Preliminary Research on Interlanguage and Learning Strategy: Function of Simple Present and Present Progressive as a Factor in Error Analysis

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1. Introduction

A. Context of the Problem: Error Analysis

Many studies have looked extensively at errors made by second language learners and have attempted to determine the origin of these errors (Richards, 1971; Selinker, 1975). Some types of errors have been assessed as being the result of transfer from the native language of the learner; others appear to be developmental errors caused by faulty overgeneralizations about the target language; still other errors seem to incorporate elements of both the native and target languages, and so have been typed as interlanguage products.

Much time and effort has been expended by researchers and teachers, developing and applying the techniques of error analysis, in an effort to find out the processes through which a language is acquired (Wode, 1976; Hakuta, 1976; Adams, 1976, Larsen-Freeman, 1976. See Hatch, 1976, for a collection of various studies.) Many of these and similar studies have concentrated on morpheme and structure acquisition, differences between various

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language groups learning a given second language, the effect of age, etc. This study, however, concentrates on two relatively new areas: the problems caused by structures possessing multiple functions (usages) and student perceptions of their grammaticality.

While the developmental patterns of structure acquisition shown in studies dealing with language acquisition in young children undoubtedly reflect their cognitive development, we are forced to seek other explanations for patterns of acquisition when dealing with older learners, who already possess cognitive maturity. Corder (1967) proposed that student errors were, in fact, evidence of students' having an inner schedule for language learning. One feature which may determine how well or how early a structure is acquired is the intrinsic difficulty of the structure.

Structural difficulty can be traced to several sources. The number of grammatical features present in a structure that the student must attempt to produce is a noticeable factor. WH-questions are an excellent example. The student is required to make a number of decisions before he can correctly produce the following structures:

Where is he going?   *When does he go?*

Do you know *where he is going?*   Do you know *when he goes?*

In addition to making the usual decisions about subject-verb agreement, gender and number, he must cope with subject verb inversion and, possibly, DO-support in simple WH-questions, but remember to omit them in embedded WH-questions.

A more subtle source of confusion, however, originates with the multifunctional nature of many structures in English where the identical form can be used to denote a variety of meanings. This happens in two ways.

The first occurs when the identical structure can function as more than one part of speech.

    She is *laughing*. (verb)

    The *laughing* girl blushed. (participial adjective)

    Laughing is good for you. (gerundial noun)

The second takes place when a structure possesses more than one usage within a part of speech. It is this type of difficulty that we will be dealing with in this study. From here on, the terms 'usage' and 'function' will be used interchangeably.

To clarify the concept of multiple functions or usages, we may observe the multiple functions possessed by the indefinite article in English: (i) it introduces a topic; (ii) it functions in a generic sense; and (iii) it refers to an unspecified noun or one of many.

    (i) There is a dog on the lawn. The dog belongs to the neighbors.

    (ii) A dog is man's best friend.

    (iii) Butch is a very good dog.

The simple present tense, which we will consider later in this study, similarly displays
a number of functions: (i) it functions to indicate a scheduled or arranged future time
when it occurs in the presence of a future adverbial; (ii) it indicates habitualness or per-
manence with both stative and non-stative verbs; (iii) it is typically used with stative verbs
(iii) it is typically used with stative verbs even in transitory situations; (iv) it functions
in narrative present to describe past actions; and (v) it is customarily used in giving
directions or demonstrations and in making sports commentary (emphasis on informa-
tion exchange rather than description).

> (i)   He leaves for London next week.
>
> (ii) I always walk to school. She looks nice all the time.
>
> (iii) I have the books today. I see the mailman coming.
>
> (iv) Yesterday was a rotten day. I get up and get ready to leave and I can't find my
>   note book. When I get to my car, I find I've got a flat tire.
>
> (v)   I place the rabbit in the hat and I pass my wand over it three times. First you
>   beat the eggs until stiff. Then you add them to the first mixture. The catcher
>   throws the ball to first, but the baseman misses.

When we begin to apply these types of distinctions to error analysis and language ac-
quisition, however, we begin to tread on unknown territory. Typically, error analysis
have dealt with structures in a gross fashion, ignoring the fact that many structures pos-
sess a wide variety of usages. A subject may be analyzed in terms of his use or ommission
of the structure under consideration, * but we still do not know from this sort of analysis
if he makes errors randomly within the structure, or if he has mastered certain usages of
if, while remaining confused or oblivious to others. As Wagner-Gough notes in her studies
on the acquisition of the progressive:

> ". . . the relationship of form and function has not been explicitly defined . . ."
> (1976, p. 282)

It is conceivable that closer analysis of chronic problems of the second-language learner
will show that he has, contrary to evidence given by his (oftentimes) mediocre performance
scores, learned certain usages of a given multifunctional structure very well; thus, his
lowered peformance scores, in fact, reflect his confusion or ignorance about the less-emp-
hasized or conceptually-more-difficult usages. It seems clear that we need to analyze the
structures more closely, identifying their various usages and the role of context in mean-
ing before we can say a great deal about student errors and the acquisition of structures.

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* See Hakuta (1976, p.45) for a list of his functors along with those of Brown (1973) and Devilliers (1973).
These functors exemplify the types of strutures commonly studied in acquisition studies. Also See Adams (19
76) and Dulay and Burt (1974). Note that acquisition of form is emphasized with little regard for acquisition
of function in cases where the structure has more than one usage. e.g., articles and the progressive. Also see
Lim's error analysis (1974, p. 26) for further examples in a classroom-oriented context. One again, structures
are treated as homo-geneous units, not taking multiple usage functions into consideration.

A major problem immediately becomes apparent here—that is, how to test and evaluate the student in non-obligatory contexts. We are attempting to evaluate the student's compentence in the target language, but unfortunately, it is not always possible to elicit responses that unambiguously reveal the extent of his competence and perceptions. Many structures commonly occur in on-obligatory contexts, reflecting a choice of nuance or style that can easily be avoided by substituting another grammatically correct response without changing the essential message of the context. In examining a student reponse, we are not able to determine whether the subject avoids an alternative usage out of preference for a structure and/or shade of meaning, or whether he does not understand, or is unaware of, the alternative. Consider the following two options:

How do you feel?　　　　　　　vs.　　　　　　　How are you feeling?

The choice of one or the other option by a native speaker reflects a choice based on "psychological nuance" (Hatcher, 1951) rather than a choice based on grammatical requirement, with 'How do you feel' being the more neutral, possibly more formal, usage. 'How are you feeling' potentially reflects a friendlier, more casual attitude, and may also be used to emphasize a more limited time span or a recent change. Unfortunately we are unable to create a context where one or the other usage is required except by artificial devices such as parallel structure. When a student consistently gives us one type of response, we have no way to be sure he is aware of, or recognizes, the legitimacy of the alternative.

Often, both teaching and testing techniques rely on certain cues to usage in the immediate context (i.e., 'now' or 'right now' signals present progressive), but this technique is artificial and unrealistic at best. The word 'now' can be used in a number of different senses, and it is actually the concept of 'right now' or 'action in progress' that commonly lends itself to expression in the present progressive.

He is eating now so he can't come to the phone.
We're watching TV at the moment.

Students sometimes tend to develop an overreliance on the presence of the adverbial, or to get confused when the same adverbial appears with other tenses. 'Now', for instance, may also occur, and quite frequently does, with a variety of other tenses and meanings. Note these usages with the simple present.

I used to take the bus, but now I drive.
It's 9:00. I go to class now.

In these cases, 'now' does not reflect 'action in progress' at the moment of speaking. Rather, there are several different possibilities. In the first case, 'now' refers to the general present as compared to the past. In the second case, 'now' refers back to 9:00 and takes on a meaning of 'at this time', i.e., 'I go to class at 9:00' (habitually).

The phenomena of nuance and non-obligatory usages present a major problem both in testing and in giving students guidelines for usage. Here, we are concerned basically with the testing aspects used in error analysis. This problem and techniques of testing will be discussed further in the Method Section, where we have attempted to develop testing techniques that allow us to more precisely determine student perceptions of English grammaticality. It remains to be seen exactly how much even the advanced student perceives of the grammatical flexibility of the English language. It is probable that many of the usages a student hears or reads violate the basic simplified rules he has been given as guidelines. How much this affects his understanding has not been determined, but it is potentially substantial.

A major factor which is dealt with in the Theoretical Section of the literature survey is that meaning is strongly determined by context, where meaning is derived not from the structure alone, but rather from the interaction of its intrinsic meaning and form with other elements in context. We do not aim to fully explore how completely the student understands the impact of context and the chages in nuance and meaning, but we have tried to make a beginning by determining exactly what his perceptions of grammaticality are, and how they compare with a native's.

B. Statement of the Problem

This study first presents the results of a survey of the literature undertaken to identify the common usages of two structures: the simple present and the present progressive. A number of usages of each were selected for testing, and items exemplifying those usages were constructed. In creating the items, we made the assumption that meaning evolves from the interaction of the structure with other elements in the context. Reliance on cue adverbials and devices such as parallel structure was avoided wherever possible. Having verified that native speakers recognized the items and their usages as grammatical, we undertook an error analysis to identify student perceptions of grammaticality. We have tried to establish that learner errors fall into distinguishable patterns over the functions (usages) of each given structure. Because we are interested in competence, a written test seemed more appropriate as production of spoken language is subject to many other factors (simplification strategies, distracation, aural and oral abilities, etc.). * A testing format was evolved that would allow us to test student perceptions in non-obligatory (i.e., natural) contexts. This will be discussed further in the Method Section.

C. Research Question

(i) Do non-native student perceptions of grammaticality differ from those of native speakers? and (ii) Is there a pattern to student errors by function which indicates that certain

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* For more along these lines, See Krashen's Monitor (1976b) and his distinction of learning vs. acquisition.

usages are more difficult than others?

D. Rationale

In error analysis, it has usually been assumed that the student has not mastered the structure under consideration if he makes a significant percentage of errors in obligatory contexts. Brown's (1973) criterion of obligatory context is often used as a standard for acquisition and mastery. The subject must produce a form correctly at least 90% of the time in contexts where it is required. Multiple usages and non-obligatory contexts not having been specified, however, it appears that most studies have failed to account for this multifunctional factor in their analysis.

Some functions are easier for students to conceptualize and master than others, either because the usage rationale is intrinsically easier, or because of similar structures and distinctions in the native language. Also, some of these usages are less emphasized or ignored entirely in the course of instruction. It is often difficult for native teachers to analyze why they say something a certain way. Teachers assume that students will develop a 'feel' for the language; and while this is sometimes the case, many students have expressed a need for further clarification of usages. This study has attempted to identify the various existing usages and identify those which cause students particular problems.

E. Significance of the Study for TESL

Identifying usage function in error analysis has significant implications for both the researcher in language acquisition and for the classroom teacher attempting to diagnose student weaknesses. If a pattern in errors emerges, it may be possible to draw some more definite conclusions as to how language is acquired and in what steps. It also clarifies what deficiencies exist in the methods of teaching English as a second language, and points to ways in which student competence, and awareness of English may be enhanced at the advanced levels. If we are able to isolate what confuses the learner and what he has difficulty in perceiving, we can focus more intensively on these areas in the classroom. We can also deemphasize the study of functions that have been previously mastered. More specifically, this type of information might enable advanced ESL classes to eliminate some of the redundancy of grammar review and to aid the student in refining his English skills, particularly in the areas of reading comprehension and writing. While this study focuses on only a few limited usages of the simple present and the present progressive structures, it is hoped that it will establish a format and guide further research on other multifunctional structures.

II. The Method

A. The Subject

The 242 subjects for this study were drawn from the advanced ESL levels at UCLA and
Evans Community Adult School in Los Angeles. The sample included a variety of types
of students ranging from foreign visa students to foreign-born residents including even
a few students who had finished their high school here, but were still deficient in English.
The elicitation instrument was administered to students from diverse language back-
grounds in an attempt to cancel out effects of native language and instruction in parti-
cular school systems or countries. The test items including some distractors totaled 90
items. Since this was too lengthy a test to give to students at one time, the test was divided
into two parallel versions with 45 items in each. One hundred and thirty-nine responses
were returned for Test Version 1, and 103 responses, for Test Version 11.

B. The Data Elicitation Instrument

As stated earlier, the object of this study is to test student perception of grammaticality,
i.e., his competency, not his ability to spontaneously produce correct speech. Therefore,
a written format was chosen for the elicitation instrument. The elicitation instrument
was a written diagnostic test combining both multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank tech-
niques (See items in the Appendix.). Short contexts were created exemplifying situations
in which the various usages being tested for were appropriate or acceptable. The cate-
gories of usages tested for will be discussed later in the section entitled "Selection of
Usages for the Elicitation Instrument." In each case a verb was left blank. The student
was given two options, plus a third open-ended option that read "Neither of these is
correct. A correct answer is _____." The student was instructed to use this third option
only if both Option A and Option B were incorrect.

