturates to the target language group will control the degree to which he acquires a second language. Schumann has called for the development of additional case studies in which individual patterns of acquisition can be related to factors of social and psychological distance to further explore the effects of such factors in SLA.

The present case study attempts to provide relevant evidence for the acculturation model by looking at the development of English ability of an adult with generally low social and psychological distance from target language speakers, acquiring English without formal instruction over a 3-year period characterized by steadily increasing interaction and communicative need. In addition, this study attempts to provide a broader and more global (though still partial) analysis of

what is acquired than is usually the case, analyzing the learner's accomplishments in terms of a four-part framework of the components of communicative competence suggested by Michael Canale (forthcoming): grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence.

### **SUBJECT**

The subject of this study is a 33-year-old native speaker of Japanese named Wes, who first visited the United States (Hawaii) as a tourist in late 1977 and shortly afterward decided to emigrate from Tokyo to Honolulu. His initial motivations were varied, ranging from the attractions of the climate and the relaxed way of life in Hawaii to personal ties with Japanese friends who had made the same move earlier and a general attraction to the people of Hawaii. Opportunities for professional development, initially not a factor in the decision to move to the United States, soon after became an additional major consideration. Wes is an artist, very successful in Japan, with a growing international reputation, and Honolulu is a significant international art market which proved to be an ideal location for further growth and recognition. During the period of observation, Wes spent increasing amounts of time in Hawaii—3 months in 1978, 6 months in 1979, 8 months in 1980—and finally achieved permanent resident status in early 1981.

Wes has had no significant formal instruction in English, as he left school in Japan to be apprenticed to a well-known artist at age 15, just about the time when English teaching in Japan begins in earnest. He claims to remember nothing from the limited instruction he did receive except the useless sentence, "I have five pencils in my hand," and reports that he was a poor English student. He was not a complete beginner in English when he arrived in the United States for the first time, however, as he had already developed relationships with numerous American and European art collectors in Japan, beginning about 1974. It is not clear how much of this interaction took place in English and how much in Japanese, but it is clear that when Wes first arrived in the United States his ability to communicate in English was minimal. He did not need to speak much English at first, however, as Japanese is widely spoken in Hawaii and Japanese friends could translate for him when necessary and handle any problems which arose.

The past three years have been characterized by steadily increasing demands on Wes's ability to communicate in English, and he now lives in an English-speaking world. An extremely friendly and outgoing person, he has a wide circle of friends and acquaintances who are monolingual English speakers, including an American roommate. Contacts with other Japanese speakers have shrunk rather than grown, and with some Japanese he will speak English if there is a monolingual English speaker present, something which he would not do and greatly disapproved of several years ago. His professional life has also required steadily increasing interaction with English speakers in a variety of situations, for while the creation of art may be a solitary act, the promotion of an artist's career is not and in fact depends nearly as much on personal and communicative qualities as on innate talent, imagination, and developed technique. While I have no data to defend the claim,

I would estimate very roughly that something between 75 and 90 percent of all of Wes's meaningful interactions at the present time are in English.

In terms of the acculturation model for SLA, the following factors are relevant:

#### **Age**

For those who view younger as better for SLA (e.g., Asher and Garcia 1969; Oyama 1976, 1977; Krashen, Long, and Scarcella 1979), this is a negative factor in Wes's case, whether the negative effect of age on acquisition is to be attributed to physiological, brain-related changes (Lenneberg 1967) or to age-related cognitive differences (Krashen 1975, Rosansky 1975). However, the primary issue here is whether age-related deficits can be reduced to social and psychological factors. Schumann has argued that adults don't acquire because they don't get involved in real communication, that they don't get involved in real communication because of problems of attitude, motivation, language and culture shock, and so on, and that if affective factors are favorable the adult's cognitive processes will automatically function to produce language acquisition (Schumann 1975, 1978a; see also Macnamara 1973, Taylor 1974).

#### **Aptitude**

In the analysis which follows, some rather inconclusive evidence is presented that Wes's language aptitude, inductive ability, and grammatical sensitivity (Carroll 1973) may be low. However, the acculturation model argues against aptitude as an important variable in SLA, because it is assumed to relate to conscious learning in an instructional setting rather than to subconscious acquisition (Schumann 1978b, p. 48, Krashen 1980b).

#### **Length of Education**

The Heidelberg study of the acquisition of German by Italian and Spanish immigrant workers (reported and discussed in Schumann 1978b) found a correlation between level of education in the native country and an index of syntactic development. Schumann hypothesizes that this might be because lack of education would lead to low socioeconomic status and social distance from target language counterparts. This does not apply in Wes's case, as he enjoys a high income and considerable social prestige in both Japan and the United States, but it is possible that the cognitive effects of suspended formal education might be relevant.

#### **Social Distance Factors**

Wes exhibits very low social distance from native speakers of English. As a Japanese, he belongs to a group that is roughly equal (nonsubordinate, nondominant) to Americans, culturally, technologically, and economically, with the two groups having generally high respect for each other. As an individual, he expresses very favorable attitudes toward and liking for Americans. While the Japanese community in Hawaii is large and in some cases highly cohesive (e.g., Japanese university students

have the reputation of sticking together), Wes exhibits very low enclosure. He does not live in a Japanese neighborhood, avoids Japanese social cliques, has notably more American than Japanese friends, and participates in American rather than Japanese social institutions. His intended length of residence in the United States is indefinite/permanent, and his social integration strategies are those of adaptation, rather than total assimilation or preservation. With respect to all these factors, the acculturation model predicts successful SLA.

Congruity or similarity of the two cultures is harder to evaluate. All observers of Japanese and American culture stress the differences, which are normally perceived by Japanese and American as great. However, in Hawaii, where nearly a third of the population is Japanese-American and mainstream United States ("haole") and Japanese cultures are merely the two most prominent strands in a multiethnic society, *perceived* cultural contrast (Acton 1979, Brown 1980) is much less than in other parts of the United States. In terms of the "high" culture in which Wes is an active participant and contributor, there is a recognition of both similarities and differences. Wes's paintings, to take a specific and relevant example, are exhibited without incongruity in the same galleries that show major American and European artists. While Wes's themes and techniques are essentially very Japanese (traditional), the presentation is contemporary and universalistic, comprehensible to those without familiarity with Japanese culture.

#### **Psychological Distance Factors.**

It should be pointed out that psychological factors are extremely difficult to define adequately or evaluate fairly, and that no entirely objective measures are available. For example, while motivation is generally conceived of as the inner drive or desire that is the cause of some action, we usually have no better grounds for attributing motivation than by simply seeing if such an action was taken. Thus, while Alberto gave responses indicating positive attitudes and good motivation on a questionnaire, Schumann points out that aspects of Alberto's life style which contradicted those responses should be given more weight. The judgments given here, as in most case studies, are therefore ultimately subjective, deriving their validity only from close personal friendship and familiarity with the subject, observations of his behavior, and discussions with him and others who know him well.

The variables which are easiest to assess are those related to personality. All observers agree that Wes is an extremely extroverted and socially outgoing person, with high self-esteem and self-confidence, low anxiety and inhibition. He is highly perceptive of the feelings and thoughts of others, intuitive, rather impulsive, and not at all afraid of making mistakes or appearing foolish in his use of English. All these factors have been hypothesized to be related to successful SLA, though not necessarily to classroom learning (Brown 1973, 1980; Chastain 1975; Guiora et al. 1975; Heyde 1977; Krashen 1980b, 1981; Naiman et al. 1978; Rubin 1975; Schumann 1975, 1978b; Stern 1975).

Culture shock and language shock (Stengal 1939, Clarke 1976) do not appear to have affected Wes to any significant degree, with none of the typical symptoms of disorientation, stress, anxiety, or fear reported.

Motivation is the hardest variable to assess. It is tempting to assert simply that as an immigrant by choice, Wes shows a strong integrative motivation to learn the second language in order to meet with, talk to, find out about, and at least in some respects become like valued speakers of the target language, with a healthy dose of instrumental motivation for professional success thrown in. This is correct as far as it goes, but it must be noted that Wes has shown little or no interest in studying English formally in order to achieve this end. This was true of Alberto also, and was one of the reasons Schumann felt that Alberto's professed high motivation should be questioned. In the present case, it seems necessary to recognize a distinction between the motivation, desire, or drive to communicate and motivation for studying the target language in a classroom situation or for doing certain types of self-study. The first does not necessarily imply the second.<sup>1</sup> Wes clearly has a strong drive to communicate for integrative purposes. Particularly striking have been his attempts to interact and make friends with all the shopkeepers, waitresses, and other workers in his urban neighborhood, quite clearly an attempt to create in Honolulu a "village within a city" community similar to the one around which his daily routine in Tokyo was centered. But in these and all interactions, his concern has consistently been with communication and not with form. Wes has been committed to learning English through natural interaction, while avoiding as much as possible any analytic study of the language code itself.

Table 1 summarizes the factors discussed above, indicating the effect on SLA predicted by the acculturation model.

