

A PLAN FOR A FRESHMAN ENGLISH COURSE FOR KOREAN STUDENTS

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According to Dr. John Bordy, Director of the Foreign Language Education Center at the University of Texas, the greatest strides in language instruction in recent years have come about because those responsible for language programs and institutions have been more explicit in setting their goals and more realistic about what achievements are possible in a given situation.¹⁾ No longer do language teachers blithely claim to make their students proficient in all four language skills.

For most Korean college students, an ability to speak or hear English will not be necessary. Nor will many have occasion to write English, at least not at a very sophisticated level. For their upper-level academic work, their future jobs, and for their pleasure, it is the reading of English that is most important.

Of course, students who have an interest in and a need for spoken English must not be ignored. A few will actually have oral interviews when applying to international companies for jobs. For them elective courses in the junior and senior years must be provided. But the average student will not need this high-level of competence in spoken English.

I. A Proposed Statement of Purpose

I tentatively put forward the following as a possible statement of the goal of a general English required course for freshman students: to increase the students' vocabulary, mastery of the grammatical system, and basic reading skills to the point that they can do independent reading in English with speed and reasonably accurate comprehension, and without resorting to constant use of a bilingual dictionary. Corollary to this purpose, any such course should 1) emphasize *meaning*, 2) stress vocabulary development, 3) use some reading skills techniques, 4) acknowledge and provide for the different levels of ability,

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1) An interview, January 14, 1976, at the University of Texas in Austin, Texas.

and 5) present content that is intellectually appealing and stimulating.

However, the fallacy of this definition is that it does not specify a level of reading: we want our students to "do independent reading" of what? Students in many fields have to rely on English language textbooks in the junior and senior years. Usually these are written for college-aged native speakers. How close are the students to this level of reading ability? How high a level can we realistically expect of them? (A tentative answer is suggested towards the end of this paper (p. 247).)

There seems to be a wide gap between the actual reading ability of many Korean freshmen and the necessary ability to make independent use of materials in the student's academic field written for college students who are native speakers of English.

Because of experiences I have had with Korean students, I believe that serious attention should be paid to revitalizing the college reading program and concentrating on the development of reading skills to enable the student to make independent use of English texts.

II. Reading for Language VS Reading for Meaning

This seems to be a concern of teachers all over the world now in the period in which the mim-mem methods are being considered less effective and reading is again recognized as real language and not just a poor substitute for speech.²⁾

There are many ideas spawning about the teaching of reading, some based on remedial techniques used with native speakers. Recent professional journals are full of articles on reading.

Sheila Been, Coordinator of the Upper Level English Department at the Israel Television Centre in Tel Aviv, Israel, makes a strong case for a dual approach to the reading program: "reading for language" and "reading for meaning."³⁾ The former is using a reading passage to teach grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, and maybe even spelling. The latter is using the reading passage for what it is intended: to convey ideas. And, Ms. Been points out, the methods used for one approach are not suitable for the other. Reading aloud, preview of new vocabulary items, literal-type questions, and certainly grammatical analysis and maybe even a little translation are all good for language study, but are deterrents to developing reading skills. To develop such skills, the students need help in recognizing redundant features of the language; they need to learn to scan for specific information and to glean the main idea from a passage without understanding every single word. The

2) Cf. Muriel-Saville Troike, "Reading and the Audiolingual Method," *TESOL Quarterly*, 7, 4, p. 234.

3) Sheila Been, "Reading in the Foreign Language Teaching Program," *TESOL Quarterly*, 9, 3, p. 233-262.

first approach is intensive reading; the second, fluent reading.

Ms. Been sees "reading for language" as a prior step to "reading for meaning," but I believe that the freshman year in college is a good time to overlap these approaches. The first would be, to some extent, a continuation of the kind of work the student has been doing for the past six years, and the latter, a push into more adult reading.

III. Reading for Language

An English reading course for freshman, supported and reinforced by some sort of aural-oral approach using native speakers and a language laboratory, can well meet the need of "reading for language."

Reading

A reading course taught by Korean professors can help the students gain a broader vocabulary and increase their control over English grammar. Essays and brief narratives by native speakers-of-English, especially those known for their writing ability and profound ideas, can present students with interesting challenges. I have no quarrel with discussion of literature in one's own language (in this case, Korean) either, though actual word-by-word and sentence-by-sentence translation is not productive. Translation is a highly sophisticated skill, and what students do could be more accurately called "deciphering."

A not-too-small advantage of this kind of course is that it is what the Korean college student expects and the kind of study that he feels comfortable with. The challenge of difficult literary selections is flattering to him and gives him more of a sense of accomplishment.