—I'm looking for John. Do you know where he is?
—I think he _____ in his room.

a. studies   c. Neither of these is correct.
b. has studied   A correct answer is studying.

No correct options were offered only in cases where there was clearly an obligatory ans-
wer indicated by the context. In cases where more than one option was possible, e.g.,

—John was sick yesterday.
—Oh? How _____ today?   (*is he feeling   does he feel*)

the usage being tested for was always one of the options given.

This technique was devised to avoid certain problems inherent in more traditional multiple-choice and fill-in-the-blank formats. While traditional formats are easier to grade and offer neater data, they are less representative of what the student knows. It is impossible to determine whether the student actually recognizes the correct answer in a multiple-choice test, or whether he has gone through a process of elimination with some of the options and/or made a guess at the correct answer. Fill-in-the-blank tests make it impossible to test student percept one in non-obligatory contexts. The student may consistently display his competency with one structure, but then it is impossible to evaluate his competency with alternative structures. Fill-in-the-blank test results are probably more representative of what the student knows than multiple-choice test results since a fill-in-the-blank test gives him no options, and he is required to produce the form; however, for dis creet point testing, the necessity of obligatory contexts, which allow only one answer,- is quite limiting. To illustrate what is meant by non-obligatory contexts, note the following examples of natural dialog.

Doctor:	Patient:
	↗oh, I'm feeling better.
How are you feeling today?	(or)
	↘oh, I feel better.
	↗oh, I'm feeling better.
How do you feel today?	(or)
	↘oh, I feel better.

Efforts to teach parallel structure, where the response is given in the same tense as the question, are often artificial since a native speaker will often change his tense to provide a different nuance or to suit his style of speech. (This is not to say that the teaching of parallel structure should be done away with entirely, since it is applicable at times, particularly in written contexts.) It becomes most difficult to evaluate a student's conceptions about what is grammatical in non-obligatory contexts. In this study, we have tried to avoid such artificial devices as cue adverbials and parallel structure in order to see how well the student actually understands the usages of, and restrictions on, the structures being tested.

The format of this elicitation instrument has attempted to work around the problems inherent in the more traditional formats by combining them. Not only does the combination of techniques save time, since the student does not have to put so much work into producing the correct forms of the tenses, it allows us to test for discreet points in non-obligatory contexts.

C. Procedures

Before the test was presented to the students in the sample,it was given to approximately

25 native speakers to verify that the usages in the test actually examplified grammatical
native speech. Some evidence of stylistic variation became apparent since the natives were
also presented with the open-ended option. Some students used 'will' in one context, but
used other future usages in others. The substitutions showed no consistency of substi-
tution by item. Items that did not receive above 90% were rewritten and retested. Sur-
prisingly, many native subjects protested that they weren't very good in English and
stated that they "hoped they had done OK." Many students also commented about certain
usages: "I say that, but I don't know if it's grammatical. It may be colloquial." These
students were assured that this study was interested in what people actually say, rather
than in 'term-paper' English. Response patterns were more consistent for obligatory usa-
ges than for non-obligatory usages, which displayed stylistic variations. In particular,
recognition of the present progressive in contexts exemplifying change and of the simple
present future ranged around 90%. Greater care in the construction of realistic contexts
was required for these.

When the final items had been selected and divided into two test versions, they were
distributed to non-native students. Several examples were done on the board to give the
students a clear idea of how they were supposed to use the write-in option. Student res-
ponses where no use was made of the write-in option were disgarded since this indicated
that the student did not really understand the test and may have been guessing or answer-
ing at random.

D. The Data Analysis

In order to make use of the computer, the following code was used in grading the items:

1 — Option A,
2 — Option B,
3 — Where the write-in option was the obligatory anwer,
4 — Correct alternative write-in answers, and
5 — Incorrect alternative write-in answers.

The total number of correct options given for an item (number of responses exemplifying
usage being tested for plus number of correct alternatives) gives us an idea of the actual
difficulty of the item and whether or not the student understands the context. The total
number of responses for the usage being tested for gives us an idea of whether or not the
student recognizes the grammaticality of the usage. The write-in alternative, correct or
incorrect, provides us with a clue as to what the student understands and how he ration-
alizes. The number and kind of write-in alternatives were tabulated and are shown along
with the test items in the Appendix. It is suggested that the reader persue them and no-
tice the types of items, their construction and the types of student responses.

For the most part, the kinds of statistics employed here are descriptive: counts, means, ranges, and standard deviations. Statistics were done (i) using a key which accept donly the usage tested for, and (ii) using a key which accepted both the answer tested for and correct alternatives. Computer runs done using the single key [option (i)] would have overestimated the difficulty of items exemplifying non-obligatory usages because the item, may be easy in general terms, although difficult in terms of the usage we are testing for T-squares and correlations were also run to determine whether there were differences dependent on student background, but this approach was not emphasized.

III. Survey of the Literature

In order to analyze student perceptions of grammaticality in terms of functional usages, it was first necessary to isolate the various usage functions. A survey of the existing li terature was undertaken to this end.

There is much confusion and disagreement as to how the simple present and the present progressive are used in English. To make matters simpler, the results of the literature survey have been divided into two parts. Section A concerns itself only with *describing the various usage functions* of these two tenses. The *theories of usage rationale,* which seem to hinge not only on the nature of the tense, but also on the semantic nature of the verb and its co-occurence with other elements, will come under discussion in Section B in an effort to enhance our understanding of actual usage patterns in English and to establish validity of our earlier assumption that meaning is based not only on form, but also on interactions between forms in context.

A. Traditional Descriptions of Usage

Before one can make any general descriptive statement about the usages of the simple present and present progressive in English, it is necessary to distinguish between stative and non-stative verbs.

1. Stative Verbs. Stative verbs are those verbs that express mental states, conditions, perceptions, and relationships (e.g., believe, think, know, be, see, taste, cost, belong to, etc.). Non-stative verbs are dynamic or action verbs showing activity, process or transition (e.g., work, change, arrive and leave) (Quirk Greenbaum, 1973).

Since stative verbs, by definition, describe a state which is not usually subject to change, process, or direct observation, they are not commonly used in the present progressive tense.

She *knows* my address.
Honey *tastes* sweet.
He *is* a doctor.

* She *is knowing* my address.

* Honey *is tasting* sweet

* He *is being* a doctor

In the first example, for instance, once she knows something, it becomes a part of her know-
ledge, and we do not expect that she will stop knowing it under ordinary conditions.
Likewise, when we say, "He is a doctor," we are speaking of his profession, which is rela-
tively permanent and not likely to change unless unforeseen circumstances arise. In most
cases of stativity, the ideas of change or of action in progress, which are entailed by the
progressive tenses, simply do not generally apply.

There are two complications here, however, where this restriction can be circumvented.
The first occurs when there is an unusually strong emphasis placed on temporariness,
on change, or on something out of the ordinary.

a. I'm forgetting names nowadays. (Palmer, 1974:73)

b. I'm seeing things. (lbid.)

c. It's mattering less and less (lbid., 74)

d. He's looking better since his operation. (lbid.)

In (a) and (b) we see a strong emphasis on something out of the ordinary. In (b) this empha-
sis is actually so strong that it acquires a special meaning of "I am hallucinating." In
(c) and (d) we see a special emphasis placed on change and/or transition. There is also an
implication in many cases that what is true now, may not be permanent or has not always
been the case.

He's feeling a little better today.

(This was not the case yesterday and may not hold for tomorrow.)

A second problem arises when the verb has both a stative meaning and a non-stative
meaning. We will refer to the non-stative versions here as non-stative homonyms.

While this is not a problem for the native speaker, it presents some difficulty for the
non-native learner, who is required to recognize two meanings housed in the same base
form (i.e., the verb infinitive) and to comprehend that it is not the verb form that is intrin-
sically stative, but rather the meaning in a given usage.

a. She appears pale. (She has a pale appearance)-S

   She is appearing in "Rocky". (She is making an appearance in the movie)-NS

b. She sees the salesman. (She perceives him visually)-S

   She is seeing the salesman. (She is dating him)-NS

c. I think he's right. (I believe it)-S

   I'm thinking of going. (I'm planning to do so)-NS

   S=Stative   NS=Non-Stative

It is not always clear whether a verb is stative and occurs subject to unusual emphases, or whether it is a homonym with a non-stative meaning. A good example is the verb 'BE'.

The child is being good.
He's being good to his girlfriend.;

It is possible that this is influenced by the act being out of the ordinary or temporary, but the author strongly suspects that 'BE' here is being substituted for the verbs 'BEHAVE' (or 'ACT') and 'TFDAT'. Therefore, they do not entail stative meanings. Rephrased, we may substitute:

The child is behaving well.
He's treating his girlfriend well.

Included in this category of verbs with multiple meanings are most of the sensory verbs. These fall into three classes: (Palmer, 1974)

l	ll	lll
smell	smell	smell
taste	taste	taste
feel	feel	feel
see	(look)	(look at)
hear	(sound)	(listen to)

Class I has a transitive, stative meaning "to perceive a sensation." Class ll has an intransitive meaning of "to produce a sensation." Class lll possesses a transitive, non-stative meaning of "to act to acquire a sensation."

1. I smell the roses.

ll. The flowers smell nice.

lll. I'm smelling the roses to see if they're real.

Difficulty and confusion arise from the fact that not only are there contrasts of duration and emphasis signaled by the choice of the simple present or the present progressive forms, but also differences of meaning in cases where there are non-stative homonyms.

I *imagine* he'll come. 'think' (Palmer, 1974:76)
You*'re imagining* things. 'having hallucinations' (lbid.)
I *think* he'll come. 'believe' (lbid.)
I*'m thinking* about it. 'pondering or planning' (lbid.)

The stative versions usually require the simple form except under the aforementioned conditions (emphasis on temporariness, or on increase and decrease). The non-stative homonym, however, takes the progressive to indicate 'action in progress' or 'limited duration', and the simple tense to indicate something relatively permanent or habitual, in the

same manner as do other non-stative verbs. Since the use of the present progressive is ra-
ther rare with [true stative] verbs, most instances of the present progressive would in-
dicate a non-stative meaning.

We have a car. (have=possession, a stative meaning)
We are having a party. (having=giving or putting on, a non-stative meaning)

2. Non-Stative Verbs and the Simple Present. With regard to non-stative verbs, a very
common, simplified view of the contrasting durational aspects of the simple present and
present progressive tenses has been to regard the simple present as describing 'habitual
action', and the present progressive as describing 'something in progress', 'right now'.
This explanation is classically typical of the majority of ESL texts and review. While
this type of simplification is extemely useful in teaching beginning classes, it is indeed an
oversimplification.

In actual speech, both of these tenses are used to refer to actions in the past, in the
present and in the future. This is especially true of conversational English.

The simple present tense has sometimes been considered to be 'timeless' or 'neutral'
in aspect (Hatcher, 1951:259; Greeley, 1973:31). This quality of timelessness seems to
suggest a relative permanence, barring some unforeseeable change in circumstances
(Greeley 1973:31). For example, a career man who considers his position stable would be
more likely to say,

I work for a law corporation.

while a student who has a non-prestigious job that he does not consider permanent might
be more likely to say,

I'm working in the cafeteria.

Unfortunately, such considerations of duration are dependent upon the individual's
subjective perceptions and frame of reference; what Hatcher (1951:270) terms the speaker's
"criterion of psychological nuances." This leaves a great deal of flexibility in the language.
However, it seems clear that a number of the usages of the simple present tense denote
actions of long-term and/or relatively permanent nature. The following paragraphs list
the types of usages of the simple present which have been noted in traditional grammars.

(1) A verb which describes a type of career of trade can usually be used in the simple
present. It is unlikely to be used when a job is considered temporary, however.

He works for the city.
I teach English.
I work for ACE TEMPORARY CAREERS.
        (but)
I'm working on an assignment in Century City.

(2) The simple present is typically used in statements describing a characteristic attribute of a subject.

> He writes well.
> He plays the piano badly.

(3) A similar usage is the use of the simple present to state what have traditionally been termed 'eternal' or 'general truths'. These commonly include the laws of nature and physics and immutable facts.

> Water flows downhill.
> Water boils at 212 degrees F.
> Los Angeles is on the Pacific Ocean.

These first three categories seem to lie along a continuum. They all demonstrate a degree of what Greeley (1973:33) terms "permanent truth value." Jespersen (1964:238) has also noted that sentences such as these "show a gradual transition from what is more or less momentary to 'eternal truths' "or what are supposed to be such.

Typically, these statements are generic or inductive in nature, rather than descriptive. Note the difference between the following:

> Water flows downhill.
> Water boils at high temperatures.
>
> vs.
>
> Look! Water is flowing over the dam.
> The water is boiling now.

The conditions in Usages (1) and (2) are considered relatively permanent until a time when an unforeseen incident might challenge their validity. These lie at the lower end of a continuum of strength of validity, while general truths, which are rather less subject to outside influences and hence commonly withstand change, lie at the higher end of the continuum.