**Table 1** Social and Psychological Distance Factors, Evaluation of Subject Characteristics, and Predicted Effects on SLA by the Acculturation Model

<i>Social and psychological factors</i>	<i>Wes</i>	<i>Predicted influence on SLA</i>
Age	33	Neutral if other factors positive
Formal study of L2	Insignificant	Not relevant
Language aptitude	Possibly low	Not relevant
Communicative need	High, increasing	Facilitative
Interaction, type and amount	Varied, increasing	Facilitative
Social dominance pattern	Equal	Facilitative
Social interaction pattern	Adaptive	Facilitative
Enclosure, cohesiveness	Low	Facilitative
Similarity of cultures	Different	Negative
Attitudes toward L2 group	Positive	Facilitative
Intended length of residence	Indefinite/permanent	Facilitative
Culture shock	Low	Facilitative
Language shock	Low	Facilitative
Empathy, social outreach	High	Facilitative
Inhibition, fear of appearing foolish	Low	Facilitative
Motivation type	Integrative	Facilitative
Motivation, drive for communication	Very high	Facilitative
Motivation for formal language study	Very low	Possibly negative
Preferred learning style	Natural acquisition	Facilitative

## DATA AND ANALYSIS

What then has been learned in the service of the drive to communicate? On a global level, Wes appears to have learned a lot, and his ability to communicate in English has increased at a steady and impressive rate. The best evidence for this global evaluation is not comments by those who know him well and interact with him regularly (they do uniformly comment on his improved English, but have also learned to understand him better), but his successful management of difficult communication situations at the end of the observation period which he could not possibly have managed at earlier periods. For example, during the last year of this study (1980), Wes undertook a heavy schedule of promotional tours, exhibitions of paintings coupled with a daily schedule of appearances and demonstrations by the artist. The first time he did this, Wes was very worried about the inadequacy of his English, and in fact spoke hardly any English at all publicly, concentrating his attention on the handful of Japanese speakers who attended the demonstrations. By the end of the year he had become comfortable with such appearances, quite confident of his ability to paint and lecture informally at the same time, enjoying as well the constant 12- to 15-hour-a-day informal interaction with native speakers which such appearances generate. Another striking change in his overall communicative competence has been in his ability to carry on *sustained* conversations with friends, acquaintances, and strangers, without running out of discussable topics or limiting interlocutors to his topics, and without losing the thread of conversation from one topic to the next. Comprehension (not formally assessed) has clearly increased greatly. As an example, at the beginning of the observation period, Wes could really only comprehend English films with simple plots and lots of action (e.g., *Star Wars*, *Dirty Harry*); at the end of the observation period, he could understand, enjoy, and quite accurately summarize films which rely heavily on dialogue to advance characterization and plot development (*Elephant Man*, *Ordinary People*).

There are clear limits to Wes's communicative ability, however, both receptive and productive. All legal discussions (e.g., contract negotiations with all parties speaking through their lawyers) are extremely frustrating for him, and he considers himself lucky to grasp the main points through the verbiage. On one occasion he went sailing, and was completely mystified by nautical talk. An order to "slack off that line" elicited the response *Means rope take off?* a response which was neither accurate enough nor quick enough to satisfy the demands of the occasion.

Such examples, of course, represent special registers which often cause great difficulty for native speakers, and there remain much more basic and serious limitations in Wes's English communicative ability. First, he does not read or write English. At the beginning of the observation period, he could not read a menu; at the end he could read a menu but not much else. Only recently has he begun to write at all, dictating informal letters to an English speaker whom he asks to write down what he says verbatim, then painfully copying the letter over in his own handwriting. All further comments therefore have only to do with oral communication. Second, Wes's grammatical control of English has hardly improved at all during the 3-year observation period, as I will detail shortly. Grammar has



been and continues to be the major problem, and very little has been acquired. Because of his inadequacies in the handling of English grammar, misunderstandings frequently arise in interaction with native speakers.

The following more detailed analysis is based primarily on 18 one-hour tape recordings concerning business and daily activities which Wes recorded in Japan and mailed to the United States on each of six trips which he made to Tokyo during the 3-year period of transition from being a Tokyo resident vacationing in Hawaii to establishing full-time permanent residence in Honolulu. The length of these visits back to Japan varied from 1 to 3 months at a time, and the amount of taped material varies from 1 to 5 hours per visit. One of the major advantages of these tapes is that they were not recorded for the purposes of linguistic analysis and consist of authentic, meaningful, and often important material, both professional and personal. A major disadvantage for the present analysis is that they are monologues. In addition, it might be suggested that Wes has a Tokyo English grammar, which emerges on each tape recorded in Japan and does not reflect changes in his developing Honolulu grammar. This does not seem to be the case, however, as Wes's grammar appears remarkably stable whether one compares early and late tapes or tapes recorded in Japan with recent, more limited recordings (3 hours total) made in Honolulu in which Wes is engaged in informal conversations with native speakers, including friends and, in one case, brand-new acquaintances. An additional source of data used in the analysis has been extensive but irregular field notes gathered by me over the entire period of observation, June 1978 to June 1981.

### Grammatical Competence

In the four-component model of communicative competence proposed by Canale, grammatical competence is concerned with mastery of vocabulary and rules of word formation, sentential grammar, linguistic semantics, pronunciation, and spelling, i.e., the elements and rules of the language code itself. Because Wes does not read or write English, spelling is not an issue, and specifying his semantic system is a formidable task which I will not attempt here.

Impressionistically, Wes's pronunciation of English is good, though clearly not native. In addition to substitutions in the segmental phonology, most final consonant clusters are reduced, far more often by consonant deletion than by vowel insertion (epenthesis). Wes articulates clearly and enjoys practicing difficult words: *banana split*, *patty melt*, *Ann Margret*, and *Cheryl Ladd* are among his favorite lexical items for such practice. Intonation is noticeably better than that of the average Japanese graduate student whom I have encountered, and no doubt contributes highly to the overall impression of fluency which native speakers often report.

Proficiency in grammar is another story, as indicated in Table 2, which shows the general lack of progress in acquiring nine commonly studied grammatical morphemes.

Table 2 Accuracy Order for Nine Grammatical Morphemes in Obligatory Contexts

	July 1978	November 1980
1. Copula BE	Acquired, present only	No change
2. Progressive ING	Acquired (?)	No change
3. Auxiliary BE	Acquired (?)	No change
4. Past irregular	25%	55%
5. Plural	5%	43%/33%
6. 3rd singular	0%	21%
7. Article	0%	19%/6%
8. Possessive	0%	8%
9. Past regular	0%	0%

Source: First and last monologue tapes.

It might be noted that the rank ordering of grammatical morphemes presented in Table 2 is in most cases compatible with the invariant order hypothesis, with 16 of the 18 clear cases of pairwise ordering relations established by other studies (Krashen 1981, p. 58) holding true here. However, three grammatical morphemes—plural, article, and past regular—have lower ranks here than in most morpheme acquisition studies. These three morphemes also have lower than usual rankings in Hakuta's (1974, 1976) study of a 5-year-old Japanese girl learning English as a second language. Hakuta attributes lack of success in these areas to the nonexistence of definite-indefinite marking and plurality in Japanese and to phonological difficulties with final consonant clusters in the case of the regular past. These explanations seem reasonable in Wes's case also, but it should be noted that what is presented in Table 2 is in fact only an accuracy order, not an acquisition order. The most striking fact about Wes's performance on these morphemes is that, taking 90 percent correct in obligatory cases criterion for acquisition, nothing has moved from unacquired to acquired status. Moreover, a closer look at specific examples in the data indicates that if anything the picture presented in Table 2 may overstate Wes's actual competence with respect to these morphemes. Especially complex is the relationship between copula BE, progressive ING, and auxiliary BE.

Wes does control the English copula appropriately in most cases: *I'm a little bit confuse, if you're quite busy, he's about fifty, this is not important*, etc. There are no errors of person appearing in the data, and number errors are limited to an occasional substitution of *they is* for "they are." Deletion errors are uncommon, with over half the cases consisting of ADJ NP structures: *now so different people here*, instead of "now people are so different here"; *little hard my life*, instead of "my life is a little hard"; *almost finish this tape*, instead of "this tape is almost finished." Some of these examples are ambiguous, however (an alternative gloss for the last example might be "I've almost finished this tape"), and the source of error is not clear. Hawaii Creole English (HCE), a nonstandard variety to which Wes has frequently been exposed, allows such structures and is a possible source, although there is no other compelling evidence in Wes's grammar to suggest an HCE influence. The major source of copula errors is tense, and there are no examples at all in the

data of *was/were*. This does not preclude considering copula as acquired only because the frequency of obligatory contexts for past tense in the data is low.

Progressive and AUX are most problematic. Wes has from the beginning supplied both of these in most cases when they are required, but there is still reason to question whether they are really acquired. In the case of progressive ING, the initial problem is defining, identifying, and counting obligatory contexts. While there are some cases when the progressive is clearly required, such as when a speaker is actually performing the action named at the time of speaking, or in response to an antecedent question such as "What are you doing?" determining the requirement for a progressive form usually involves trying to read the mind of the speaker. In those cases where progressive ING seems semantically required, Wes usually supplies it: *All day I'm sitting table, I don't know why people always talking me, I'm always thinking, so now I'm painting new one*. Evidence against full acquisition includes the frequent appearance of ING forms when progressive meaning was apparently not intended (*so yesterday I didn't painting*), occasional use of bare stem forms when progressive is required (*right now I'm paint new ukiyo-e*), and the fact that for most verbs Wes uses either the bare stem consistently or the ING form consistently, suggesting that the distribution may be as much lexical as syntactic or semantic. Verbs which always appear in the progressive include *joke* (*if I'm strong talk, or sometime joking*), *plan* (*before I'm planning*), *train* (*maybe today is training*, i.e., "exercise"), and *touch* (*so this one years I didn't touching my money*). There are only two verbs which Wes uses with any frequency in both bare stem and progressive form, *think* and *paint*. From the data, *paint* and *painting* appear to be in free variation (*I love paint, I love painting, today I'm start five six paint*), while *think* can often be seen as indicating opinion (*I think so*) as opposed to reflection (*today I'm thinking Honolulu*). An attempt to see whether Wes has any metalinguistic awareness of progressive vs. nonprogressive forms elicited mixed results:

RS: So what's the difference between "paint" and "painting"?

Wes: Well, if I go to exhibition, I saw "paint," but "I'm start painting" means I do it, not finish.

RS: Yeah, OK, sort of, so what's the difference between "think" and "thinking"?

Wes: "I'm think means now. "I'm thinking" means later.

(field notes, March 1981)

Auxiliary BE is an even more striking example of a grammatical morpheme which appears to have been acquired if one considers only frequency of appearance in obligatory contexts, but seems a quite different phenomenon if one considers overuse and questions of function as well as form. The obligatory environment for auxiliary BE is the presence of a progressive verb. When Wes uses a progressive form, it is almost always preceded by a form of BE, usually the correct (see examples in discussion of progressive ING). He seldom says things like "He dancing," a typical error of many nonnative speakers. However, Wes produces a great number of other utterances of BE, with a great variety of meanings, where there is no reason to use auxiliary BE:

I'm cry (meaning 'I almost cried' or "I would cry")  
I'm always listen (repetitive, habitual)  
Tomorrow I'm finish (future)  
Before I'm finish (past)  
You are sounds tired (present)  
He's come to my apartment ("he used to come to my apartment")

Since utterances of these varied types are far more frequent in Wes's speech than those in which auxiliary BE is required and supplied, it would be misleading to claim that those limited cases represent acquisition of an auxiliary triggered by a syntactic environment. Again, a look at specific examples indicates some lexical influence. There are a number of verbs which are usually directly preceded by a noun or pronoun (*I think, hope, hate, love, wanna, need, said, told you so*) or by NP + *don't* or *doesn't* (*I don't like, need, etc., I didn't gift*). Most other verbs are regularly preceded by a form of BE: *I'm never push, this morning I'm buy*, etc.