Grammar should be emphasized and weaknesses in the students' backgrounds in grammar strengthened. I would urge that labelling and naming grammatical structures be held to a minimum and that grammar rules be presented "in terms of changes of meaning."⁴ Ruth Berman has presented some ideas on grammatical analysis through paraphrase which might prove fruitful.⁵ She suggests, for instance, replacing difficult abstract nominals—usually of Romance origin—with verbs and restructuring the sentence accordingly.⁶ One example she furnishes is "there was no sharp division of labor"/"labor was not divided up

4) Karl Diller, *Generative Grammar, Structural Linguistics, and Language Training* (reprinted by Kwang Moon Sa, 1968), p. 34.

5) Ruth Berman, "A Technique for Advanced Level Reading," *TESOL Quarterly*, 9, 3 p. 243-251.

6) *Ibid.*, p. 246.

sharply.”⁷⁾ She also suggests replacing participle phrases imbedded in noun phrases with complete relative clauses.⁸⁾

Students should be given outside work and encouraged to work independently. Each week the student could turn in a small paraphrase or free composition in addition to translation or answers to questions prepared by the professor. This independent work could be more rewarding to the student than extra hours in class, particularly if he receives his work back with corrections while it is still fresh in his mind.

Spoken English

Though reading is central to our purposes, we must be cognizant of the fact that the four language skills are interrelated. Though the majority of our students will never need to speak English, they can never have a real grasp of the language unless they can produce it. As Karl Diller states,

A student cannot have a clear idea of a sentence he hears or reads unless it is a sentence for which he has the grammatical competence which underlies its production. When a person ‘understands’ something which is beyond his capacity to produce, guesswork is involved. . . . If a student wants real reading power [I interpret this to mean comprehension at the sentence level in what we have here called “intensive reading.”], he must have active control over what he reads. It is for this reason that de Sauze’ maintained that the only effective way to attain the goal of a ‘reading knowledge’ of a language is to gain an active mastery of the productive aspects of that language.⁹⁾

For practice in the production of language, speaking offers two advantages over writing: 1) it is usually more efficient simply because one speaks faster than he writes and because feed-back is immediately accessible, and 2) oral interchange, particularly with a native speaker, forces the student to realize that English is indeed a vehicle for thought and communication.

The writer of a report to the British Council on new work in Tabriz, Iran, states that their experience has shown that it is “desireable to reinforce reading ability by a variety of approaches. Inference plays a vital role in the reading skill. Discussion [of reading material] is a powerful method because significant communication, not just illustrative material,” is used.¹⁰⁾

In addition, there seems to be a psychological link between oral verbalization and conceptualization. This shows up clearly when Korean students *write* “player,” for “prayer,”

7) *Ibid*,

8) *Ibid.*, p. 247.

9) Diller, p. 76.

10) “Aspects of the Writing and Teaching of EST Courses: The Tabriz Materials” *English Language Teaching Documents* (The British Council) February 1975.

or “crose,” for “close”; i.e., the r/l difference is not just a problem of tongue habit, but more important, a matter of conceptualization of the elements of the language. These pairs are simply not separated in the student’s mind. And there is a definite link between verbalization and memory. We have all experienced trying to remember a telephone number and find by repeating it over a few times we can remember it better. There are few people equipped with “photographic memories.” At the Reading and Study Skills Laboratory at the University of Texas in Austin, Texas, it has been found helpful to have a student with reading inadequacies to stop and summarize *orally* to himself the main point of every section of difficult reading he encounters in textbooks.¹¹⁾

In a Spoken English class, students producing an English sentence have to manipulate more language mentally; they cannot constantly refer back to visual symbols as they do in reading; thus, the memory is given rigorous exercise. This exercise sharpens their ability to understand English—even written English.

Therefore, I believe that an English reading course can be greatly strengthened by a parallel spoken English course taught by native speakers of English, using the same basic material studied in reading. After students have explored the meaning of a given passage with a Korean professor, they could come into the native English speaker’s class to practice use of the vocabulary and grammar patterns in the text, and deal in English with the ideas raised in the passage.

Normally an aural-oral “conversation” class uses a short reading selection as a spring-board for the unit of work. Time is spent essentially teaching reading, though with perhaps different methods than the students are used to. With an integrated course the Spoken English teacher could spend more time in interaction with the students.

Reading and Spoken English teachers should sit down together and draw up a list of vocabulary items and grammar patterns to be emphasized with each unit of work. A list of “new” words from the reading lesson could be drawn up and expanded by adding cognates and/or antonyms with like roots, e.g., “secure” and “insecure.” It might be good to give the students at the beginning of the semester a list of vocabulary items they will be expected to learn and perhaps demand as high as 90% mastery of these words. In grammar, it would be far more fruitful for the Korean professors to explain grammar and have the native speakers drill the students in oral-aural practice over the same material.