(4) The simple present is also used with certain adverbials (everyday, usually, rarely, whenever, etc.) to describe habitual activities.No time limit having been stated, these may take place repeatedly (or in the case of negative adverbials, customarily do not take place) over time and are considered permanent until something occurs to change their validity.

> John usually plays golf on Saturday.
> I read the morning paper on the bus.
> I rarely watch t.v.

The adverbial need not be explicitly stated in the sentence, itself, but may be present in earlier context or simply within the general context of human knowledge. For example:

JoAnne pays her rent on time. (Greeley, 1973:34)

Since it is common knowledge that rent needs to be paid repeatedly and regularly (usually once a month), we can impute a sense of habituality from this statement.

The simple present also possesses a number of specialized usages. Some of these could be considered stylistic variations, but many of them are not uncommon in everyday life and speech. These are elaborated on in the following paragraphs.

(5) Commentaries such as sports broadcasts and live news coverage are typically delivered using the simple present. It functions to neutrally report what is happening and to advance the action rather than to describe it.

> The pitcher throws the ball--Smith swings--
> He misses it. . .

(6) Demonstrations, too, make use of the simple present to report what is being done. The emphasis is on information transfer, rather than description or considerations of duration or limitation.

> I place the rabbit in the box and close the lid.
> I take three eggs and beat them . . .
> Then I add sugar . . .   (Palmer, 1974:61)

(7) Stage directions typically use the simple present.

> John enters through the door, stage left. (Ibid.)

(8) It is also used for instructions.

> First, you fill out this form. Then you go see
> Mr. Green in the personnel office.

(9) Historical present may be considered a stylistic variation combining the simple present and past tenses to relate events in the past. Jespersen (1964) notes that the alternation of the present and preterit tenses functions to strengthen and maintain the past time reference.

> He came to see me yesterday. He sits down in that chair by the window and sighs.
> So I ask him what's wrong. He says his wife has left him and then he begins to cry.

(10) Present descriptive narrative combines the use of both the simple present and the present progressive.

> I [am sitting] at a corner table in a restaurant. A middle-aged man and woman [are
> sitting] at a table next to me. The woman [is drinking] coffee and [talking] to the man
> . . . The man [says] something to the woman. She [looks] displeased, but [nods] her

head. Now, they [get up]. They [walk] toward the door . . . The waitress [runs] after them and says, "Oh, sir, sir, here [is] your check. (Danielson and Hayden, 1973:83)

The simple present tense advances the action, while the progressive serves a descriptive function and sets the scene in our imagination.

Usages (5)–(10) seem to be related in that they concentrate on information transfer. Palmer (1974:60–62) observes that the unmodified (non-habitual) simple present only *re ports* on activity. These last five usages seem to exemplify this; what is important is the exchange of information and advancing the action, not descriptive niceties. More important than an aesthetic description is 'what happens next'.

Usage number (10), that is, descriptive narrative, is probably the most complex and confusing usage because there are a number of factors involved. In addition to the contrast presented by verbs of a 'commentarian' nature vs. usages intended to advance the action, there is also an interaction between tense and the nature of the verb in question. The present progressive is used when what is described is in progress over a period of time (i.e., an incompleted action). This contrasts with the simple present which is use to report the entire act (completed action). This becomes an important factor in interpreting certain verbs. Bull (1971:44–47) attributed a cyclical/non-cyclical nature to verbs. Cyclical verbs are those, which by nature of their definition advance to termination almost instantly and, hence, do not lend themselves well to being described 'in progress' or unterminated. Since the duration expressed by verbs of a cyclical nature is so short as to be instantaneous, an iterative meaning is attached to these verbs when they appear in a progressive form.

He nods. (One short action, quickly completed)
He is nodding. (Repeated action)

I saw him nod.
I saw him nodding.

These types of verbs naturally lend themselves well to the analysis of 'descriptive' goals vs. goals of 'advancing the action'. By nature having a duration too short to be considered of a descriptive nature, their occurance in the progressive form takes on another meaning which can be descriptive, i.e., repeated action.

Additional support for the analysis of the simple exemplifying 'reportive aims' comes from an analogy of this goal with the goals of 'private verbs' (Palmer, 1974:71). This is a sub-class of stative verbs denoting sensations that the speaker alone is aware of. As stative verbs they are used customarily in the simple present tense *to report* to the hearer the mental activities or sensations experienced by the speaker. "Just as the radio commentator uses the non-progressive because his aim is merely to report, so too the person who

reports on his own mental activities or sensations is simply reporting and so uses the non-progressive form" (Palmer, 1974:72). Even in TV and in public demonstrations, although the audience may observe what is happening with their own eyes, the speaker is simply reporting what is happening to ensure that nothing is missed or misunderstood. His aim is not to be descriptive of to set the scene.

(11) Performative verbs (pronouncing and naming) are verbs that by definition are themselves part of the activity they report (Palmer, 1974: 61; Greeley, 1973:37).

> I pronounce you man and wife. (Greeley, lbid.;)
>> (Palmer, lbid.)
> I christen this ship . . . (Greeley, lbid.)
> I declare the meeting closed. (Palmer, lbid.)

The usage of the simple present contrasts with the use of the progressive. The simple is used in actually performing the act, while the progressive is used when talking about the act that either has been, or is to be, performed.

> I promise to go. (i.e., the act is being performed)
> I am promising to go. (The promise has been, or will be made and the speaker is telling someone about it.)

It is still difficult to categorize many usages that occur in normal speech. Palmer (1974: 61) cites a number of examples:

> He *talks* like an expert.
> You said something different a few minutes ago. Why *do* you *say* this now?
> Why *do* you *cut* it like that?

These actions are occurring right now and should exhibit a progressive tense. Palmer's only possible explanation for this phenomenon is that all of these utterances contain adverbials of manner or cause, and hence, the foci of these sentences are these adverbials, not their durative potentials. Therefore, we may use the more 'neutral' simple present rather than the present progressive. The simple present essentially seems to express objectivity and factualness in both its reportive and permanent usages.

Another usage of the simple present, which we have not yet touched upon, is one which receives little emphasis in most ESL texts. So far, we have used the simple present in present, past, and in timeless contexts, but it is also used to indicate the future when it occurs in a context where there is either an explicit or a contextual future adverbial.

> I leave for next month.
> I start getting social security when I retire.

The usage of the simple present for future represents the future as a fact which will

be definitely realized (Jespersen 1956:22; Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973:49). There is a strong degree of certainty that the projected future action will occur and that it is, perhaps, a fixed or scheduled arrangement not easily changed. If a young man were drafted into the military, it is likely he would say:

I leave for * * * * next month.

He could also say:

I'm leaving for * * * * next month.

The 'simple present future' is not a requisite usage; in fact, because of its suggestion of inflexibility, it has a much more restricted and limited usage potential than other future usages. It intimates that everything is already set up and will not, or cannot, be easily changed. This contrasts to the usages of the present progressive and BE GOING TO, which have been characterized as showing future planned actions. These usages are more casual when contrasted with the inevitability embodied in the simple present future usage. Note that the simple present cannot be used for future where there is a substantial degree of uncertain.

I'm seeing the doctor next week if he can work me in.
* I see the doctor next week if he can work me in.

3. Non-Stative Verbs and the Usages of the Present Progressive. The present progressive is used to connote a number of different meanings and nuances.

It is most commonly used to indicate an action in progress at the moment of speaking.

She can't come to the phone because she's eating dinner.
Please answer the phone. I'm taking a bath.

The action may be continuous as in the example above, or it may be iterative when used with cyclical verbs.

She's blinking.
He's kicking the ball.   (repeated actions)

The present progressive may also be used to indicate actions taking place over a period of time considered abstractly by the speaker as 'now', (recently, currently, these days, this year, etc.) These actions need not be in progress at the moment of speaking, nor need they be marked by an explicit adverbial (i.e. defined here as an adverbial in the immediate sentence.

I'm working at the hospital these days.
I'm taking an English class 3 days a week.

Usages of this type have sometimes been termed 'expanded present' (Jespersen, 1964). They

strongly imply incompleted action by nature of their progressive aspects. This connotation of incompleteness is characteristic of the progressive in other tenses as well.

> He was eating my chocolates (but I stopped him).
>
> He has been eating my chocolates (but there are some left). (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1973:46)

Some grammarians have attributed a temporary quality to the progressive (Joos, 1964: 107); others in a similar vein have termed it as demonstrating 'limited duration' (Palmer, 1974:68; Twadell, 1960:7). A by-product, you might say, of 'limited duration' is the connotation of change (Danielson and Hayden, 1974), or action that is out of the ordinary. These inferences are usually derived from the adverbials or other contextual elements.

> We're eating more meat since the war. (Palmer, 1974:69)
>
> I'm taking the bus while my car's in the shop.
>
> I used to live in L.A., but now I'm living in N.Y.

This becomes especially evident with adverbials of increase or decrease which by their very nature denote change. As mentioned earlier, this idea of change is so strong that it may also extend to the normally, non-progressive stative verbs.

> I'm getting fatter every day.
>
> More and more people are moving here. (non-stative)
>
> She's looking better every day.
>
> I'm feeling better since my operation. (stative)

The present progressive also has some rather less commonly discussed manifestations. One rarely mentioned in the ESL classroom is the usage of the present progressive to denote sporadic repitition.

> She's always breaking things.
>
> The car is always breaking down. (Palmer, 1974:69)

Note the implication that this is not a usual happening, but rather happens irregularly. Regularity is still best expressed by the simple tense.

> The car always breaks down when I start for home. (Ibid.)

Another little-emphasized usage is the habitual present progressive. This occurs with an explicit adverbial and may either be continuous or sporadic. Probably, these durational meanings depend on the nature of the verb itself and on other elements in context.

> He's always studying.
>
> She's forever writing letters.
>
> Basketball players are always sweating.

The usage of the present progressive as opposed to the 'neutral' simple present probably adds an element of personal judgement or experience on the part of the speaker.

He's always studying whenever I see him.

This possibility was first raised in a discussion with a friend but was later substantiated (although very sketchily) by references in the literature.

"It [sc. the progressive] imparts a subjective element to the speaker's statement; it is expressive of man's emotional side, or one's personal involvement; it is affective, warm and human." (Storms, 1964:61 as quoted in Macaulay, 1971:47)

The progressive is used

"to give an emotional coloring to the sentence, e.g., to express annoyance, irritation, impatience, indignation, surprise . . . etc." (Kruisinga ε Erades, 1953: 356)

A subcategory of this usage is the pejorative present progressive used with an adverial expressing habituality.

He's always feeding his face.
That brat is always making a nuisance of himself.
He's forever making excuses for himself.

However, a great deal of the emotional, i.e., subjective quality, is in fact imparted by the tone of voice, so the pejorative quality may actually be more contextual and/or indicated by paralinguistic features such as tone of voice, rather than by actual lexical and grammatical content. This suggests that the usage is basically subjective and emotional, rather than pejorative. Note the possible interpretations of the same statement.

"He's always studying, the bore," she sniffed.
"He's always studying." she smiled indulgently.
"He's always studying," she said with admiration.

The possibility that the habitual present progressive arises because the act is repeatedly observed in progress on the occasions they are noted by the speaker is in keeping with Jespersen's (1966) analysis of the progressive as a "frame" around another occurance, in this case the speaker's observations.

He's reading whenever I see him. (Palmer, 1974:58)

Hatcher (1951) suggests that the 'ing' option is often used to "precipitate us into the midst of an activity" and in this way it is a more emotive, dramatic, involvement-oriented usage than the simple. The usage of the progressive stresses involvement of the speaker. It is probably for this reason that the simple is more appropriate in formal writing or on serious occasions, since American style prefers objectivism in these registers. The progressive

remains more appropriate for conversational or informal register when the context does not require its usage obligatorily.

There is a lot of overlap in usages in contexts where there is nothing to make one usage obligatory. Much seems to be determined by Hatcher's "criterion of psychological nuance" (Ibid.). Although it is beyond the time and scope limitations of this study, it is hoped that this may someday be explained by a generative approach analyzing the interactions of the type of verb, its tense, and its interactions with other elements in the context.

B. Some Theoretical Considerations Concerning Context

In the last section we undertook to describe the various usages of the simple present and the present progressive tenses, their meanings and the contexts in which they appear. In this section, however, we will depart from the traditional descriptive grammars and briefly discuss some of the theories which have been formulated in an effort to understand and categorize the various usages, and to account for the restrictions on them in certain contexts.

Macaulay (1971) provides an enlightening discussion and his own analysis of the simple/progressive contrast in his doctoral dissertation. A grammarian embracing a generative approach to the problem, he closely concerns himself with meaning in addition to form. He uses the Bloomfieldian definition of these:
Bloomfieldian definitions of these:

> 'The vocal features common to same or partly same utterances are *forms;* the corresponding stimulus reaction features are *meanings.* Thus, form is a recurrent vocal feature which has meaning, and a meaning is a recurrent stimulus-reaction feature which corresponds to form. (Bloomfield, 1926:155)

He explicitly challenges, however, the Bloomfieldian assumption that:

> "Every utterance is made up wholly of forms." (Ibid.)