BE thus appears not to be an auxiliary, but a generalization of the forms of the English copula to other functions. The source of this generalization is not entirely clear. Utterances such as *tomorrow I'm finish* could be related to *now I'm finish(ed)*, where consonant cluster simplification accounts for the ending deletion in the sentence on which the analogy rests. Sentences like *today is a nice day* could be the source by analogy of sentences like *now is I'm work*. However, examples like the last, as well as *time is go, everything is I know*, and *now is I'm very tired* suggest a source in language transfer. Wes may be using the English copula BE simply as an equivalent to the Japanese topic marker *wa* (Hiroki Kato, personal communication). This explanation would also account for the previously mentioned cases of copula deletion in sentences like *little hard my life*, as these exhibit comment-topic rather than topic-comment order.

There is another example of overgeneralization of the copula in Wes's English which is apparently not due to transfer from Japanese but indicates that Wes does consciously or unconsciously formulate hypotheses about English structure on the basis of what he knows about English. In general, Wes has little trouble with English pronouns, other than some *she/he* confusions, but his system of possessive pronouns is incomplete. *My* and *your* are used correctly and frequently, and there are occasional occurrences in the early tapes of *their*. But no first person plural possessives appear in the data at all until early 1980, and when a form does appear it is defective: *So tonight, Tim and me we are come back here early, we are apartment*. Subsequent occurrences have made it clear that *we are*, rather than "our" is Wes's first plural form, and this has become firmly fixed in his speech. The most likely explanation seems to be that Wes has created this form by analogy with *your* (misanalyzed as "you are") and *their* (misanalyzed as "they are"). Support for this suggestion comes from the fact that the last few tapes exhibit additional possessives on the same pattern: *your friend is house* (possibly only a case of vowel insertion to break up a /ndz/ cluster), *she's name is Izumi Ukimura, she's working is beautiful*. Certainly this is evidence of creative construction, but creative con-

struction somehow gone awry, resulting in incorrect forms that once generated have persisted without further modification.

With regard to the remaining grammatical morphemes listed in Table 2, Wes has shown some development on most, though in no case has criterion been reached to claim acquisition. In some cases, percentages figures may again give a more optimistic view than justified. The overall percentage for plural, 43 percent correct in the November 1980 tapes, is less impressive when it is noted that 7 of 17 correct occurrences (out of 40 obligatory contexts) occurred within the phrases *n years old* and *n years ago*, and that Wes also says both *one year ago* and *this one years*. If these examples are omitted, the percentage drops to 33 percent. The total score for articles is similarly inflated by high-frequency phrases, with 12 of 17 correctly supplied articles (95 obligatory contexts) occurring in the phrase *a little (bit) X*. Elimination of these cases drops the percentage correct from 19 to 6 percent.

The irregular past is perhaps the only grammatical morpheme for which real progress can be claimed. A number of irregular verb forms, including *went, sent, told, saw, said, met, bought, sold, left, made*, appear with some consistency in the later tapes, though often with accompanying copula (or topic marker), e.g., *I'm left, I'm wrote*. Perhaps coincidentally, past tense is the only aspect of Wes's grammar which I have consciously corrected or given explicit feedback about in my interactions with him over the past three years, arguing that lack of a tense system has been a major source of misunderstood messages. However, regular past tense forms, including those that are not subject to consonant cluster simplification, e.g., "started," "sounded," "wanted," do not appear at all in the recorded data, though in my field notes for March 1981 I note what may be the first appearance of a rule-governed past tense form, a correction from *he bought* to *he buyed*.

While the grammatical morphemes discussed here and in a great deal of the SLA literature represent only a small part of the grammar of English, the rather dismal picture indicated by Wes's performance on these morphemes is confirmed if other aspects of English grammar are considered. Except in routine, formulaic utterances (*do you have time? are you busy?*), Wes has no subject-verb inversion in questions (*ah, you has keys? when Tim is coming?*), no dummy or pseudo-subjects (*because here is nothing* for "because there is nothing here"), no relative clauses (*you know before people bought my painting* for "people who bought my paintings before"; *he saw before I sent painting* for "he saw the painting I sent before"), and no passives (*this is cannot help* for "this cannot be helped"). Negatives are a bright spot in the overall picture, generally well formed (*I can't do it, because she doesn't have it*), except when problems of auxiliary or other grammatical aspects of a sentence complicate matters (*I'm not complain, this is cannot*). There are no examples in the data of either Neg + S (e.g., "no more pizza") or no + Verb (e.g., "I no can see him") constructions, both of which are possible in Hawaii Creole English and appear in the data from other nonnative speakers of English, especially native Spanish speakers. However, the some-any rule has not been acquired by Wes

(*you don't need something, right?*), except in formulaic utterances (*I didn't say anything*).<sup>2</sup>

As I have implied in passing several times, Wes has a rather rich repertoire of formulaic utterances, memorized sentences and phrases (Fillmore 1976, Peters 1977, Krashen and Scarcella 1978, Yorio 1980, Coulmas 1981, Pawley and Syder forthcoming), which increase the appearance of fluency in English. Some high-frequency formulaic items include:

Hi! How's it? So, what's new? I beg your pardon . . . what did you say your name was? You know what . . . I tell you. You know what I mean? What can I do? Whaddya want? Whaddya mean? Whaddya doing? Do you remember? I told you before. Something like that. I dunno why. That's great, terrific! Sure, I would love to. Can you imagine? Thank you VERY much. Thank you calling.

It is not always clear which of Wes's utterances are memorized wholes, except for those which clearly exceed the limits of his acquired grammatical system, but it is clear that he has chosen this as a major language strategy. He listens carefully and extracts formulaics from television commercials ("thank you *very* much" comes from a well-known tire commercial in Hawaii), from records ("what did you say your name was?"), and from conversations ("you know what? . . . I'll tell you" is an expression frequently used by a particular gallery owner). He comments frequently on phrases that he finds characteristic of friends and acquaintances, and practices many of these consciously.

The importance of such memorized sentences and patterns in second language learning has been a matter of recent debate. Fillmore has argued that the strategy of acquiring formulaic speech is central to the learning of language, and reports that in the case of the children she studied routines and patterns evolved into creative language. Krashen and Scarcella maintain that routines and patterns are fundamentally different and independent from creative language, with routines and patterns playing a minor role in both language acquisition and actual speech performance. In Wes's case, I cannot find much evidence of evolution toward creative grammar from formulaics (though one interesting example is discussed in the next section), and in some cases even minor changes in formulas fail to come off (*but Shinji, what can I do?* for "but what can Shinji do?"). I do not conclude that the effort is wasted, however. Pawley and Syder claim that the importance of familiar, sentence-length expression, numbering perhaps several hundred thousand for a mature native speaker, has been underestimated in linguistic theory and in fact accounts for nativelike fluency in ordinary speech. Wes controls perhaps a hundred such memorized sentences and phrases; so he clearly has a long way to go. But it is evident that of Wes's two major language learning strategies, imitation and rule formation, imitation is more successful. While he does attempt novel utterances and hypothesis formation, his creations and hypotheses are more often than not incorrect (as in the extension of copula BE to functions such as possessive). Over a 3-year period characterized by extensive and intensive interaction with native speakers, Wes's development in terms of what is generally considered to be the

heart of SLA, the acquisition of productive grammatical rules, has been minimal and almost insignificant.

### Sociolinguistic Competence

In Canale's framework, sociolinguistic competence has to do with the extent to which utterances are produced and understood appropriately in different sociolinguistic contexts, depending on contextual factors such as status of participants, purposes of the interaction, and norms or conventions of interaction. Appropriateness has two dimensions, meaning and form. Appropriateness of meaning concerns what one does in particular situations, what communicative functions or acts may be expressed. For example, in English one does not normally ask strangers their age, marital status, or salary on first meeting (excluding job interviews and other special interactions), though these may be acceptable first questions, social openers, in other cultures. Appropriateness of form concerns the extent to which a given communicative meaning is represented in an appropriate grammatical form and style.

A partial picture of Wes's command of English communicative functions and forms and his development in this respect over the 3-year observational period can be gained from looking in some detail at a sample of his directives, a major category of speech act (Searle 1976, Schmidt and Richards 1980). A directive is any utterance whose principal point is that it counts as an attempt on the part of the speaker to get the hearer to do something. The category thus includes orders, requests, pleas, hints, and suggestions, though these subtypes of directives may differ in the intensity of expression or other dimensions of the act.

The following are some of Wes's early directives, taken from my 1978 field notes:

1. shall we go?
2. ah, I have a Big Mac, n I have a french fries, small, and Coke, that's all.
3. can I have a banana spi . . lit, please?
4. NS: you wanna go eat?  
Wes: uh, what you ever like?  
NS: you mean "whatever you like"?  
Wes: yes, please.

Examples 1, 2, and 3 indicate Wes's reliance from the beginning on speech-act formulas for directives. In these examples, the formulas are both topically appropriate ("shall we go?" is thoroughly idiomatic as a suggestion) and situationally appropriate ("I'll have X" and "Can I have X?" are normal restaurant patterns). The phonological distortions (*I have* for "I'll have"; occasionally *shall (w)e go?*) indicate that in some cases these formulas may not be analyzed into literal meanings and parts, but other examples such as 4, in which Wes is groping for a formula which is not yet mastered, indicate that there is some analysis into constituent parts even with idiomatic expressions.

5. sitting? ("shall we sit down?" or "let's sit down")
6. nice meeting you (when being introduced)

Example 5 indicates that at this point formulas like *shall we go?* are not yet analyzed into patterns that can be used productively for a range of directives. At this stage Wes has only *shall we go?*, not *shall we sit down* or *shall we . . .* anything else. This is a case of undergeneralization of a pattern, but there are cases of overgeneralization as well, as in Example 6 (not a directive), where a speech formula sometimes used by native speakers to conclude a conversation with someone whom the speaker has just met is used here also as a direct response to the introduction (a slot more often filled by native speakers with "nice to meet you" or some other unrelated routine entirely).

7. Please n you taking this suitcase.
8. please, never thinking ("don't think about it")
9. maybe curtain ("maybe you should open the curtain")
10. OK n maybe betta first go to Shinji's place and I want and take back here and go to dinner, because tomorrow and Wayne he's working in the morning and seven o'clock. ("Maybe we should go to Shinji's place first and then come back here and go to dinner, because Wayne is working at seven tomorrow morning")

Examples 7 and 8 indicate several phenomena. In these early directives, Wes's usual verb form (outside of formulas) is the *-ing* form, rather than the imperative stem. *Please* occurs frequently in Wes's early directives, but not necessarily as a politeness marker. While the *please* in Example 3 does appear to be a polite tag used with unfamiliar in routine transactions, the preposed *please* of 7 and 8 more likely represents a communication strategy to make it clear that a request is in fact being made (necessary since there is no grammatical device for indicating requests), as well as establishing the sincerity of the request. Native speakers also use *please* for these functions. *Maybe*, a hedge, similarly serves as a lexical marker for suggestions, as in 9 and 10, so that the illocutionary force of the utterance is clear even if the reduced structure of 9 and the confusing suggestion + justification of 10 are ambiguous or unclear in other respects.

11. get the light
12. Wes: Ah, Miss. (Looks at cup; waitress looks puzzled)  
 NS: Could ya warm up his hot chocolate a little bit?  
 Waitress: Oh, is it cold love? Sure!  
 Wes: Sorry. (softly)  
 Waitress: (to cook) Excuse me. This hot chocolate is not hot.

One way in which speech-act realizations differ across cultures is the degree of politeness (generally speaking, the degree of indirection) required for the performance of specific acts in particular contexts (Brown and Levinson 1978). For Wes, directives do not in general seem to require elaborate politeness devices, as



in Example 11, which was issued in the context of a task orientation and is incidentally the first use of a bare stem imperative for a directive which I have recorded. But requests which also imply criticism, thereby potentially threatening or embarrassing to the “face” of the listener, are expressed very cautiously if at all, as in Example 12, which took place in a coffee shop. When Wes’s hot chocolate arrived cold, he wanted a new cup but was reluctant to complain to the waitress and first tried to get a native speaker to make the complaint for him, on the grounds that his English was not adequate. When the native speaker refused, Wes first tried to convey the request for a new cup indirectly, with the barest of hints and a glance at the cup. When the waitress failed to understand his intended meaning, a second native speaker stepped in, issuing the request using the “negative” politeness strategy of minimizing the imposition, “a little bit” (see Brown and Levinson for definition of terms). When the waitress, who is polite in a friendly way to customers (but not the cook) responded, Wes was obviously embarrassed and muttered *sorry*. This extremely indirect way of conveying directives which may imply criticism is, from all reports, typically Japanese.

13. this is all garbage (“put it out”)
14. ah, I have two shirt upstairs (“please get them while you’re there”)
15. uh, you like this chair? (“please move over”)
16. you like this shirt? (“why don’t you change it?”)

Examples 13 to 16 are all hints, specifying neither the task to be performed nor the agent who is to perform the action (Ervin-Tripp 1976), which Wes has used extensively from the beginning. There is an important difference, however, between hints 13 and 14, which imply the request message by mentioning a reason why an action might be desired, immediately comprehended as requests by the English native speaker addressee, and hints 15 and 16 which were not understood as directives by the hearer and apparently represent transfer of a Japanese hinting pattern to English. In these cases, Wes was attempting to convey the requests not by mentioning a reason for doing an action but by questioning whether there was a reason *not* to do the action. While such hints are sometimes used in English (“Are you really going to wear that dreadful shirt again?” would work in the way in which Example 16 was intended, and “Are you busy tonight?” could convey or at least serve as a prelude for a request for a date), these are much more restricted in English than in Japanese. We might take the classic example of a speaker who is hot and wants a door opened to let some cool air in. In English, we might convey the request by a hint of the form, “It’s stuffy in here.” Wes’s hint in precisely this circumstance was to ask *are you chilly?* which was taken by the English native speaker addressed to be simply a question about his welfare, with no uptake of Wes’s intended request message.

In summary, Wes’s early directives reflected a heavy reliance on a limited number of speech formulas, many of which were not available for productive use

outside of the wholly fixed expressions in which they first occurred, an incorrect identification of *-ing* form with request function, a reliance on lexical clues such as *please* and *maybe*, and transfer of Japanese norms regarding both which speech acts are acceptable in particular situations (complaint example) and the linguistic strategies which are commonly used to convey such acts (hinting example).

Since I have indicated that Wes is highly motivated to engage in interaction and communication and in general has developed considerable control of the formulaic language that acts as social grease in interaction, we might expect that he would show more development over time in the area of sociolinguistic competence compared with his very limited development of grammatical competence. This is, in general, the case. By the end of the observation period, gross errors in the performance of directives had largely been eliminated: progressive forms were no longer used for directive function with any frequency, while the use of imperatives increased (*please next month send orders more quick*); "shall we?" and "let's" were used productively as patterns for a great many different requests; and in general Wes's directives showed a great deal more elaboration (*shall we maybe go out coffee now, or you want later?*; *Ok, if you have time please send two hand-bag, but if you're too busy, forget it*).

Appropriateness of meaning is one area in which Wes has shown clear evidence of acculturation. Although there are certainly still cases in which his messages are more appropriate by Japanese than by American norms for particular contexts (e.g., he tends to open many phone calls with an immediate *thank you* for some recent service rendered, while Americans tend to delay such thanks to later in the conversation), he is no longer reticent, for example, about expressing complaints to waiters (*excuse me, this milk is no good, sour I think*). He often comments on differences between the United States and Japan with respect to such norms of speaking. For example, in response to an item on a test of verbal routines designed by Scarcella (1979), he noted the following difference:

- Item: Greg told his friend, Silvia, that he would see her in the cafeteria at 12:00. Greg arrives late. He feels bad. When Greg sees Silvia, he says, "Hi! . . . . ."
- Wes: "Hi! I'm sorry. Somebody call." No, this is Japan need two story. Here I'm only just say "Hi, sorry, you waiting long time?"

Moreover, when his responses are strange in American terms, this currently seems as often due to personal idiosyncratic factors as to transfer of Japanese norms to American speech situations, as in the following example from the Scarcella test:

- Item: David sneezes. His friend, Sharon, politely says, ". . . . ."
- Wes: "Stop it! This is your habit?"

Wes's rather startling response to this test item, which I think is a good characterization of what he might actually say in the situation, is no more expected by Japanese than by Americans.

On other items on the Scarcella test, Wes's meanings are appropriate, though in some cases the form is deviant. This is at least in some cases due to experience and exposure (*excuse me, I want full gas* instead of "fill it up" can be attributed to the fact that he does not drive but relies on taxis for transportation). Overall, Wes scored 47 percent on the routines test (administered orally), better than the 38 and 30 percent mean scores which Scarcella obtained for two groups of advanced ESL learners.

While Wes's learning accomplishments appear on the whole better in the area of sociolinguistic than grammatical competence, this should not be overestimated. For example, he is able to a limited extent to provide alternate forms for a speech act appropriate to different addressees:

Item: Robert is a waiter. He is taking an order. When he finishes taking the order, he checks to be sure that his customer doesn't want to order more. Robert asks his customer, "....."

Wes: "Would you like something more?" But home you know I'm only just say "do you want." Don't need so polite.

However, this ability is limited, and Wes does not have extensive control of different registers for talking about the same things differently in different settings or with different hearers: bodily functions, sex, and other taboo topics are discussable rather crudely or not at all. The forms of speech-act realizations, though much improved, are still far from perfect also, with the mesh between productive utilization of patterns and idiomaticity still to be realized. In fact, Wes's most productive extension of a speech-act pattern, the clearest case of creative construction arising from a decomposed formula that I can find in all the data, leads to some clearly inappropriate utterances:

1. can I getting some more coffee? (at home, intended as request)
2. can I have a light? ("turn on the light," not "give me a match")
3. if you back to room, can I bring cigarette? ("please bring me")
4. uh, can I? ("would you?")

(field notes, 1980)

I believe that the source of directives 1 to 4 is the English request form which Ervin-Tripp (1976) has labeled the permission directive, utterances which have the form of asking for permission but the function of getting the hearer to perform some action. Some examples would be "may I have change for a dollar?" or "can I get some more coffee?" where it is obvious that a clerk or waiter is to make change or pour coffee. Permission directives have been frequent in Wes's English from the beginning, and it is this pattern which has emerged over time as his favored request form. However, the extension of the pattern "Can I X?" does not always work. When the resulting utterance is nonidiomatic (*can I getting?* instead of "can I get/have?") or occurs in a less role-defined situation (where Example 1 could be taken as an offer as readily as a request), the intended message

fails to get through. Example 2 fails because of idiomaticity; "Can I have some light in here?" would have worked. Example 3 illustrates most clearly Wes's extension of the pattern beyond its scope in English ("can/could/will/would you?" is required), while 4, said when Wes was carrying two heavy bundles and wanted help with one, shows the degree to which native speaker listeners must rely on the nonverbal context not only to decipher the ambiguities of his grammatical system but also to discover the illocutionary force of his communicative messages.

### Discourse Competence

Both grammatical and sociolinguistic competence, as discussed so far, deal with the learner's language at the level of the single sentence or utterance. In Canale's framework of the components of communicative competence, discourse competence concerns mastery of the ways in which grammatical forms and meanings combine to achieve unified spoken or written texts. As Wes does not write English, I will be concerned in this section only with spoken discourse. Since spoken discourse other than monologue is a cooperative effort by all parties to a conversation, I will also be dealing with *conversational* competence and what we might consider *interactional* competence.