He seeks to show (with some degree of success) that there is a consistent rationale behind the usages of the simple present and present progressive. According to Macaulay, the surface meaning arises from the interdependence of a given form with the other forms surrounding it in a given context. This idea is basic to this study since we assume that meaning depends not on form alone, but also on context. We cannot within the scope of this study ascertain precisely what meaning students attribute to given usages; we can however make a start by determining what forms they recognize in given contexts.

Since the simple has always been considered the base form and the progressive, a variation, Macaulay begins with a list of the traditional characterizations of the meanings of the progressive form (1971:46–47).

a. "the essential meaning of the progressive form is duration." (Curme, 1913:172)

b. "attention or interest are necessary conditions for the use of the progressive form." (Van der Laan, 1922:23)

c. "the progressive is the norm for all verbs that describe overt or developing activity or both." (Hatcher, 1951:279)

d. "The grammatical meaning of *be* or *ing* is . . . 'limited duration'." (Twadell, 1960:7)

e. "[the progressive] is preferres where the action, as such, is to be emphasized." (Akerlund, 1911:2)

f. "the expanded [progressive] form tends also to draw attention to and describe the doer of the action, as it were, through the activity he is performing." (Charleston, 1960:225)

g. "I call it the temporary aspect. . . The meaning of our temporary aspet is *limited duration*." (Joos, 1964:107, 113)

h. "in general, we may point to duration as the feature marked by the progressive." (almer, 1965:78)

i. "we can now define the basic meaning of the progressive as *heightened temporary relevance*." (Van Ek, 1969:585)

j. "it [the progressive] imparts a subjective element to the speaker's statements; it is expressive of man's emotional side, of one's personal involvement, it is affective, warm is expressive of man's emotional side, of one's personal involvement, it is affective, warm and human." (Storms, 1964:61)

For the most part, the differences in the characterizations of the progressive we have quoted are slight. Macaulay notes that most of them are consistent with the traditional focus on notions of "actions" and "processes"; but the heterogeneity of the characterizations suggest to him that a broader generalization is being missed. A pitfall to be avoided, in his opinion, is to try and designate one of the meanings or usages as the 'most fundamental' and then go on and try to explain the other meanings in terms of this most fundamental meaning. In other words, it is a mistake to try and define one or more usages in terms of yet another usage. There must be some quality that is basic to all of these.

Macaulay espouses and builds on a characterization of the simple/progressive contrast made by Hirtle (1967:25–27). Hirtle perceives the contrast of the simple and the progressive in terms of the difference between "state" and "action." He defines a state as "something which involves no material change" and an action as something suggesting "some change, some development." Since most actions require the passage of a certain time span to be complete, they can be perceived either in terms of parts or as a whole. However, "a state is necessarily seen as a whole." He continues:

The opposition between simple and progressive is therefore basically one between whole and part. An event whose material significate strikes the mind as being

complete, as permitting of no further addition, will be expressed by the simple form. One which gives the impression of lacking something, of leaving room for something to come ,will be expressed by the progressive. In grammatical terms, the opposition can be stated thus: the simple form is *perfective,* the progressive form is *imperfective.* . . Thus the progressive is limited to the expression of imperfective actions; the simple can express either a perfective action or a state. (Hirtle, 1967:26–27)

This view, however, requires some adjustment in our grammar with regard to HAVE + EN, traditionally referred to as the perfective tense. Following Joos (1964) and Trager and Smith (1951:78), Macaulay defines aspect as ± PERFECTIVE and renames HAVEF + EN, PHASE. Hence we have the Auxiliary Expansion Rule:

    AUX→TENSE   (MODAL)   PHASE   ASPECT   (have + en)   (be + ing)

and as an expansion of ASPECT:

    ASPECT→(± PERFECTIVE).

Some support for this anlysis can be found when we analyze what happens in terms of perfectivity (completeness) in the following sentences:

    She has read *War and Peace.*

    She has been reading *War and Peace.*

You will note that the idea of completed action is broken in the second sentence, which includes the ING element, in spite of the so-called 'present perfect progressive' tense. The HAVE + EN element in the perfect tenses actually serves to indicate time reference, but the element of completeness of action is indicated by the presence or absence of the progressive element.

Macaulay (1971) continues and asserts that the use of the simple present with non-stative verbs is in many ways more similar to the assertion of a state than it is to an action by virtue of its emphasis on permanence.

Using this tree and the expansion rules we just stated,

    John   know   the answer

    The servant   open   the· door

we can derive the sentences:

> The servant opens the door. (Open = − STATIVE)
> John knows the answer. (Know = + STATIVE)

Both verbs here describe something characteristically true. In these sentences, "opens" presents little contrast to "knows" regardless of the stative/non-stative contrast of the base verbs by virture of the emphasis on this being a relatively normal, permanent condition. This is quite in keeping with the assertions in the last sections that the simple denotes actions considered permanent and unchanging. This can easily be likened by analogy to the changeless nature of a state.

The reason that stative verbs are typically incompatible with the progressive is that states are by nature perfective only. All verbs occurring in the simple are, in a sense, "stative" in that particular usage. The peculiar nature of statve verbs lies in the fact that they *cannot* become imperfective in normal circumstances.

The true nature of stative verbs has always presented a problem for linguists and grammarians. Macaulay's analysis (1971) of them differs from most in that it enters on the degree of tolerance to the qualities of temporariness and permanence inherent in the base verb. Read the following examples and note how Macaulay's analysis differs from more traditional analyses. (For a goood summary of the discussions found in the literature on the nature of stativity, See Macaulay (1971:24-33).)

> a. The book is lying on the table.
> b. Maurice is sitting in the bar.(lbid.:54)
> c. London lies on the Thames.
> d. Jeremy Bentham sits in a glass case in the London School of Economics.

There is no action embodied in either of the verbs, 'SIT' or 'LIE'. It would seem logical to conclude that they are by nature stative verbs. Yet, they are not. Although (a), (c) and (d) are characterized by the absence of an agent (See Fillmore's characterization of stative verbs [1968]), they are not stative. Neither do they pass all of Lakoff's tests for determining ± stativity (1966). The chief feature that changes with the use of the simple or the progressive here, according to Macauley, is the quality of permanence. Examples (a) and (b) describe temporary conditions, while (c) and (d) denote rather permanent situations which we do not expect to undergo change in the near future barring unforeseen changes in circumstance. There seems to be a strong case for the simple/progressive contrast actually embodying a PERFECTIVE/IMPERFECTIVE contrast. Stative verbs occur only in the simple under normal circumstances either because they exemplify permanent conditions or because changes in state cannot be readily perceived (e.g. as in sensory verbs of perception). The change is not "overt" (Twadell:1960). To try to define stativity in terms of motion or agency alone still leaves us with many counterexamples. Examining this pro-

blem in terms of perfectivity seems to make many examples more readily interpretable and comprehensible.

Another similar conclusion about the nature of the simple/progressive contrast can be found in Kirsner and Thompson (1974). In their paper, "The Role of Pragmatic Inference in Semantics: A study of Sensory Verb Complements in English," they take a look at the role of context in assigning meaning to sensory verb complements. They characterize the 'plain' (simple) and 'ing' forms as:

Plain = bounded in time, and lng = not bounded in time.

Note the contrast between:

"I saw her drown,"

and   (lbid.,:25)

"I saw her drowning."

In the first example using the simple verb, the action is viewed as a whole (completed) action, bounded in time. In the second, the action is incomplete (imperfective) and is in progress at the time of the sensory perception.

Thompson and Kirsner note that a number of different contrasting meanings can be inferred from the simple/progressive complement depending on the nature of the verb and the context, but conclude that these meanings represent a pragmatic interpretation taken from the base meaning of the form and what the person perceiving the message knows about the context and the situation. This offers further support for our previous assumption that meaning does, in fact, depend more heavily on context than has been formally recognized.

So far we have focused intensively on the nature of the verb, itself. We have observed that certain verbs are incompatable with certain tense usages (e.g., the progressive with stative verbs). We have also noted that the cyclical/non-cyclical nature of the verb causes certain meanings to be attached to particular usages (e.g., iterativity when the progressive occurs with cyclical verbs). We will now focus on the interactions between the verb form and other elements in context.

A particularly important interaction appears to occur between the verb form, the semantic nature of the verb, itself, and the adverbials. By advervials, here, we include not only explicit adverbial elements in the immediate sentence, but also those running throughout the context, and those which are not stated, but which can be inferred within the context of human knowledge and expectations.

Palmer (1974:58) noted that:

"the future and habitual uses are normally marked by adverbials (tomorrow, next week, and always, whenever. . .) while the basic use is not marked this way."

However, he stopped there and did not go on to draw the conclusion that the meanings of

habituality and future are derived from the interaction of the tense and the adverbial and are not inherently meanings embodied in the verb tense alone.

One grammarian who tried to analyze the different meanings that could be attributed to a given tense form was Twadell (1960). Twadell applied the term' zero modification' to the base verb; that is, the form that conveys the semantic context of the lexical item. It is compatible with any chronological time signaled either by adverbial markers or by context. He then went on to posit three modifications:

  l. ed, the past modification;
  ll. have + participle, the perfect; and
  lll. be + ing, the progressive.

He also posits five classes of lexical verbs:

  (1) Neutral with respect to duration or repitition;
  (2) Durational, with possible limitation;
  (3) Non-durational, with possible repetition;
  (4) Non-durational, not subject to repetition in some contexts; and
  (5) Durational, not normally subject to repetition.

Using these classifications and modifications as a base, he follows with a discussion of the interplay between them. Unfortunately, however, the presentation contains few examples and is difficult and clumsy to evaluate.

Another similar, but more comprehensive attempt was made by William Diver (1963), who attempted to isolate the elements of the verb system and to enumerate the various possible combinations and the meanings engendered by each combination. He includes not only verbs and various temporal adverbial factors, but also modals and auxiliaries. However, like Twadell's, his results are very abstruse and complicated to work with.

By far, the most comprehensive and useful work that has been seen to date is Crystal's analysis (1966) of the co-occurances of tense form and temporal adverbials. Crystal sets out to clarify and chart the potential combinations possible and determine the meanings that may be attributed to a given combination. He expresses the hope that a recognition of the formal characteristics of verb tense and adverbial co-occurance will lead to clearer, more precise teaching methods and offset the unwelcome state of confusion in the teaching field, which relies heavily on traditional transparent terms. He states:

> Labels such as 'future' or 'habitual', then, should not be given to the verb form alone, but to the combination of the two forms, verb and adverbial, the adverbial reinforcing the verb's potential for referring in the general direction of a particular temporal aspect, and specifying this aspect further. (Crystal, 1966:6)

In addition to sources already in the literature (Jespersen, 1933; Jacobson, 1964; A.

Zandvoort, 1957; Scheurweghs, 1959; the Tokyo Department of Education Report on
English Co-locations, 1933 [verbs and adverbials]), he also examined a corpus of spoken
and written English. *

He noted three main kinds of adverbial specifications:

    l. adverbial in the same clause;
    ll. adverbial in a subordinant clause; and
    lll. adverbial in a removed context.

To these he added a fourth kind of adverbial specification involving temporal conjunc-
tions where the dependent clause, itself, is functioning as an adverbial expression. In the
materials examined, he noted that approximatly 70% of the usages looked at required ex-
plicit adverbial specification of some kind.

Crystal undertakes three tasks in his paper: He first makes a notational classification of
the temporal adverbials; then, taking adverbials as a base, he notes the formal pattens of
co-occurance and the restrictions on such with certain tense forms; finally, he takes the
tense forms as a base and correlates them with each of the classes of adverbials deter-
mining the range of verbal (verb) temporal reference and distinguishing the different
'meanings' of English tense forms in various adverbial contexts (including 'zero modi-
fication').

Unfortunately for this study, Crystal did not find it necessary or feasible to distinguish
between the simple and progressive forms. He simply states that:

> "with certain co-occurances there is a definite tendency for one or the other [the sim-
> ple of the progressive] to be used, and in one case ('timeless' use of the present) the
> simple form is obligatory."

He goes on to note that:

> "for the present this issue [simple vs. progressive] has been left as a 'loose end' which
> obviously needs further study. It would appear that there are verb classes which have
> a certain time-relationship 'built in', which in the context of adverbial specification
> forces co-occurance with progressive rather than simple or vice versa."

Limited by the scope of his study, Crystal only does the correlations for six verb classes.
These are as follows:

    1. present (LV-; be LV-ing);
    2. preterite (LV-ed; was LV-ing):
    3. perfect (have LV-ed; have been LV-ing);
    4. pluperfect (had LV-ed; had been LV-ing);
    5. conditional (would LV-; would be LV-ing); and

---

* British Standard English.

6. future (will LV-; will be LV-ing).

He then describes the resultant meaning when each of tense verb cases is paired with a particular category or sub-category of adverbial. Take, for example, the adverbial sub-category, B-1. Category B includes adverbials that answer the question "HOW LONG?" or express "RESTRICTED DURATION." Subcategory 1 is where the "LIMITS OF DURATION" are EXPLICIT OR KNOWN: all day(s), (for) a day. . . or so/two, all (the day . . . long, all (the) year round, . . . etc." Crystal then lists the meanings that can occur when adverbials from this sub-category co-occur with each for the six verb classes. The interactions produce a variety of meanings. While some adverbials may combine with all tenses, others have a more limited potentiality for co-occurance. Note that a given adverbial may combine with more than one tense; however, there is often a change in meaning produced by the change in co-occurance.

C. Closing Comments

The purpose of this survey has been to describe the usages of the simple present and present progressive which have been isolated and noted, and to give the reader an idea of the complexity involved. It has clarified be importance of context in determining meaning and pointed out that a given form (tense) may possess more than one meaning dependent on its interaction with the lexical nature of the verb and with other elements in context. It points out that oftentimes there is not an obligatory form required, and that the form chosen expresses a psychological nuance favored consciously or unconsciously by the speaker. In the following section, categories of usage selected for testing will be discussed.

IV. Selection of Usages for the Elicitation Instrument
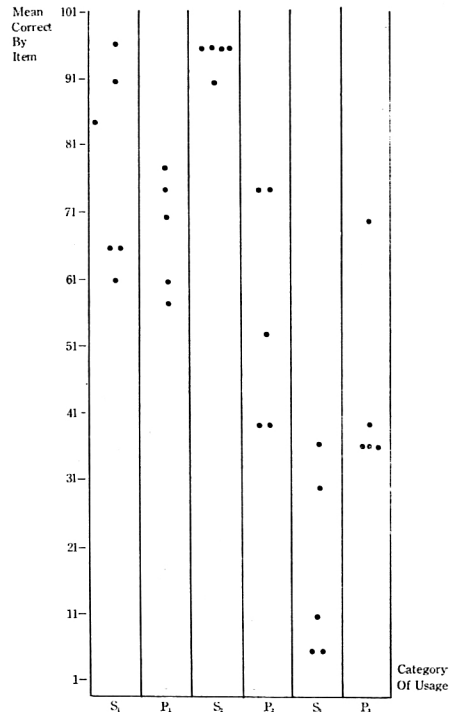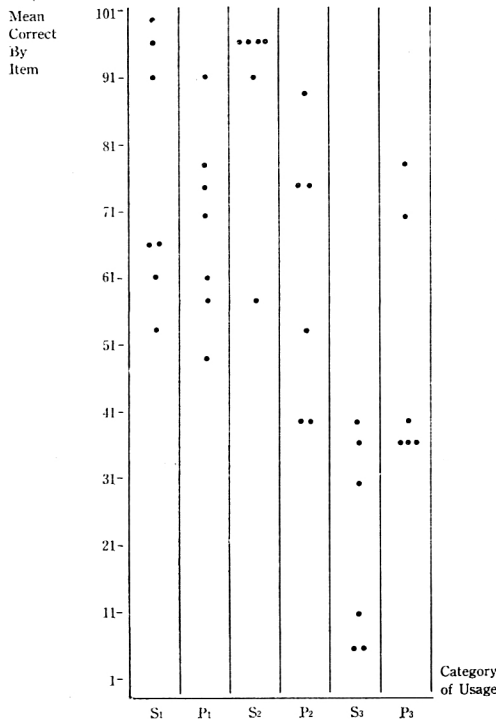
A. The Bases for Selection

Due to limitations of size and scope, it was not possible to test for all the usages that were described in the Survey of the Literature. The usages were selected on the bases of several things. First of all was the possibility of isolating the usage and constructing contexts for it. Some usages come close to being stylistic variation, e.g., historical present, and these would be very difficult to do. Secondly, the selection was influenced by the results of an initial pilot study undertaken to give some indication whether the idea of a distribution of errors across categories had any validity. Thirdly, the selection was influenced by subjective feelings relating to classroom experiences on the part of the author.

Since the initial pilot study results were most influential in the decision to go on with this study and in the selection of the usages tested for in this study, the format of the pilot and its results will be discussed in this section. The pilot study was done before the Survey

of the Literature had been completed, and so the catagories of usage are much broader
than those used in this study. Three of the usages required the present progressive verb
form (Pn) and three required the simple present verb form (Sn). The categories were as
follows in the pilot study:

S₁ the requisite use of the simple with stative verbs under normal circumstances;

    I am a student.

    * I am being a student.

P₁ the use of the progressive with non-stative homonyms when the emphasis is on 'right
now' or on 'limited duration';

    He is being good. (being = behaving)

    We are having dinner. (having = eating)

S the use of the simple with non-stative verbs to denote something habitual or relatively
permanent;

    I rarely eat meat.

    I always go to church.

P₂ the use of the progressive with non-stative verbs when the emphasis is on 'action in
progress' or 'limited duration';

    I'm taking a shower. Please answer the door.

    I'm taking a class this quarter.

S₃ The use of the simple with adverbials of the future to denote future actions already
arranged or scheduled;

    My brother leaves for Viet-Nam next month.

    My tour departs tomorrow.

P₃ and lastly, the use of the progressive with adverbials of the future to denote casually
planned future action.

    I'm going to Europe next summer.

    He's coming tomorrow.

The pilot test was then given to UCLA students studying ESL at the advanced level.
Twenty-six responses were received. There were six to seven items in each category. The
results are depicted in Table A. The verticle axis represents the percentage of students who
got the item right. The higher the item scored on the vertical axis, the easier the item.
On the average, scores on individual items did not correlate highly with scores on the
test as a whole. However, there were typically strong correlations between scores on in-
dividual items and scores on the category to which they belonged. This indicates that
doing well on items in one category does not suggest that students would do well in other
categories even though the same structure is being used (in a difference function, how-

TABLE A ITEM DIFFICULTY
BY CATEGORY

TABLE B ITEM DIFFICULTY
BY CATEGORY HAVING
ELIMINATED THE OUT LIERS

* The higher the score on the verticle axis, the easier the item. This is reflected by the % of students who evaluated the answer correctly.

TABLE C MEAN PROPORTION OF CORRECT RESPONSES BY CATEGORY

CATEGORY	MEAN PROPORTION CORRECT
S_1	75.9%
P_1	68.4%
S_2	88.5%
P_2	60.8%
S_3	20.2%
P_3	48.5%

ever). The mean proportion of correct scores by category is shown in Table C.

In spite of the broadness of the categories used in the initial pilot and the smallness of the sample, some patterns of competency began to emerge. These were more noticeable when the outliers were eliminated. Table B shows the items again using the five most consistent items from each category.

The highest, most consistent scores were achieved in the S_2 category (the simple with

TABLE D CORRECLATION OF ITEMS TO TOTAL SCORE VS INTRACATEGORY CONSISTENCY

CATEGORY	r(item-total)	r(item-scale)
S_1	.44	.57
	.29	.67
The Simple with	.04	.66
Stative Verbs:	.00	.00
	.21	.70
	.58	.60
	.51	.80
P_1	—.04	.56
	.59	.62
The Progressive with	.29	.66
Non-Stative Homonyms:	.51	.70
	.52	.91
	.22	.31
	.19	.68
S_2	—.06	.53
	.44	.81
The Simple with	.44	.81
Non-Stative Verbs:	.02	.91
	.50	.48
	.12	.48
	.25	.71
P_2	.45	.75
The Progressive with	.22	.46
Non-Stative Verbs	.35	.65
	.51	.66
	.39	.71

habitual or permanent contexts). The mean score was 88.5%. Students clearly do well on the items exemplifying this usage.

The lowest scores were in the S_3 and P_3 categories (future usages). The use of the simple for future did especially poorly. The results seem to indicate that students experience many reservations and a great deal of confusion about these usages. The write-in answers here provided a great deal of information about student perceptions of the future. Almost without exception, students write in answers using either 'will' or 'be going to'. The mean score for the 'simple present future' category (S_3) was 20.2%. Students did somewhat better with the more common 'present progressive future.' The mean score here was 48.5%.

The mean scores for items in categories S_1 and P_1 (the simple present with stative verbs

Table D (continued)

Category	r(item-total)	r(item-scale)
S₃	.26	.64
	.35	.74
The Simple	.59	.64
Present Future:	—.12	.58
	—.12	.58
	.65	.72
P₃	.44	.69
	.53	.79
The Present	.11	.73
Progressive Future:	.62	.82
	.53	.76
	.54	.74

The correlation of item-total is a correlation of the scores on individual items to the scores on the test as a whole. The correlation of item-scale is the correlation of the items to other items in the same subscale (category). The higher scores on the item-scale correlation suggests intracategory consistency.

and the present progressive with non-stative homonyms) display a wide distribution. This may indicate that students are more familiar with certain stative verbs and their non-stative usages. The data is not conclusive. It seems probable that certain stative verbs are commonly learned by rote and their non-stative usages as idioms. This ecomes a problem more similar to vocabulary and idiom acquisition since there is no consistent way to type a stative verb, lacking native speaker intuition. The students cannot be given a rule which will tell them consistently which are stative verbs. These observations are inkeeping with the wide deviations shown by student scores on these categories, and also by the deviations in recognition response by item.

The results of the P₂ category (action in progress or limited duration) also had rather inconclusive results. The clustering pattern was quite diffuse. However, the author suspects the reason for this was that the use of the present progressive is multifunctional and that this broad category actually encompasses several usages which present varying difficulty to the student. It was the results of this category that prompted a decision to concentrate heavily on the usages of the progressive and the different contexts in which it is found for the final study.

The pilot was extremely useful in that it pointed out difficulties in constructing this type of test, and also certain difficulties exhibited by students. Formost were student difficulties in reading and in adverbial recognition. Exemplifying problems with adverbial recognition was an item which used the adverbial phrase "on the first of the month" in a future context. Native speakers who had been used for item validation unanimously recognized the

usage in context as a future reference. Many foreign students, however, failed to do so and
responded with a past verb which conformed with a past verb in the previous sentence. This
served to point out that adverbials without a fixed time reference(this type of adverbial
derives its time reference from interaction with other elements in the context) may present
a problem, and that lowered competency scores reflect not problems with tense usage, but
rather problems with adverbial recognition. In the following examples, note how the con-
text and common knowledge determine the time references for the adverbial.

> I pay my rent on *the first of the month*. (habitual)
>
> I just got paid on *the first of the month,* but I'm already broke. (past)
>
> My new apartment should be ready soon, so I'm planning on moving the *first of the
> month*. (future)

knowledge of the context gives the adverbial its respective meanings in the above sen-
tences. It lends tself to given meanings by interacting with the context.

Even where there was an explicit adverbial with a definite time reference, students some-
times exhibited difficulty. This was particulary true when the adverbial was not in the
immediate sentence. This might possibly indicate reading or short-term memory difficulties
of some sort where the student reads word by word and sentence by sentence without being
able to relate their meanings to each other. Here, once again, lowered performance reflects
not competency with tenses, but skill deficiencies of another sort.

B. Usages (Functions) Selected for Testing in the Final Instrument

The categories that were selected for testing are as follows below. The main emphasis
of the test is the multiple functions exhibited by the present progressive form. In addition
to the large number of meanings attributed to this form in the Survey of the Literature,
performance with the general category, present progressive, demonstrated a great deal of
variation in the pilot study just discussed. Therefore, it seemed to merit further testing
and analysis on a finer scale. The progressive usages were balanced by items requiring
the simple present form. As an experiment, the simple present items were subdivided into
two categories (one using explicit adverbials, and the other using non-explicit [contextual]
adverbials) in an effort to ascertain whether this made any difference in student pecerp-
tions and performance. Categories exemplifying the simple and the present progressive
'futures' were also included to be compared with the results on the initial pilot. The
categories included in the test were:

1. the simple present with explicit adverbials;
2. the simple present with contextual adverbials;
3. the present progressive in contexts of change;
4. the present progressive indicating 'action in progress';

5. the present progressive in temporary contexts;
6. the present progressive with habitual action;
7. the present progressive for future; and
8. the simple present for future.

A ninth category of miscellaneous distractors requiring 'will' or future usages was also included to balance out the emphasis on using present tenses to indicate future (Categories 7 and 8). Since both classroom experience and the pilot study results seemed to indicate that stative verbs and nonstative homonyms were learned somewhat idiomatically, these cagegories were eliminated as not productive for testing. The present progressive category from the pilot study was subdivided in four narrow categories (3-6). The two future usages remained as they had been. Note that these usages are representative of everyday spoken, and informal written, Enlgish. Only Categories 1, 2, 4, and 5 are required usages in formal English. The others are non-obligatory. Categories 4 and 6, in particular, are grammatical and appropriate in normal, everyday English; they are, however, inappropriate in more formal registers (e.g., in term papers, formal speeches, business correspondence, etc.) Unfortunately, the scope of this study does not allow us to go deeper and try to analyze student perceptions of register at this time.