Discourse competence seems to me to be Wes's greatest strength in his use of English, compensating to an extent for his weaknesses in other aspects of language form and use. Consider the following illustrative example, once again taken from a restaurant interaction:

Waiter: Are you ready to order?  
Wes: Yes, ah, I like teriaki steak, medium rare, rice, salad, thousand, coffee.  
(field notes, February 1980)

There is at first glance nothing special about Wes's order, which seems to be just a list, unless one realizes that its structure derives from an extended routine which is standard for the restaurant in which the interaction occurred, and many others:

Waiter: Are you ready to order?  
Customer: Yes, I'd like teriaki steak.  
Waiter: How would you like your steak cooked?  
Customer: Medium rare.  
Waiter: Would you like rice, french fries or baked potato?  
Customer: Rice.  
Waiter: Soup or salad?  
Customer: Salad.  
Waiter: What kind of dressing do you want?  
Customer: Thousand.  
Waiter: Anything to drink?  
Customer: Coffee.

Being thoroughly familiar with the routine of ordering in that particular place, Wes placed his order not only as it is usually solicited but also in the order in

which the bill is recorded. I doubt that the native-speaking waiter in that instance knew that his customer was a nonnative speaker.

Discourse competence is also the area in which the greatest improvement has been evidenced over time in Wes's use of English. The texture of the early tapes is choppy. Narratives are brief, presented without embellishment, as in the following quite typical examples:

TRIP TO

THE BEACH

I don't like boring and lazy / no / not my type /  
this summer you know go to beach only one time I go to pool /  
very crowded / and short time I'm stay and pool and coming back  
/ = pause (monologue tape, July 1978)

A BURGLARY

Anyway / June twenty six I come back here many bad happening / but  
not my business / and someone take my jewelry / and camera / clothes /  
everything / anyway I'm so bad / but now is OK everything / I'm fine  
(monologue tape, August 1978)

Descriptions, on the other hand, often do contain considerable detail, but these are very difficult for a listener without a great deal of background knowledge to understand:

Now I'm start and making and two album / soon I sent to you / one album / ah you know  
Sophia Loren? / and Dewi Sukarno / and ah you know Elsa Martinelli? / she's before movie  
star / but now designer / and last year my exhibition / American Club / Bangkok / Oriental  
Hotel my fashion show / Pattiya Beach / Cliff Hotel / ah opening Royal Cliff Hotel / in Tokyo  
and Gallery Seiwa / and old temple shrine / Zojoji / they have my painting / I don't remember /  
three four years ago / this shrine everything new / big money / and opening seven Japanese  
artist and they are gift paint / one artist he's very famous / but just before he's die / and one  
woman she's also very famous / you know Japanese and traditional calligraphy / also and  
sumi-e / and other artist and me / also in Tokyo TV program / camera and showing my work /  
one hour program . . .

(monologue tape, July 1978)

In the above passage, which is taken from a taped letter, Wes is describing to his listener a two-volume portfolio which he is compiling. One volume, not described here, is to contain photographs and reproductions of paintings. The gist of the passage cited is that the other volume will include:

1. Photos of Wes with well-known clients, e.g.:
  - Sophia Loren
  - Dewi Sukarno
  - Elsa Martinelli
  - formerly a movie star
  - currently a designer
2. Clippings from five different exhibitions, i.e.:
  - Tokyo American Club
  - Oriental Hotel, Bangkok (a fashion show)
  - Royal Cliff Hotel, Pattiya Beach, Thailand
  - Seiwa Gallery, Tokyo

Zojoji Shrine, a group show with other artists, including a famous artist who died shortly before the show, a famous woman calligrapher and sumi-e artist

3. Still photographs from a TV documentary on Wes's work

This passage thus does have considerable coherence of ideas and is structured, but the highly abbreviated style in which the description is presented and the lack of transitional and other devices of cohesion make the passage extremely difficult to comprehend. I suspect that for most readers, unfamiliar with the facts being presented, the initial impression of the passage may have been that it was no more than free association.

Descriptions and narratives in the later tapes are, by contrast, much easier to comprehend. Increased redundancy and the use of structuring elements such as *well*, *anyway*, *so*, and *then* clearly play some part in this, as in the following excerpt:

UM / well / nothing new here / but this afternoon I went n exhibition Japanese artist / well / quite large exhibition / New Asashi Building / very tall building / fifty something or maybe fifty one floor / anyway / s crowded / because today is last day / very very interesting painting / then / after / I'm always thinking my paint / so / this artist quite large piece / many large piece / also eight or ten screen / you know his style is not Japanese / but technique is Japanese / do you remember I paint Mount Fuji in sand? / well / very close technique / quite similar / but color is so beautiful / beautiful / so / well / then after I went coffee shop / thinking my paint / also his paint / well / he's not detail / he doesn't have detail / so different my paint / you know I'm always detail / but his painting so beautiful / well also my painting is beautiful too / don't you think so? / I think so / you know I'm so lucky / because ah my business is painting / also my hobby is painting

(monologue tape, November 1980)

In addition to the improved comprehensibility of the last passage, I find the expressiveness which it exhibits particularly striking. As Goffman (1974) has pointed out, when we talk we do not just convey information or make requests, promises, and the like. Rather, we present dramas to our audiences, relating versions of what has happened, employing essentially theatrical means to provide evidence for the fairness or unfairness of our current situation or other grounds for sympathy, approval, understanding, or amusement. The fact that Wes is good at these uses of language is clearly reflected in the later tapes, in the passage above and perhaps even more so in the next excerpt (immediate continuation of last example):

also my hobby is painting / I can't you know stop painting / if I'm very tired / but I can't also sleeping / now every day three four hour sleeping / well / now's a little relax / because just now go to movie / you know / sometime / I go out after painting / very late / maybe midnight or three four o'clock / well outside is very dark / quiet / then you know I'm relax / also natural air is good / walking / because all day I'm sitting table my studio / so my leg little bit sleep / also little hurts / uh / but you know this is my way / this is my life / cannot stop and paint / you know nobody push / but myself I'm always push / anyway / last night . . . . .

(November 1980)

Unfortunately, I have no early data on Wes's performance in dialogue or other conversation; so no data can be offered to support my impressionistic judgment that during the early part of the observation period conversation with him was very difficult. The remainder of this section therefore deals only with his current level of competence in conversation. Consider the following narrative, from a spontaneous conversation which was unobtrusively tape-recorded:

Wes: listen / today so funny story  
 NS: yeah / what happened?  
 Wes: you know everyday I'm go to McDonald for lunch  
 NS: yeah  
 Wes: and today I saw so beautiful woman / so beautiful clothes / make-up / everything / but / so crazy!  
 NS: how? / what do you mean?  
 Wes: talking to herself / then she's listen to some person / everybody watch / but no one there / then / somebody / local woman I think say "are you OK?" / "can I help?" / but beautiful woman she doesn't want talk to local woman / she's so snobbish! / so funny!  
 NS: Jesus

(conversation tape, January 1981)

Wes's story contains all the elements of a well-formed narrative (Labov and Waletzky 1967, Labov 1972, Labov and Fanshel 1977). An attention getter (*listen*) is followed by an abstract, a general proposition which the narrative will exemplify (*today so funny story*), an orientation to time and place (*McDonald's*), a complicating action (*but so crazy*), a result (*then somebody . . . but she doesn't want talk to local woman*), an evaluation (*she's so snobbish!*), and a coda relating back to the original abstract (*so funny!*). Moreover, Wes introduces the complicating action in his story with a puzzle or teaser (*so crazy*), capturing and holding the interest of his listener. The story is not only well formed but cleverly formed and funny, and on those grounds it compares well with good stories told by native speakers.

Wes is a good conversationalist in many ways. The following piece of "small talk," following an ordering routine, gives an idea of Wes's ability to establish a relaxed, bantering tone with native speakers, in this case a married couple (M and G) whom he had met only a few minutes before at a hotel garden brunch:

M: I would like eggs benedict (to waitress) / that's the specialty (to Wes)  
 Waitress: how about you?  
 Wes: here eggs benedict is good?  
 M: { yeah  
 G: { it's the specialty  
 Wes: yeah? / OK / I have it (waitress leaves)  
 M: you never ate before?  
 Wes: no, I ate before / but not this hotel  
 M: it's very good over here  
 Wes: but only just English muffin / turkey / ham and egg / right?  
 G: right  
 Wes: so how different? / how special?

- M: because it's very good here / maybe it's the hollandaise / I don't know  
 G: maybe it's just the atmosphere  
 Wes: yeah / I think so / eggs benedict is eggs benedict / just your imagination is  
 different / so / this restaurant is belong to hotel?  
 G: no / not exactly

(conversation tape, January 1981)

{ = overlapping utterances

The good-natured, teasing type of humor of this passage (unfortunately and inevitably less obvious from a transcript than from the recording, which preserves tone of voice) is typical of Wes's conversations, as is his skill in listening to what people say and picking up topics for further development. Wes is not a passive conversationalist but nominates topics frequently. Moreover, the topics he nominates are almost always relevant to previous topics. I have never observed any instances of conversation coming to a halt because Wes has raised a topic (or commented on a topic already on the floor) in a way that indicated he had not understood what the previous speaker had said or had made an unfathomable connection to a new topic. In this respect he is quite unlike the majority of nonnative speakers of comparable linguistic level whom I have observed.

Wes is a good listener as well as a good talker. He is interested in people and what they have to say. He signals his comprehension of ongoing conversation frequently, using feedback signals such as *uh huh, I see, really?, really!, yeah, I know what you mean, my goodness*, as well as repetitions of fragments of his interlocutors' utterances. While many Japanese learners of English, even those with a high level of grammatical competence, retain the use of Japanese conversational fillers, accompanied in varying degrees by Japanese body language, Wes does not. His paralinguistic behavior is dramatically different depending on whether he is speaking English or Japanese.