A total of 90 items were selected for the final instrument, 45 items per test version. It was originally intended to have five items from each category in each test version; however, due to an error in categorizing, Test Version 11 has six items in Categories 2 and 3, and only four items in Categories 1 and 7. Note that Category 9 is not a real category, only a group of miscellaneous distractor items; therefore, it is not considered in the data analysis. The reader is advised to take a look at the items which are included by category in the Appendix for a clearer idea of what each category exemplifies.

V. Results and Analyses of the Data

The results of the data analyzed were encouraging and supportive of the earlier hypothesis set forth that students do recognize certain functions of a given form, while they persistently have difficulty with others. Some definite patterns of usage and error emerged, not only within one test version, but across both test versions.

Table E lists the percentage of responses recognizing the usage tested for, the range of responses by item within the category, the standard deviation, and the average percentage of correct anwers (usages tested for F correct alternatives) under the title, "Difficulty." The latter gives us an idea of the difficulty of the category in terms of whether the students understood the items, in general, and so, were able to make some sort of appropriate response. The percentage scores for the usage tested for tell us the frequency with which students recognized the given usage under consideration. The range and standard devia-

TABLE E AVERAGE: RESULTS BY CATEGORY *

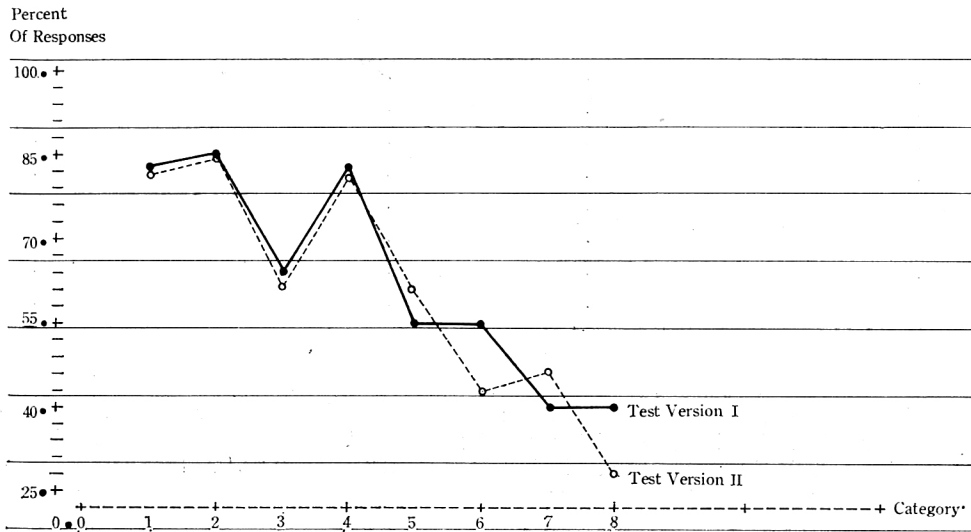| Test Version I				Test Version II			
Av. Resgonse for Category Tested	Range*	S.D.	Difficulty	Av. Response for Category Yested	Range*	S.D.	Difficulty
1. 81.58%	30.21	1.03	82.59%	1. 81.31%	9.70	1.03	83.50%
2. 86.33%	13.67	0.91	90.51%	2. 85.76%	19.42	0.93	88.35%
3. 65.32%	36.69	1.32	84.46%	3. 61.00%	16.50	1.57	79.85%
4. 82.30%	15.83	1.03	82.45%	4. 82.82%	10.68	1.14	83.30%
5. 54.10%	37.41	1.43	60.58%	5. 60.95%	22.33	1.44	75.73%
6. 56.11%	14.39	1.70	84.03%	6. 43.69%	43.49	1.61	80.54%
7. 39.43%	48.20	1.49	88.49%	7. 47.33%	42.72	1.31	94.91%
8. 41.15%	53.96	1.55	91.80%	8. 28.74%	35.92	1.35	95.53%

* Range here is the number of points between the item with the highest rate of reponse (in percentages) and the item with the lowest rate of response (also, in percentates). * The significance which can be place on the Range and Standard Deviation in this study is limited because of of Test Version II. If the outlier in this category is eliminated, we get a considerably different Average Response of *51.21%* and a much smaller Range of *15.53* percentage points. The small number of items in each category makes them highly responsive to the influence of even one outlier. The Standard Deviation here was taken from the computer run that recognized only the response tested for as being correct.

tion give some idea of the clustering patterns of the responses. However, as noted in the footnote to Table E,the range and standard deviations are not terribly reliable. Elimination of outliers (scores that do not fall within the general clustering patterns, or are greater than three or so standard devations from the mean) substantially reduces the range and may drastically affect the mean and standard deviation of a category. These measures lack reliability in this test because of the small number of itmes involved in each category (five items per category per test version). Outliers may possibly be attributed to problems the student has with elements in the item which are not related to tense usage *per se* (e.g., vocabulary problems, adverbial recognition problems, different interpretations of the context due to language or cultural background). In view of this, the clustering patterns exhibited by the data are probably somewhat understated.

The smaller ranges and standard deviations for Test Version ll in general (especially after the exception, Category 6, is adjusted for outliers) would seem to imply that the response patterns for it are more consistent. The results of Test Version ll with regard to Categories 7 and 8 are also more in keeping with the results of the initial pilot study.

Note that the response pattern rises and falls rather consistently across both test versions. This can be more clearly seen in Figure 1. The graph here depicts the percentage of responses recognizing the usages tested for by category. Category 9 is not included in any of these tables and figures because of its miscellaneous make up. Although the correlations of responses on individual items to responses on the test as a whole were typically low, the

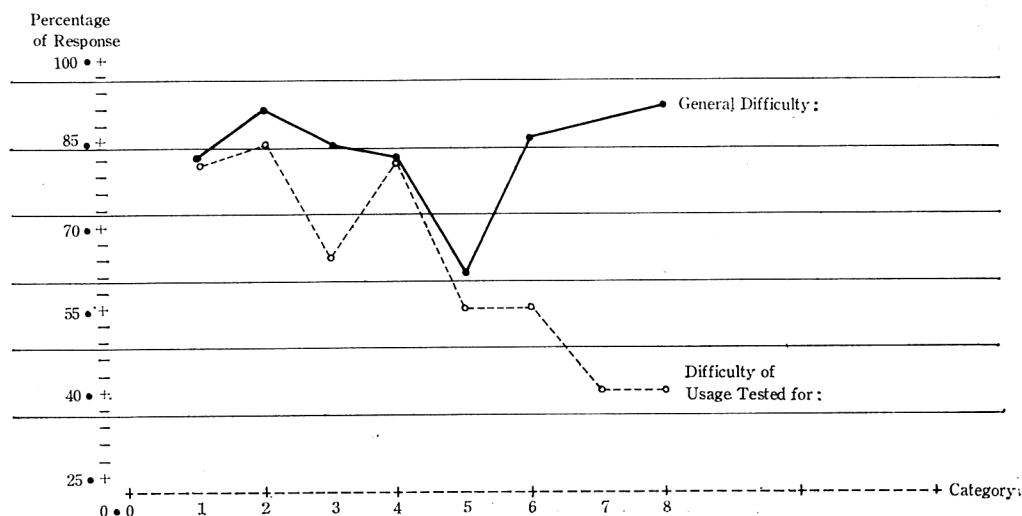FIGURE 1. Responses Recognizing Usage Tested For: By Category

Percent
Of Responses

* The solid black line represents the responses for lest Version 1. The broken line represents the responses for Test Version II. The vertical axis is the percentage of responses. The different categories of usage lie along the horizontal axis. Note the similarities in rise and fall.

correlations of item scores to scores on the category they belong to were higher, indicating a degree of consistency within the category. See Table A-1 in the Appendix.

Figures 2 and 3 plot the percentage of responses for the usage under consideration (the broken line) compared to the total percentage of correct responses indicating category difficulty (the solid black line). It may be noted that most of the categories are fairly easy in terms of general difficulty. With the exception of Category 5, they all rank above 75 percent, indicating that at least 75 percent of the subjects were able to supply some sort of correct response. Only four of the categories exemplified contexts in which there was a relatively obligatory response (Categories 1, 2, 4, and 5). We say 'relatively obligatory' here because it is possible to find substitutions although the answer under consideration is the most natural and consistently used form. We will deal with these categories first. The difficulty entailed in finding correct alternative substitutions causes the two lines to be very close for these categories. An example of a test item is included with each category.

Categories 1 and 2 both exemplify contexts where the use of the simple present to denote permanence or habitual condition is appropriate. However, the pilot study seemed to indicate a reliance on explicit adverbials in many cases. For this reason it was decided to

FIGURE 2 General Difficulty of Category vs. Difficulty of Usage Yested for: Test Version 1

* The solid black line represents the average difficulty of the category items (i.e., the sum of the percentage of responses recognizing the usage tested for + the percentage of correct alternative responses). The broken line represents the average difficulty in terms of the usage being tested for. Note that divergence of the two lines is relatively small when the category exemplifies a relatively obligatory usage; however, where the usage is non-obligatory (Categories 3, 6, 7, and 8), a large divergence in the two lines is common.

have one category with *explicit* adverbials and another with non-explicit or contextual adverbials. You will note that the mean difficulty of the usage tested for and the mean difficulty of the category in genral are very close for Category 1, the category using explicit adverbials.

—*Normally,* Mary *takes* the bus to work. This week, however, she's been driving. (1)

—*Usually,* I *stay* home in bed when I get sick. (1)

There is a very slight divergence between the lines for Category 2 (see Figures 2 and 3).

—When is the rainy season around here?

—Oh, I think it begins to rain about September. (2)

(Note that 'the rainy season' although not an explicit adverbial, implies that we mean usually, every year.)

Because the divergence is so small, it is dangerous to generalize about the respective degrees of difficulty engendered by the two categories; however, it is noteworthy that this pattern appears in both test versions, indicating that it is *somewhat* more difficult when

FIGURE 3 General Difficulty of Category vs. Difficulty of Usage Tested for: Test Version II
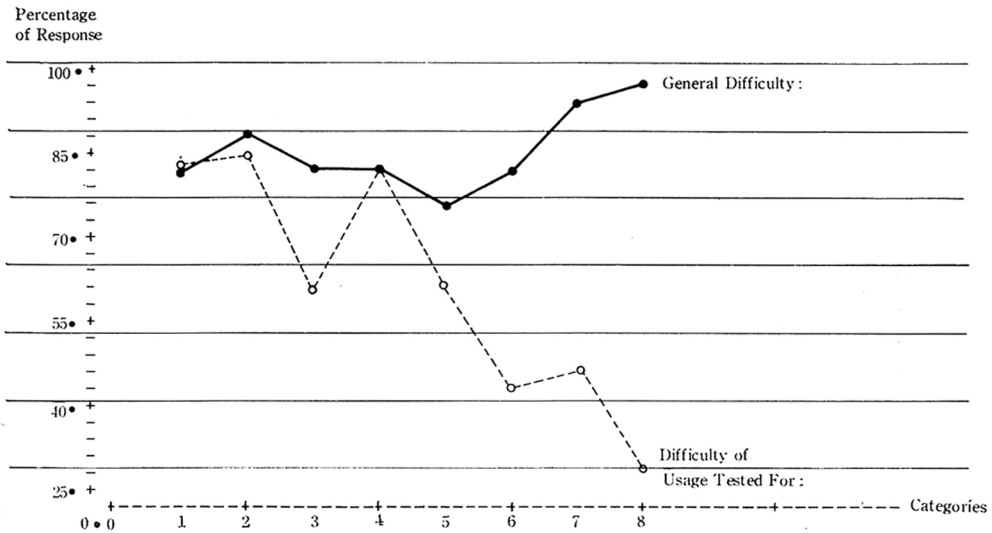
Percentage
of Response

* The solid black line represents the average difficulty of the category items (i.e., the sum of the percentage of responses recognizing the usage tested for + the percentage of correct alternative responses). The broken line represents the average difficulty in terms of the usage tested for *only*. Note that divergence of the two lines is relatively small when the category exemplifies a relatively obligatory usage; however, where the usage is non-obligatory (Categories 3, 6, 7, and 8), a large divergence in the two lines is common, indicating that the category items are easy enough in general terms, but that the particular usage being tested for is difficult.

explicit adverbials are not present. Many students had difficulty, in particular, in distinsuishing between statements of general permanent truth value, and their descriptive counterparts.

Water flows downhill. (permanent truth)
Look! Water is flowing over the dam. (descriptive statement).

Overall, however, students easily identified situations involving permanent truths or condition or repeated habitual actions.