Other aspects of Wes's conversational ability may well be transferred from Japanese or may simply reflect personality characteristics which are independent of language. Japanese friends report that in Japanese Wes is considered a very good conversationalist, thoughtful, witty, and refreshingly direct. Wes's own characterization of his conversational style, reporting on a Japanese conversation, is certainly in harmony with my analysis of his English conversational style:

then Sam say / people always talking me / because I'm a very warm person / then also very smart / clever talking / ah / well / I like talk to people you know / um / I'm always listen / then start talk / then listen / always thinking my head / then talk / some people you know only just talk, talk, talk, talk / similar Tom / he's only just talk, talk, talk / he's big star / but I'm not / if people ask something then nice talking / but sometime / OK / if I'm very strong talk / or sometime joking / you know if I'm talk middle age people and strong talk / but people happy / people never get angry / OK / I tell Sam / I said I think people likes you / but a little bit boring and talking / then he said ah because I'm a little old / then I said this is not important and you know talk, talk, talk / so / people always ask me / also they want something then I'm help

(monologue tape, November 1980)



## Strategic Competence

In Canale's framework, this component of communicative competence is composed of mastery of verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that are called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to limiting factors in performance (e.g., inability to recall a word) or to insufficient competence in one or more of the other areas. Typical examples would be the use of paraphrase, requests for repetition, clarification or slower speech, and the use of reference sources.

Since Wes clearly has a very limited command of the grammatical aspects of English, communication breakdowns do occur when he is talking to native speakers. Yet Wes is almost always able to repair these breakdowns, and it seems that his confidence, his willingness to communicate, and especially his *persistence* in communicating what he has in his mind and understanding what his interlocutors have in their minds go a long way toward compensating for his grammatical inaccuracies. A number of communication strategies which Wes uses have already been mentioned in the earlier parts of this paper: the transfer of Japanese grammatical principles and patterns when elements of English structure are not known; the use of formulaic utterances which exceed in complexity the capacities of the internalized, creative grammar; phonological practice; the practice; the use of disambiguators such as *please* to clarify illocutionary force; guessing and the extension of patterns to new contexts.

Some additional communication strategies can be identified by looking at what happens when Wes does not know an English word:

Wes: this is what?/mo-?/ mo-? (pointing)  
NS: mole  
Wes: better take out, right?

(field notes, February 1981)

Wes: Dick / "heroin" is English?  
NS1: yes  
Wes: OK / you know "heroin" right?  
NS2: uh huh

(field notes, February 1981)

In the first example, Wes had forgotten a word which he had heard the day before; so he simply asked a native speaker to supply it. The second example is a bit more complicated. The context is that Wes wanted to tell NS2 a story about the rising incidence of heroin addiction in Japan. However, although he knew the word "heroin," he was not sure if it was an English word. Wes knew the word not from hearing it in English conversation but from Japanese, which has borrowed the word from English, and specifically from written Japanese, which marks foreign borrowings by spelling them in the katakana syllabary. However, Wes has learned from experience that the fact that a word is written in katakana does not guarantee that it is an English borrowing, e.g., the word "arbeit," which Wes is aware from previous attempts at use is not only a German rather than an English loan but has

also acquired a particularly Japanese meaning. He therefore asks for confirmation from NS1 before using the word with NS2.

If Wes does not know a borrowed word for what he wants to communicate, he will paraphrase. Paraphrases may be brief word coinages, e.g. *money-girl* for "prostitute" (possibly from Japanese English, although Japanese informants I have asked are unfamiliar with the expression), or extended, as in the following example:

- Wes: well / also / I go to movie and / you know movie / always in Japan / titles / you know everything is writing Japanese, right?  
G: { oh!  
M: { uh huh  
Wes: if somebody speaking English / { so  
M: { subtitles

(conversation tape, January 1981)

Paraphrase may involve associations to context and to real-word knowledge, which are sometimes unsuccessful if his interlocutors do not share the same knowledge or cannot make the association rapidly. The following example is an attempt to identify the actress Meryl Streep on the basis of her appearance in a movie with actor Dustin Hoffman:

- Wes: no / I know her / you know her / you remember girl in movie with big nose guy? / what's name?  
NS: no  
Wes: you know (annoyed tone) / OK / little guy movie / he loves his father / also mother  
NS: oh / you mean "Kramer versus Kramer"?  
Wes: yeah / Kramer Kramer  
NS: no / that's not her

(conversation tape, February 1981)

It is interesting to observe as well some common communication strategies which Wes does *not* use. He does not use a Japanese-English dictionary to look up words. Although he owns such a dictionary, he reports that he has never used it. I have never heard him ask a native speaker to explain the difference between two words. I have never heard him ask whether a particular word is appropriate or idiomatic. Whereas other nonnative speakers have asked me questions such as whether the word "dishwasher" could be applied to people as well as machines, Wes seems content if the basic idea is communicated. For example, although I have pointed out to him several times that *money-girl* is not idiomatic English, and have supplied several lexical substitutes, *money-girl* remains his only active lexical entry for that meaning (he comprehends other terms but does not use them). He does not often ask for information on the semantic range or precise meaning of a word. In fact, I have noted only one such instance, when a client commissioned a painting and later rejected it without paying: Wes wanted to know if the meaning of "order" was different in Japanese and English. Finally, I would note that when native speakers supply lexical items, Wes seldom does what I have

observed students to do often, repeat the word just supplied by native speakers, one in the "heroin" sequence quoted above, when Wes turned to a new addressee, and "subtitles" in the following example:

- Wes: well / also / I go to movie and / you know movie / always in Japan / titles / you know everything is writing Japanese, right?  
G: { oh!  
M: { uh huh  
Wes: if somebody speaking English / { so  
M: { subtitles  
M: subtitles  
Wes: subtitles?  
M: { subtitles  
G: { subtitles / right  
Wes: then I'm never looking Japanese / only just listen / then sometime I don't understand / but I'm enjoy

(conversation tape, January 1981)

It is interesting that although Wes did repeat the word "subtitles," perhaps as acknowledgment of the insistence of his interlocutors, he did not use the word in his last utterance, although the intended meaning was "then I never looked at the subtitles."

On the grammatical level, Wes also has a number of communication strategies that partially compensate for inadequate knowledge of English structures. He relies to a great extent on reasonable associations among semantic elements to compensate for the lack of surface structure markings [*this afternoon I went n exhibition Japanese artist* for "this afternoon I went to an exhibition (of paintings) by a Japanese artist"] or non-English word order (*maybe ten paint I'm one month sometime* for "sometimes I can finish ten paintings in one month"). To compensate for an almost total lack of a tense system in English, Wes uses time adverbials, a communication strategy that is certainly frequent and perhaps universal among second language learners. *All day, always, right now, today, yesterday, tomorrow, before, last year, tonight, this morning, etc.* are high-frequency items in Wes's English.

With regard to the discourse component of communicative competence, I find Wes's development of topics particularly impressive. Especially in the later monologue and conversational tapes, he is usually quite concerned with establishing the sequence of information necessary to understand a story or the main point to be drawn from it. In some cases, this means doing a lot of topic preparation (Hatch 1978c), initially establishing background information that will be drawn upon in the narrative or description which follows:

- Wes: well / OK / this is new guy / he's about fifty / I think last time you met him / he's also own company / small company / he's go to Canada / quite old guy / his nickname is I think Sam / so / every morning nine thirty or ten I went Max Coffee Shop / also this guy's coming . . .

(November 1980)

Wes: well / I'm start painting six o'clock / then / OK / my good friend / his name is Ken / before I'm teaching him / so sometime he's come to my apartment before / then he try paint / well / quite good / but he's not strong / he's always tired and complain / but he loves paint / so / anyway / today he's come my studio / then he said . . .  
(November 1980)

In both of the above examples, Wes is making sure that the listener has some information about a person mentioned, before beginning the story in which that person will figure as a character. Native speakers use this technique too, of course, and I have no baseline native speaker data for comparison, but Wes may be more conscientious than native speakers usually are in establishing such reference points for development of narrative. Note also that in both of the above examples, and in many others, background information is prefaced by *OK* and concluded by *so* or *anyway*.

Communication strategies are particularly evident in conversational material, since native speakers may signal the fact that a message has not been received, although it may not be clear whether phonological, syntactic, or other problems have caused the mistransmission. The simplest repair strategy is repetition:

Wes: you have stereo?  
NS: huh?  
Wes: you have stereo?  
NS: yeah

(conversation tape, February 1981)

M: so you can speak Arabic? (to R, native speaker)  
Wes: Arabic sounds like Germany (softly)  
R: you like the sound of German?  
Wes: right?  
R: I hate the sound of German  
Wes: no / means Arabic sounds like . . .  
R: oh / Arabic sounds like German  
Wes: yeah

(conversation tape, January 1981)

In the first example above, the native speaker clearly signaled his failure to receive the message; so Wes simply tried again, successfully. In the second example, native speaker R thought that he heard Wes accurately but wasn't sure, so tried to check his comprehension by repeating what he thought was Wes's message. Wes missed this, and his *right?* is a tag on his original utterance; apparently not related to R's move. R's next comment, however, indicated that he had not heard Wes correctly the first time; so Wes repeated the message.

Repetition is the favored strategy if an interlocutor seems not to have heard a message. This is true also if Wes has not clearly heard a message directed at him by native speakers:

Wes: what time is it now?  
NS: ten after nine  
Wes: ten to nine?

NS: ten after nine  
Wes: uh huh / so tired!

(field notes, December 1980)

If it seems that an interlocutor has heard the words but has not understood the message, then paraphrase and expansion of content are Wes's favored strategies:

Wes: Doug / you have dream after your life?  
NS: whaddya mean?  
Wes: OK / everybody have some dream / what doing / what you want / after your life / you have it?  
NS: you mean after I die?  
Wes: no no / means next couple years or long time / OK / before I have big dream / I move to States / now I have it / this kind you have it?  
NS: security I suppose / not necessarily financial / although that looms large at the present time

(conversation tape, April 1981)

In attempting to ask the native speaker whether he has a goal or purpose for his future, Wes's nonidiomatic vocabulary triggers a miscommunication, which he repairs first by explaining what he means by *dream* (*what doing, what you want*) and *after your life* (*means next couple of years or long time*) and second by giving a specific example, his realized goal of moving to the United States.

Wes clearly pays a great deal of attention to feedback from native speakers, whether this is explicitly provided (*huh?, whaddya mean?*) or only identifiable from subsequent discourse (*Arabic sounds like Germany* example). Wes also reports that he makes a point of watching the face of interlocutors carefully, not only to enhance receipt of native speaker message—he claims to be an expert lip reader in Japanese and has several times surprised me by accurately reporting English conversations observed across a crowded and noisy room—but also to detect facial expressions indicating that native speakers are not understanding him.

The fact that Wes pays attention to and is alert for signals of miscommunication and energetically repairs messages that are not received the first time raises the question of why this has not had a salutary effect on his grammatical competence. Vigil and Oller (1976) have argued that feedback is the primary factor controlling the development of learner grammars. They argue that positive affective feedback ("let's increase the intensity of this relationship") and positive cognitive feedback ("I understand what you are saying") will be apt to produce fossilization of errors, while positive affective feedback and negative cognitive feedback ("I want to understand, but don't understand") create a desired instability in incorrect utterances and prod the learner to make appropriate modifications. Hence, whatever grammatical rules were used in the attempt that failed will tend to destabilize and are not apt to be fossilized without modification (Vigil and Oller 1976, p. 291).

Wes receives many affectively positive and cognitively negative responses from native speakers, yet the result has not been destabilization of his interlanguage grammar. There may be several reasons for this. First, as Selinker and

Lamendella (1979) have observed, feedback may take place separately for communicative competence versus grammatical correctness. This means that deviant utterances such as *this morning I'm finish new paint* are understood and get positive reinforcement more often than not. Second, in real-world interaction native speakers seldom provide explicit focused corrective feedback for grammar in conversation with nonnative speakers. I have observed Wes in interaction with many native speakers, including at least a dozen language-teaching professionals, and have not noted a single instance of feedback explicitly focused on grammatical form other than my own inconsistent attempts to prod Wes into an awareness of tense. Native speakers do, however, provide some corrective feedback for vocabulary and pronunciation (e.g., *subtitles* examples above) and usually do let nonnative speakers know if they have not understood them. Third, even if native speaker feedback is intended as corrective and at least partially focused on form, the nonnative speaker may not respond by modifying the form but may attempt a nongrammatical solution to repair the message. This is the case in the form:

Wes: I'm go to airport eleven thirty  
RS: do you mean you have to leave here at 11:30 or you have to arrive there at 11:30?  
Wes: means 11:30 I'm airport / not here

(field notes, October 1980)

In the next exchange, Wes's repair does involve a grammatical distinction, which perhaps unfortunately clarified the message sufficiently for understanding:

Wes: today I'm buy cigarettes  
RS: do you mean this morning or now?  
Wes: not I'm bought / I'm buy! (annoyed tone)

(field notes, December 1980)

An additional reason why feedback from native speakers may not affect the learner's grammar is that, although miscommunication may be caused by inadequate grammar, the conversational management strategies such as requests for clarification or paraphrase of message to check understanding which native speakers use to signal the need for repair are no different in essence (they may be in frequency) from what native speakers do with native speakers and, indeed, what nonnative speakers do to uphold their side of the conversational interaction with natives. In the "goal of life" dialogue presented above, the native speaker several times asked Wes for clarification or expansion of his messages. In the continuation of that dialogue, the roles are reversed, with Wes demanding the same kinds of clarification and confirmations from the native speaker:

NS: security I suppose / not necessarily financial / although that looms large at the present time  
Wes: but not only just money, right?  
NS: right

- Wes: so what dreaming?  
NS: well / I guess first you worry about the basics / then if you have that / then maybe  
prestige / ultimately peace of mind and enlightenment  
Wes: so means you want famous and happy?  
NS: shit / I'm not interested in being famous / no / you know we're still trying to find our  
place in the community / we're displaced  
Wes: where from? / you're from mainland right?

(conversation tape, January 1981)

In native/nonnative conversations, the interlocutors face essentially the same task: to understand and be understood by someone who is speaking a radically different version of "the same" language. Each party must therefore make an attempt to bridge the gap. The native speaker has far superior knowledge and power, and the nonnative is expected to do most of the work. But it seems clear that many nonnative speakers, Wes included, do not expect to have to do all the work or to reach perfection. This may be because the nonnative perceives his level of proficiency to be adequate for most needs, or—as I believe is true in Wes's case—because the nonnative may simply not accept the fairness of greatly disparate levels of effort by conversational partners. A final communication strategy which I believe Wes has quite consistently relied upon, no doubt valuable in the short term but probably detrimental in the long run, is to expect native speakers to learn his interlanguage, both to understand him and to speak in a way that is comprehensible to him, and to consider it the native speaker's problem as much as his own if this does not happen. From the point of view of the learner, this is perhaps not as irrational a position as it might seem at first, since in the individual learner's experience his own effort may be maintained at a more or less constant level, and interactive success on particular occasions may depend largely on what the native speaker does. Some native speakers are simply better at carrying on conversation with nonnatives than others. Some are better at modifying their input to nonnative speakers, including vocabulary, or at modifying their discourse structure. Some are adept at understanding nonnatives of a particular language background or nonnatives in general (a talent which many teachers develop). Other native speakers may mumble or act as though everyone knows their experience. Some are deaf or don't listen closely. On numerous occasions I have heard Wes express displeasure at native speakers who are not able to understand him.

A by-product of Wes's expectancy that native speakers can learn to understand him if they try has been a degree of dependency on those who have demonstrated that they can, who therefore can serve (if present) as interpreters and general caretakers. Native speakers also rely on other native speakers to assist in communication:

- Wes: what kind of song you like it?  
NS1: what's he saying?  
Wes: this is grea(t) song  
NS1: gray?

Wes: this is grea(t) song / listen / you know this music? / what's name? / oh / American  
Gigolo

NS1: what's he saying / gray?

NS2: no / great

(conversation tape, January 1981)

## DISCUSSION

Wes: I know I'm speaking funny English / because I'm never learning / I'm only just  
listen / then talk / but people understand / well / some people confuse / before  
OK / but now is little bit difficult / because many people I'm meeting only just  
one time / you know demonstrations everybody's first time / sometime so difficult /  
you know what I mean? / well / I really need English more / I really want speak  
more polite English / before I'm always I hate school / but I need studying / maybe  
school / I don't have time / but maybe better / whaddya think? / I need it, right?  
(monologue tape, November 1980)

Whether one considers Wes to be a good language learner or a poor language learner depends very much on one's definition of language and of the content of SLA. If language is seen as a means of initiating, maintaining, and regulating relationships and carrying on the business of living, then perhaps Wes is a good learner. If one views language as a system of elements and rules, with syntax playing a major role, then Wes is clearly a very poor learner. Friends and acquaintances who are not in the language or language teaching business generally evaluate Wes's English favorably, pointing out, for example, that "I understand him a lot better than X, who's been here over twenty years." Several sociolinguists with whom I have discussed his case have given similar evaluations, sometimes proclaiming him a superior language learner who just doesn't care about grammatical do-dads, most of which are eliminated in normal speech anyway. Grammar teachers, on the other hand, generally consider him a disaster, possibly beyond rescue. Wes's own evaluation of his English ability is mixed, recognizing both strengths and weaknesses. He is quite clearly proud of what he has accomplished and knows that he can communicate much better in English than many nonnative speakers with much greater linguistic knowledge. On one occasion Wes introduced me to some Japanese friends honeymooning in Hawaii, for whom he was acting as guide and interpreter, friends who by all appearances knew no English. Yet in subsequent encounters, with Wes not present, it turned out that the husband at least knew English quite well, had a large vocabulary, and spoke very grammatically, but was simply too shy to attempt much conversation and had some difficulty comprehending what native speakers said to him. On several different occasions I have heard Wes give impromptu English lessons to other Japanese, explaining what to say in a particular circumstance, supplying forms which were almost always wrong but which had worked for him. At the same time, Wes knows that he speaks *funny English*, that there are many things he wants to say that he can communicate only with great difficulty, that people do sometimes have a difficult time understanding him, and that his command of English is not adequate to his needs.



Wes is a different type of learner from many others with the same language background, for example, the Japanese graduate student at an American university who has studied English for many years and can write well, perhaps even at the scholarly level, but who is barely comprehensible in conversation. However, the major point of this paper is that Wes is also unlike Alberto, who lived in an Hispanic/Portuguese ghetto, Zoila, who never wanted to come to the United States, and the Vietnamese mother suffering from intense culture shock. It seems to me quite clear that Wes's failure to learn much of the grammatical component of his second language cannot be attributed to social distance factors, to lack of need for or interest in meaningful communication and interaction, to personality factors such as self-consciousness, or to poor attitudes toward target language speakers. Low social distance, positive attitudes toward the second language community, and high integrative motivation to use the second language for communication have led to a considerable increase in overall *communicative* competence but have had little effect on improved *grammatical* competence. I conclude, therefore, that the hypothesis that "the degree of acculturation toward the 'model' language group seems to be the primary consideration in attempting to account for the varied levels of *linguistic* achievement reached by second language learners" (Stauble 1978, p. 46, emphasis mine) is false.<sup>3</sup>

There are, of course, a number of ways in which one might attempt to explain away or modify this conclusion. It is possible that the period of observation reported here might not be the relevant time span in which to observe the effect of social and psychological variables on SLA. The acculturation model might be relevant to explaining Wes's acquisition of a limited form of English in Tokyo, but perhaps once such a system has developed and has been perceived as adequate for a period of time it fossilizes, so that changes will not be effected simply by changes in social and psychological distance factors. Such a rationalization would explain not only Wes's case but also the case of Angela, an Italian immigrant reported on by Bruzzese (1977). Angela came to the United States when she was 37 and initially lived in an Italian neighborhood in New York. Twenty-three years later, she moved to California and integrated into an English-speaking community, but this did not result in defossilization of her very limited linguistic system. If this kind of explanation is accepted, however, it restricts the importance of the acculturation model to a very limited time span.

Conversely, the most relevant period in which to observe the effects of social and affective factors on SLA might be still in the future in Wes's case. Perhaps eventually his rudimentary grammatical system for English, maintained so far through compensatory strength in the area of discourse competence and the extraordinary use of communication strategies, will "crack" and syntactic development will resume. While I certainly hope that this happens, and expect some progress in the future, I doubt that Wes will change his basic approach to language learning, and assume that he will continue to emphasize message content over message form.