Category 4 demonstrated the relatively obligatory usage of the present progressive to indicate action in progress at the moment of speaking.

—Where's Carol? She has a phone call.
—She's *taking*. Tell whoever it is to call back later. (4)

The mean difficulty of this usage and the mean difficulty of the cateto items in general were almost identical. Again, results indicate that students find it quite easy to conceptualize

and identify 'action in progress' at the moment of speaking.

Category 5 embodies the present progressive usage used to designate an action or condition that is temporary or of 'limited duration.' This usage is sometimes referred to as 'expanded present.'

—where's Janet. Isn't this her desk?

—Yes, it is. But she's *helping* in the library until they hire a new librarian. (5)

This usage proved to be the most difficult of all the categories both in terms of the usage tested for and in general terms. Because it is a relatively obligatory usage, there are few substitutes for it. Unlike other categories where the category was relatively easy in general, but the specific usage was difficult, Category 5 was difficult for the student in both ways. Not only did the student have difficulty recognizing the usage tested for, but also in supplying grammatical substitutes. Both the solid and broken lines drop significantly for this category in Figures 2 and 3. Students do, apparently, have trouble conceptualizing or recognizing is usage.

Categories 5 and 6 exemplify non-obligatory usages. They also exhibit a distinctly informal or conversational register. Category 6 is grammatical *only* in an informal register.

Category 3 embodies the use of the present progressive in a context of change where there is no adverbial specification strong enough to make either the simple present or the present progressive tenses requisite.

—I'*m watering* my plants more now that the weather is drier. They were starting to turn brown. (3)
—Before I took my care to the mechanic, it used to stop and overheat. But it'*s running* well now. (3)

We could easily substitute 'I water my plants more' and 'it runs well' In these sentences. Recognition of this usage scored a percentage in the low sixties although the general difficulty of the items in this category averaged out in the low eithties. Most of the correct alternative substitutions involved the use of the simple present. Although the usage here is often characterized as the use of the present progressive to emphasize change, the problem in conceptualizing it are similar to those involved in conceptualizing temporary or 'expanded' present (Category 5) where the action is taking place (maybe even repeatedly) over a period of time philosophically considered 'now,' but may not actually be in progress at the moment of speaking. Students probably wonder why the progressive is possible when the act happens repeatedly and is not actually 'in progress.' It follows that the recognition responses were low on both of these categories (3 and 5). The significant difference between Categories 3 and 5 is that Category 5 is a relatively obligatory usage while 3 is not.

Category 6 exhibited extremely low recognition by students (the broken line, Figures 2 and 3), although the category, itself, was not difficult in general (difficulty represented by the solid line, Figures 2 and 3). Since Category 6 exemplifies the use of the habitual present progressive, which is restricted to conversational and informal contexts and which is seldom mentiones in ESL texts, the low rate of recognition of this usage was expected.

—John is angry with his wife. They are trying to save money, and he says she's *always buying* things they don't need. (6)

This usage represents an emotional, personal involvement on the part of the speaker. This subjetive quality makes the usage inappropriate outside of informal, conversation contexts. Students tend to react to the adverb, 'always,' and substitute the simple present which they have learned in conjunction with this adverb. While this is perfectly grammatical, student no doubt wonder why they hear it used, but get such usages marked off in their compositions. They may not realize the special emphasis and the restricted usage here.

Category 7 items explored student recognition of the culture present progressive.' The items in general were among the easiest items in the tests. However, student recognition of the validity of the present progressive to express futurity was quite low. Recognition of this usage averaged out in the forties for both tests (See Figures 2 and 3).

—Jane and I have a date for next Friday. We're *going* to a concert. (7)

 Category 8 exemplifying the 'future simple present' to show fixed or scheduled future demonstrated the lowest recognition rates of all. (See Figures 2 and 3). Like Category 7, Category 8 also ranked among the easiest categories in terms of general difficulty. Category 8 itmes received a recognition response in the high forties on Test Version 1, and in the high twenties on Test Version II.

—My plane *arrives* late tomorrow evening.
Can you have someone meet me at the ariport? (8)

The results of the correlations did not show any differences based on age or sex, etc., that could be verified as reliable. As an example, women did not do as well as men; however, most women coming from South America and the Middle East do not have as much education. It is, therefore, impossible to isolate what is actually at the root of difference. Not enough data was available on student characteristics such as number of years of schooling and so forth to undertake comprehensive correlation studies, so they were eliminated from this study.

 It was hypothesized on the basis of classroom experience, however, that there is a difference in the way foreign-taught students and resident students use a given structure. A computer run utilizing t-tests was done to see if any differences in utilization appeared.

TABLE F Percent of Responses Exemplifying Usage Tested For by Item by Category: Visa vs. Resident Students (Test Version II Only)

Category 1: (4 items)			Category 5: (5 items)	
Visa	Resident		Visa	Resident
88.5	68.6		39.2	66.7 *
96.2	81.6		63.5	86.3 *
84.3	78.0		58.0	68.8 *
86.0	74.0		67.3	56.9
			55.8	57.1 *
Cagegory 2: (6 items)			Category 6: (5 items)	
Visa	Resident		Visa	Resident
96.2	87.5		53.8	62.0 *
94.2	86.3		49.0	49.0 *
94.2	86.0		54.9	62.0 *
94.2	90.0		44.2	40.0
80.4	86.3 *		5.8	21.6 *
78.8	64.7			
Category 3: (6 items)			Category 7: (4 items)	
Visa	Resident		Visa	Resident
46.2	62.7 *		23.5	26.0 *
63.5	66.7 *		46.2	17.6
56.9	61.2 *		73.1	60.8
62.7	68.0 *		64.7	68.6 *
75.0	66.7			
57.7	51.0			
Category 4: (5 items)			Category 8: (5 items)	
Visa	Resident		Visa	Resident
90.4	77.6		21.2	27.5 *
82.7	70.6		11.5	14.0 *
82.7	76.5		44.2	52.9 *
92.3	82.4		26.9	30.0 *
90.4	82.4		26.9	33.3 *

* Starred items are items where resident students did as well or better than visa students in spite of the fact that visa students did better overall on the test as a whole (by providing acceptable alternatives). Visa students here include foreign students here on visa and college bound residents. Resident students are a less homogeneous group when it comes to educational background, but in general resident students have significantly less formal education.

The two groups of students contrasted have been given the titles, Visa and Resident students contrasted have been given the titles, Visa and Resident students. The resident student group is typical of the mix you find in Adult Education classes. Their educational back ground, although far from homogeneous, tends to be typified by lower levels of education than you find in the visa group. There is no requisite level of education for entry

TABLE G Percent of Responses Exemplifying Usage Tested For by Category: Visa vs. Resident Students (Test Version II Only)

Category	Visa Students	Resident Students
1	88.75%	75.55%
2	89.66%	83.46%
3	60.33%	62.71%
4	87.70%	77.90%
5	56.76%	67.16%
6	41.54%	46.92%
7	51.87%	43.25%
8	26.14%	31.54%

* The boxed-in figures are categories where resident students did better than visa student in spite of the fact that visa students did better overall on the test as a whole (by providing acceptable alternatives). The definitions of visa and resident students may be found under Table F.

into such classes. Also, many of them have lived and/or worked in the United States for an extended period of time. They tend to have acquired more 'street English.' The visa student group is actually misnamed. It includes not only foreign students studying here on visas, but also college enrolled residents. The UCLA ESL classes include many residents who may have finished their high school here or have immigrated, but they have not yet acheived enough proficiency in English to be exempt from taking English as a Second Language. They are grouped together because these students are all characterized by a high level of education and by having learned English in a formal teaching situation. All have finished high school. A majority of the resident students have never finished high school. In fact, illiteracy in the native language is sometimes a problem in the resident classes. In view of this, it comes as no surprise that Via students did better than Resident students in a testing situation.

It was originally hypothesized, however, that resident students might do better on some usage categories (especially those of a conversational nature) because of their greater exposure to conversational and spoken English. Since a large number of resident students have learned their English on the streets and from radio and TV, they might have had greater exposure to some of the less formal and less commonly taught usages (i.e., the non-obligatory usages, Categories 3, 6, 7, and 8). The visa students, who have learned their English in the classroom and have lived here for shorter periods of time tend to have a narrower, ruleoriented view of grammar (in this author's experience). The rules that are emphasized in most texts and ESL grammars are the obligatory usages.

The t-tests were computed on the items from Test Version ll. Table F shows the breakdown of mean scores of visa and resident student per item in each category. The hypothesis that resident students would do better on specific usages (although their scores were lower in terms of general proficiency) was borne out. The starred items are those on which re-

sident students did better than visa students. Table G shows the average scores per category by resident and visa students. They did better than the visa students on three of the four non-obligatory usages. They also did better, however, on Category 5, the requisite use of the present progressive in contexts of temporary or 'limited' duration.

VI. Comments

There are two possible explanations for the resident students' excelling in certain categories of usage. First it may be easier to acquire these usages (by habit and exposure to them in an English-speaking environment) than it is to learn them conceptually in a rule-oriented classroom. Secondly, it may be that some of these usages are not identified and/or taught in ESL texts and classrooms. It is difficult to determine which is responsible. Perhaps, both of these play a part. The strict rule orientation of textbook English learned by the visa students does not usually take into account the flexibility of the English language (particularly in non-obligatory contexts).

In answer to our earlier research question, the data analyses establish that there is indeed a pattern of errors and competency underlying the various usages of a given form (in the case, tense). Although there are many factors which influence student performance (e.g., learned chunks of dialog, vocabulary recognition, and adverbial awareness, etc.), students do exhibit more trouble with certain usages of a multifunctional form.

It is also clear that foreign students have far less flexible perceptions of English usage than do native speakers. Lacking a command of the range of possibilities, they tend to want to use the 'most grammatical' form, not realizing that there are oftentimes numerous grammatical forms exhibiting various registers (degrees of formality). One is not more grammatical than another; it may, however, be more appropriate in certain contexts.

English does not have the formal devices that some languages do (e.g., a formal 'you' and a familiar 'you', or various ways of expressing an idea to someone older, to someone younger, to someone of the opposite sex, tec.) Nonetheless, there are differences of registe that encompass vocabulary choice, verb tense, expressions, and so forth. Register, unfortunately, is a matter that is little discussed in most ESL books. Although a great deal of emphasis is placed on learning 'formal' English in American high schools, the native rarely resorts to dealing with questions of formality on a conscious level. A sense of register is acquired. A common reply that many people make when faced with a non-native's question on usage is: 'Well, it just sounds better that way." Natives are rarely conscious of the rules that they obey in speaking and writing.

The foreign learner, who does not posses this native 'feel' for the language, has a much more rule-governed idea of grammar and the way English works. A salient case of such is the foreign learner's perception of future. There are a number of different ways to indicate

future in English including the use of the simple present, the present progressive, 'be going to', and 'will.' 'Will', however, is commonly overtaught and stressed as future in both ESL texts and foreign language dictionaries, without reference to the fact that it singnals a very strong, determined future, and that is possesses a number of other functions as a modal as well (e.g., making request, showing commitment, and volunteering one's services). Teaching strategies may sometimes leave the student with misconceptions about a structure's functions, the restrictions on it and the alternatives to it.

We have already pointed out that many usages are not obligatory. One might ask at this point: Why does the student need them at all? The best answer to this is to consider another question, and that is: What does the student perceive when he encounters usages that do not fit within his limited framework of grammar? Certainly, this must confuse the student who is not sure of the implications of the usage. He feels it challenges the validity of the rules he does have.

If one is convinced that only 'will' singnifies future, then surely the time required to re-cognize another form must be longer than to recognize 'will.' A student need not use a non-obligatory usage, but it is very desirable for him to know it on at least a passive level.

An interesting phenomenon of foreign student speech is that many of them use the 'simple present future' in their speech.

I take my test tomorrow morning.

However, often, it is a simplification or a case of native language transfer, because only a small percentage of students will recognize the validity of this usage in a sentence if questioned about it. This is particularly true when it occurs in a written context where the student has time to analyze the components.

This reliance on the use of 'will' to indicate future is just one glimpse of student concep-tions of grammar as revealed by the test responses. Many insights into student problems were also revealed by students' questions during the testing. A number of mechanisms and strategies can be seen in play.

A very common strategy exhibited by students to avoid tense seeems to be the use of cer-tain modals, in particular, *have to, must,* and *can.* One hypothesis it that, perhaps, these are more readily translatable into verb equivalents in other languages (e.g., in Spanish: *tener que, haber que, poder*). Other modals oftentimes do not have direct verb equivalents, but are expressed by a number of different tenses, particles, and/or adverbials. Students often rejected the tense forms given in the test and substituted not another tense, but a modal-plus-verb alternative The resulting changes of meaning ranged from slight to considerable. Note the following examples:

　　a) I'*m watering* my neighbor's plants this week while she's out of town.
　　b) I *have to* water my neighbor's plants this week while she's out of town.

c) I *will* water my neighbor's plants this week while she's out of town.