A third possibility is that in my description of Wes I may have unfairly deemphasized negative affective factors. For example, Wes is indeed extroverted

and uninhibited, but under the bravado one can find, if one looks hard enough, some insecurity, even shyness. Perhaps it is detrimental that Wes has a strong personality and a strong sense of identity, as a person and as a Japanese. This suggests that he may lack ego-permeability (Guiora's term), although this is expressed not in lack of empathy or in self-consciousness but rather in sensitivity to criticism and a degree of stubbornness. Identification as a Japanese also puts limits on the level of integrative motivation which I have attributed to Wes, though Schumann is clear that the acculturation model does not require adoption of the life style and values of the target group for successful acquisition; social and psychological contact are enough.

The concept of field dependence/independence might be relevant. These concepts attempt to combine perceptual, personality, and learning characteristics. The field-independent person is one who is good at finding the trees in the forest or identifying monkeys hidden in pictures. The field-independent person is competitive self-confident, independent, and possibly good at classroom learning. The field-dependent person is concerned with the overall picture, ignoring the trees in the forest and the monkeys in the pictures, is affectively empathetic, with social outreach, is concerned with communication and thought to be good at acquisition. The problem with applying these concepts to Wes is that he has characteristics of both types. He is self-confident and competitive but also shows social outreach. He is concerned with communication but is not good at acquisition, if by acquisition we mean the acquisition of grammar. However, the main reason the dichotomy does not hold up is that there is a clear task-specific difference (Brown 1980 p. 93). Perhaps because he is an artist, Wes has no difficulty finding monkeys hidden in pictures. In his work he is a perfectionist, and his paintings rely to a great extent on detail for their impact. In language learning he is not a perfectionist, and appears to care little or nothing for the details.

The factors which appear to best explain Wes's failure to acquire much grammar are therefore partly psychological, but these have less to do with social or psychological distance from target language speakers than with cognitive style, personality characteristics, and attitudes which are specifically relevant to learning the grammatical code. While the acculturation model predicts that such factors will interact with acculturation but will not dominate it (Schumann 1978b, p. 48), this appears to have happened in Wes's case.

The following factors remain candidates for identification as causal variables operating negatively for Wes's acquisition of grammar:

#### **Age**

It remains to be demonstrated whether any mature adult can actually *acquire* impressive control of the grammar of a second language (see below).

#### **Aptitude**

Wes's hypotheses about English grammar are more often than not incorrect, suggesting that aptitude may be important in acquisition as well as in classroom

learning. However, Wes's failure to correctly induce the grammatical rules of English may be due less to innate analytical ability than to his basic lack of interest in this aspect of language and/or his failure to test and revise preliminary hypotheses.

### **Hemispheric Dominance**

No direct evidence is available, and this factor is only suggested by Wes's gestalt approach to learning, his strengths in intonation and comprehension as compared with syntax, and current theorizing that there is greater left hemispheric involvement in second language processing among early bilinguals and relatively greater right hemispheric involvement among late bilinguals. However, the hypothesis that left hemispheric processing is associated with formal learning environments and relatively more right hemispheric processing is associated with informal acquisition (Genesee 1981) suggests that this factor, if relevant, may be as much effect as cause.

### **Cognitive Style**

Expressive/gestalt rather than analytic, with consistent focus on message content over form; monitoring of communication rather than grammar; use of communication strategies which resolve immediate problems but do not also serve as long-term learning strategies.

### **Exposure**

Lack of formal instruction in English; lack of experience with the written code of English, which might make grammatical features more salient; lack of developed metalinguistic awareness for either first or second language.

### **Sociolinguistic**

The multidimensional demands of conversation and interaction, with feedback focused on content and message transmission; the redundancy of grammar in communication; requirements and expectations for nonnative speaker proficiency.

### **Personality/Attitudes/Interests**

Dominant personality, sensitivity to criticism and dislike of the subordinate learner role; dislike of formal study and defeatist attitude toward classroom abilities; great curiosity about people but no interest in linguistic analysis; unwillingness to expend time and energy studying English outside the actual context of use.

Talent, temperament and experience are all involved, and Wes has shown improvement in just those aspects of English which he enjoys and has devoted the most attention to, using strategies that have been facilitative. However, the relationships among age, lack of instruction, and failure to acquire grammar—features which Wes shares with the other unsuccessful learners in the SLA literature with

whom I have compared him—remain the most provocative and significant for an adequate theory of SLA. The question which remains unanswered is whether or not adults really can acquire much grammar through interaction alone. If by acquisition we mean to include only wholly unconscious learning, I believe the answer is no, they cannot. Adults do seem to have lost the still mysterious ability of children to acquire the grammatical forms of language while apparently not paying attention to them.<sup>4</sup>

At least, there is no evidence presently available to argue convincingly that this ability is retained. The studies by Carroll (1967), Upshur (1968) and Mason (1971) which showed increased proficiency without formal study all involved subjects who already had a substantial base of formal instruction, implying both a body of knowledge to build upon and at least some developed sensitivity to form. The SLA literature does not yet contain any well-documented studies of adults who have successfully learned the grammar of a second language solely through interaction, without any formal instruction at all, regardless of their purported social and psychological attitudes toward target language speakers. There might well be some such individuals, however, and I do not wish to argue that instruction is a necessary condition for adult SLA, but only conscious attention to form, which could be accomplished through self-study, using conscious learning strategies such as some of those identified by Rubin (1981) which Wes does not make use of: asking questions of native speakers, consulting available sources and actively using deductive reasoning to look for general rules and exceptions.

A good deal of current theorizing in SLA is built on the principle that a watched pot never boils. This approach, with its stress on interaction and meaningful communication, responds well to the problems of the overly conscious “monitor over-user” (Krashen 1978), whose rules get in the way of fluent communication, and is in harmony with research findings that grammatical competence derived through formal training is not a good predictor of communicative skills (Canale and Swain 1980, Savignon 1972, Tucker 1974, Upshur and Palmer 1974). However, the partial independence of grammatical competence from the other components of communicative competence is also reflected in the ability of second language learners like Wes to communicate well without much grammatical control. For such learners, interaction, which they are already good at, is no panacea. The “watched pot” analogy begins to fall apart, because learning a second language is not as simple as boiling water but has at least as many aspects and dimensions as preparing a meal. First, one must turn on the heat and assemble the ingredients. Social and affective factors have a lot to do with providing the heat, and the interaction which they engender provides manageable data for the learner (Long, forthcoming), but surely that is not the end of the endeavor. The learner must cook the complementary courses of the meal, and in the case of grammar that means processing data received through interaction: analyzing them, formulating hypotheses (which may not be express-

ible as formal rules but may nevertheless be conscious at some stage of the process, at least through the ability to recognize nativelike linguistic strings), and testing those hypotheses against native speaker speech and native speaker reactions. These are of course psychological processes, but the idea that if affective factors are positive then cognitive processes will function automatically, effortlessly, and unconsciously to put together conclusions about grammar is overly optimistic. Interest and attention are additional minimum requirements if the sauce is to come out as well as the main course, and most language learners would agree that hard work is involved as well.

## NOTES

1. Schumann (1978a) has argued that adults with high social and psychological distance from target language speakers will not avail themselves of instruction even if available. However, unwillingness to take classes may have other sources, such as previous school failure or the realistic demands of a busy life. It is important not to automatically consider lack of formal study as *prima facie* evidence of high social and psychological distance and low motivation, since this makes separation of the variables of instruction and affective factors impossible and trivializes the affective argument. The claim that acculturation and affective factors are the major causal variable in SLA, with instruction playing only a minor role, can only be empirically justified if the model recognizes the possibility of individuals with positive affect but no instruction.

2. In general, Japanese speakers do not have the same degree of difficulty with English negation as do native speakers of many other languages. This makes an index of development based on stages of negation documented for Spanish learners of English (Cazden et al. 1975, Schumann 1978a/b, Stauble 1978) inappropriate for Japanese learners, and accounts for Agnello's (1977) inability to demonstrate that the English of his Japanese subject Masa was "pidginized" to the same extent as Spanish, Italian, and Greek subjects in the same study.

3. While it can be argued that case studies cannot be used as proof or disproof of theoretical models which have to do essentially with group tendencies, the acculturation model makes sufficiently explicit claims about the way in which diverse factors interact in the individual to make all case study material relevant for its evaluation. Particular case studies will support or detract from the model to the extent that they represent common types of learners rather than idiosyncratic exceptions. I believe that many readers will recognize similarities between Wes and other nonnative speakers they have known, not in all details of course, but certainly in broad outline.

Moreover, the major case studies used to develop the acculturation model do not provide thoroughly convincing evidence and support for it either. Alberto, the poorest language learner of six in the Cazden et al. study was not only the most socially and psychologically distant from target language speakers but also the oldest. The only other adult in the study is reported to have had significant prior instruction and knowledge of English. Stauble's study involves the comparison of 40- and 50-year-old learners on a developmental continuum for negation observed in the acquisition of English by 10- and 12-year-olds. Based on a questionnaire concerning social and psychological distance factors, Stauble concludes that there is a hierarchy of importance of factors, with psychological variables outranking social variables and motivation outranking other psychological factors. However, she could have equally concluded that social distance does not matter at all or even detracts from acquisition, since the most socially distant subject acquired the most and the least socially distant subject acquired the least control over English negation. The argument that

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psychological factors are differentially important is not particularly convincing, as Stauble's best and middling subjects had identical psychological distance scores, differing only in the responses to two questions on a 14-item questionnaire. Finally, it should be noted that once again the poorest learner in the group was the oldest.

4. I do not intend to raise the issue here of whether conscious attention to form may also be important in child first and second language acquisition, but confine the argument to adult SLA. However, there is some evidence in Fillmore's (1976) study that this was an important factor with 5- and 6-year-olds learning English as a second language. Wes is rather like Nora, Fillmore's best subject, in his use of social skills which encourage exposure and interaction. However, in his lack of attention to the structural possibilities of language, he is much more like Jesus, another much less successful subject in Fillmore's subject group.