In the absence of other contextual information, statement (a), exemplifying the temporary present progressive usage, emphasizes that the speaker and neighbor have an agreement that the speaker would water the plants for this period of time. Statement (b) intimates that it is necessary to water the plants, and that, perhaps, the speaker has forgotten or hasn't done it yet. Statement (c) implies that the speaker notes that the neighbor is out town and just decides to water the plants without the neighbor's knowledge. While the modal substitutions are grammatical, they change the meaning.

Another interesting observation was that a small percentage of students became confused in 'if' contexts, assuming that the presence of 'if' signaled an unreal conditional, and hence, 'would' was required in the result clause.

I'll call you tomorrow if you *would** be home

Some students had problems with verbs possessing a dual transitive/intransitive nature, where one version has an agent and the other does not. The author has also noted problems with this in the classroom. Examine the verb, *open.*

He opened the door.
The door opened.

In the first statement, the verb is transitive with an agent and a direct object, and the meaning is causative. In the second statement, there is no agent and the verb is intransitive. For native English speakers the distinction may be slight or unnoticeable, but many other languages have distinct verb forms to express this difference. A common manifestation is a reflexive form to denote the intransitive form (in Spanish: *abrir, abrirse,* and in Russian: otkryvat', otkryvat'sja). One strategy used by some students in the pilot study was to circumvent the problem by substituting the copula plus an adjective to express the meaning of the verb, e.g.,

The store is open at 7.

in place of

The store opens at 7.

This strategy may, however, reflect a structure in the native language.

Adverbial recognition proved to be one of the more serious problems encountered in both the pilot and this study. Oftentimes, adverbials (and, in particular, connectives) do not have direct equivalents in the native language; or the equivalents are used in different ways. Look at the following example from Spanish.

Hace dos años que no lo he visto.

An appropriate translation of this would be 'I haven't seen him for two years.' However, *hace dos años* also translates as 'two years ago,' which is a specific past time reference and incompatable with the English present prefect tense. Although there is a tranlatable equivalent, the restrictions on usage are different. The student must not only be taught what the adverb means, but the restrictions on its usage with certain tenses. Many student errors may be traceable to adverbial recognition problems, rather than tense acquisition problems *per se*.

Problems sometimes arise when students have been taught to associate certain adver-. bial cues with certain tenses although the same adverbials also occur with other tenses. (Induced errors: See Stenson [1975]; and transfer of training: See Selinker [1975]) Oftentimes the co-occurence with different tenses also produces different adverbial meanings. Note:

> I go to class now. (at this time, regularly)
> I'm going to class now. (right now or immediate future, one occasion)

A recent teaching strategy to circumvent this difference in meaning has been to use 'right now' in drilling the present progressive expressing action in progress; and, while this is a useful technique with beginners, it still does not solve the problem students have conceptualizing the idea of 'right now' and recognizing it from context rather than depending on the actual presence of the adverbial. The use of 'now' was avoided in constructing test items expressing 'action in progress.' We wished to determine what percentage of students were able to recognize the quality of 'action in progress' through context as opposed to relying on the adverb. Unfortunately, it was almost impossible to avoid the use of it in the items where progressive was used to emphasize change. For this reason, student recognition response may be overstated for this category (3). Some students may be responding to the adverbial presence rather than recognizing the appropriateness of the verb given the context. 'Now' in these items expresses not 'right now' but the idea of general present as compared to the past. This meaning is also compatable with the simple present.

> I used to play tennis, but now
>
> > I'm swimming more.
> > I swim more.

This brings us to the most serious problem encountered in this study: Many students (both in the initial pilot study and in this study) seemed unable to perceive the meaning of the context as a whole. Several factors seemed to be involved.

Oftentimes, it appears that students have learned to form structures, but that their knowledge of how to use them and when they are appropriate is limited. A number of criticisms have been raised in recent years against grammatical exercises involving form

manipulation (e.g., where a student is instructed to change one form to another, rewrite a paragraph in another specified tense, and so forth). Concentration on exercises of this sort do not give the student practice with how the form is actually used. Not only are many of the exercises stilted, they often make use of the somewhat artificial device of parallel structuring. Use of cue adverbials, which we discussed earlier, is also prevalent. Unfortunately for the student, these devices are often taught and stressed in a vacuum, so to speak, without consideration for the changes of meaning and influences that are found in normal conversation. They tend to focus on forms and structures in isolation and not in context.

Many students had trouble when the adverbial considerations were in a removed context, either contextual, or in another clause or sentence. If too sentences were related, but another sentence or clause intervened, many students were unable to make the connection that the two sentences were operating in the same time reference. It is not clear whether this problem is indicative of a conceptual difficulty in unraveling the meaning of the context as a whole, or whether is indicates a reading and/or memory problem. A common phenomenon among language learners is difficulty in remembering what has just been said or read; since much effort is concentrated on the bit of material at hand, what has already been processed and interpreted is more readily forgotten.

A serious attempt was made in devising the elicitation instrument to avoid constructions where the student would be able to rely on parallel sturcture or would be influenced by it in his answer. Several methods were used here. Note in the following example:

—Where is John?
—He's in his room. He's *studying*.

Inquiring about his presence sets the scene in a context of 'right now.' of we had asked, "What is John doing." however, the student would be tipped off by the presence of the progressive structure in the question. By beginning with a question or statement using a copula, we avoid using the function being tested for. Another method used was substitute immediate context and respond in kind with another past verb.

I used to work there, but no I *didn't*.
I'm sorry I broke your window, and I * *wanted* to pay for it.

They seemed unable to recognize the inappropriateness and nonsensical aspect that reulted when they did this. In some cases, this may be attributable to carelessness and the student's not reading the context carefully or completely. The high incidence of such cases, though, may indicate that students overrely on parallel strucutre. The importance of context cannot be overemphasized. Although students many have learned to form a structure and the meaning of it, he may not know when it is appropriate to use it in context.

There seemed to be some evidence that student recognition of usage/tense compatability and appropriateness depended on the verb in question. For example, students did better on items exemplifying the 'future present progressive' (Category 7), where the verb used was 'go' (e.g., I'm going to the beach tomorrow). Responses recognizing the validity of the progressive as a future expression were much higher in such cases than they were then another verb was used (e.g., I'm taking my test next Friday.). This could, perhaps, be attributable to certain verb/tense expression retained as learned chunks from dialog memorization. It could also be that certain expressions are so common throughout speech and written ESL materials that the student does not question their validity. In such cases he accepts them because they sound right; while in cases involving a less familiar verb, he relies on his concepts of grammar to make a response.

There were also occasional problems with verb choice/situation compatability. Some usages seemed idiomatic to students. Sometimes a student substituted another verb. These included the following:

I *have* lunch   I eat lunch.
Light *speeds* faster for than sound.   Light travels faster than sound.

Some of the substitutions were acceptable. Others were not. An item that gave student particular problems was an item which stated:

The street *runs* north and south.

This was an unfortunate item in that the compatability of 'run' with an immovable object confused many students. They had not learned the directional meaning attributable to 'run' and had difficulty evaluating the context. Care in constructing test items is essential when we wish to truly test student competency in a given area. Some of the error on this item is attributeable to vocabulary problems rather than knowledge of tenses.

The results of his study demonstrate that students not only have difficulty recognizing some of the usages of the given tenses, but that they also have difficulty using the information in context to help them ascertain the meaning. It is not clear how such an awareness of contextual meaning can be taught, but it is important the students realize that often there is not a one-word equivalent in their own language for a word or expression brought out by the interaction of the word or form with other elements in the context.

Even native teachers often express concern about their own ignorance of how the language functions. A native speaker commonly takes for granted a particular usage or meaning attributed to such, without realizing that the structure does not possess that meaning in isolation, but rather acquires it from contextual interaction. Look at the following.

He *ran into* my car.   * He is running into my car. (?)

He *ran into* me   * He is running into me. (?)

He *ran into* the house.   He is running into the house.

We have identical structures, but various meanings and limitations on usage. In the first sentence we can clearly see from the inanimate nature of the object that the meaning is physical. Using our common sense, knowing that car doors are not large enough to run in and out of, we reach a meaning of 'collision.' There has been an accident. Since this is, by nature, a cyclical event, it is somewhat incompatable with the progressive tense. In the second sentence, the animate object leaves it open as to whether the meaning is a physical collision or the more abstract meaning, 'to meet by chance.' Without further context, it is ambiguous. Below, the additional clarifies what is meant.

He ran into me, but he stopped to ask if I was hurt.

He ran into me at the reunion. He said I hadn't changed a bit in twenty years.

The third sentence, in the absence of other context appears literal. We derive a meaning of 'entering the house at a run.'

He ran into the house.

The meaning of physical collision is also possible with additional context, however.

We had to repaint and replace the siding where he ran into the house (with the car).

There are many subtle changes of meaning which may take the native teacher unawares since the meaning is so apparent and obvious to him. In both teaching and testing, teachers and researchers need to be sensitive to the idea that certain usages do not necessarily carry over into, or even make sense in, the student's native language. It is important of the teacher to be aware of these changes and make sure that the students understand and perceive them in context.

In the opinion of this study, the burden of explanation and analysis should not be left to the teacher. It is far too broad a field for one person to assimilate completely, and even those teachers who possess a good background are likely to have trouble on occasion. Many individuals become teachers on the basis of their native competency alone. While some students readily learn from exposure to English, other students may request explanations and analyses that such a teacher is not prepared to give. Textbooks need to include more background on a subject (especially at the advanced level), to aid the teacher who may not have the time to rationalize an explanation, nor the background to enable him to do so.

Texts and materials should also include techniques aimed at different groups, such as resident and foreign students. Both groups need to be taught register. Typically, the resident student has acquired more conversational usages and needs to be taught more formar structures that he can use when the occasion requires it. The foreign or overseas

student, on the other hand, has usually learned the formal obligatory usages. He needs to be aware that there are other less formal variations and, perhaps, differences in meaning which he must, at least, have a passive recognition of if he is to have a good comprehension of native speech. An effort to incorporate more instruction in registers in ESL texts is highly desirable.

At this point, the reader is advised to take a look at the Appendix. Included in the Appendix is a list of all the test items used in the elicitation instrument together with the numbers and kinds of student responses. These are more than supplementary materials. Comments and impressions of various mechanisms at work are included so that the reader may obtain a better grasp of how some of the observations discussed in this section were arrived at. A teacher's guide to the usages and implications of the usages of the simple present and present progressive is also appended.

VII. Suggestions for Further Research

A great deal needs to be done in the field of investigating student usages of, and conceptions about, grammar. The relationships of function and meaning in context need to be further explored for the structures examined here as well as for other multifunctional structures. Articles, which were cited in the introductory section, are a likely candidate for analysis. Other verb tenses, their usages and meanings, deserve further investigation. Note the present perfect tense. This describes an action which occurred in the past, which is relevant to the present, and which may or may not extend up to the present time. It is often characterized as demonstrating completion, but this is rather vague since simple past also demonstrates completed action. Macaulay (1971) characterized the ± PERFECTIVE contrast as one of ± specific time. Investigation of the present perfect in this light could be fruitful. In isolation, we derive a meaning of non-specific past time. For this reason, specific past time adverbials are incompatible with the present perfect. The idea of completion is compatible here.

> I have gone to Europe many tiems.
> * *The last time* I have gone to Europe, . . .
> * I have gone to Europe *last year*.

When used in conjunction with an adverbial expressing either a given period of time or a starting time, we derive a meaning of action that began in the past and continues up to the present. Whether the action will continue is not specified.

> I have lived here for 10 years.
> I have lived here since 1968.

What kinds of adverbials interact with a given tense and which contexts students recog-

nize them in needs comprehensive investigation.

This study only undertook to determine what context students recognized grammatical usages in. Further work needs to be done in determining what their perception of the changes are, if they perceive changes at all. Take, for example, the simple present/present progressive contrast examined in this study.

He used to live in Santa Monica, but now he lives in L.A.

he's living in L.A.

It would be interesting to survey American students on questions of this sort (where the usage is non-obligatory) to find out if they perceive a difference in meaning or register. Which or the above is friendlier, more businesslike, more formal, more objective, etc.? or are they the same? In what contexts would an American prefer one usage over the other? How does this compare with non-native preferences? More sophisticated testing techniques need to be developed to help us test student recognition of, and perceptions about, various usages, particularly non-obligatory ones.

Another approach to this problem would be to examine student speech and writing to determine what usages the student actually uses as opposed to those he recognizes. Which usages does he actively produce?..

A task remains for the future is to incorporate what is learned of function and meaning in context into material for ESL teachers and students. Both student and teacher texts should include better explanations and contextual exercises. Exercises should also include keys to usage rationale so that the reasons given behind a particular usage are carefully though out. This task should not be left to the teacher who may not have the background or the time to develop a rationale. However, a great deal more needs to be known about usage and contextual meaning before this stage is reached.

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