With vocabulary and grammar areas to be emphasized agreed upon, the Spoken English teachers can develop their own materials. A week after the students have studied a selec-

11) An interview with Mrs. Claire Reinhart, RASSL, the University of Texas, Austin, Texas. Mrs. Reinhart referred me to the chapters on memory in a book by Walter Pauk, director of the Reading and Study Center of Cornell University: *How to Study in College*, (New York: Houghton Muffin Co., 1974)

tion in reading class they would have aural-oral exercises on the meaning of the selection and the grammar and vocabulary items that had been chosen for emphasis. A sample of the kinds of exercises that could be created follows. The first three are on comprehension and are in order of difficulty, moving from literal type questions to questions requiring inference to questions that would elicit evaluation, opinion, and application. The first two would be appropriate for the beginning, but an effort should be made to get to more of the third type as the semester or year progresses, particularly with the better students. The fourth exercise is a pattern drill in grammar, and the fifth, a vocabulary exercise. The sample exercises are based on one page of the reading text used at Soong Jun University in 1975,¹²⁾ and is included here for the convenience of the reader.

Twenty-four years ago Bertrand Russell—one of the world's great philosophers—wrote his own obituary.

He said: "By the death of the third Lord Russell, or Bertrand Russell as he preferred to call himself, a link with the very distant past is gone."

To the amazement of many—but not to his close friends—he even predicted the date of his death, June 1, 1962. By then he will be 90.

"I haven't changed a syllable of it," he said in an interview.

I'm sticking to the date of my demise. It seems a suitable age to die."

Then, with a merry twinkle in his bright blue eyes, he added in his surprisingly high, piping voice: "But I must say I'm becoming a little nervous as the time approaches."

He may be nervous, yet as he moves on towards his 89th birthday on May 18, few men speak more directly or appealingly to youth.

I. Direct content questions with possible "read-back" answers:

1. Who is one of the world's great philosophers?
2. What did Bertrand Russell predict?
3. How old would Bertrand Russell be on June 1, 1962?

⋮

II. Questions requiring inference but no discussion:

1. What year was this article written in?
2. Bertrand Russell died in February 1970. How old was he?
3. If Lord Russell sang would he be a bass or a tenor?

⋮

III. Questions that elicit discussion on content:

1. Why did he prefer to call himself Bertrand Russell?
2. What did he mean by, 'But I must say I'm becoming a little nervous as the time

12) *College English Readings* (Seoul: Il Shin Sa, 1974), p. 147.

approaches.”?

3. Why did he have a twinkle in his eye when he said that?

⋮

IV. Pattern drill to reinforce grammar:

Ex.: It seems a suitable age to die.

Stimulus: Is ping-pong good for passing time? WHY Response:

Yes, it seems a good way to pass time.

S: Is typing suitable for learning English? METHOD

R: Yes, it seems a suitable method to learn English.

S: Is 2:00 tomorrow convenient for visiting John? TIME

R: Yes, it seems a convenient time to visit John.

⋮

V. Vocabulary development questions to be answered at the early stages with “feed-back” type of responses (Can you predict the weather?) but later with more conversational answers:

PREDICT and its cognates

1. Can you predict the weather?

2. Can a person make a prediction about the date of his death?

3. Is one’s lifespan predictable?

4. Is a person’s behavior predictable or unpredictable?

5. What can we make predictions about?

6. Is the weather today predictably cold or surprisingly so?

Some students will find that they have particular interest and/or ability in spoken English. As I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, special junior- and senior-level elective courses must be provided.

The Language Laboratory

The language laboratory can support the reading and spoken English programs. Each week’s work could consist of drill on whatever aspect of pronunciation is being emphasized in Spoken English, grammatical patterns that are present in the reading, and review of some part of the reading selection by the cloze method. Thus Reading, Spoken English and Language Lab would all be integrated.

The cloze method is as follows: the students are given a sheet of paper with a paragraph or paragraphs from the text printed on it but with every 10th word left blank; they listen to someone read the passage on tape (including the missing words) and fill in the blanks. More advanced students work with exercises with every 7th or every 5th word removed.

This sharpens the student's listening, reading, and even writing—especially spelling. By being more aware of articles and prepositions which are so frequent, his grasp of grammar is also improved. The selection may be presented twice, first at a more deliberate, slow rate of speed, and then, with a different set of words left blank, at a normal rate.

IV. Reading for Meaning

With Reading, Spoken English, and Language Laboratory intergrated and reinforcing one another, we have a sound basis for "reading for language"—or, for teaching the fundamental vocabulary and structure of English. But to produce independent, fluent readers, something more is necessary.

I propose that as part of a course for freshmen there be included a Reading Skills Laboratory, with the purpose of encouraging and equipping students to do independent reading in English. It would incorporate some of the ideas used in speed reading, although *comprehension*—not speed—would be the goal. (Speed would be the whip!)

It has been shown in reading one's native language, comprehension can be lost because of attention to too much detail. Frank Smith, a psycholinguist, says that to understand the meaning of what one is reading he must be able to absorb big "chunks" of material at a time.¹³⁾ Nicholas Ferguson maintains that the same is true in second language reading.¹⁴⁾ Sheila Been states that the student must not feel it is necessary to have "an explicit understanding of every word if he is to apprehend meaning." He must develop the ability to "guess intelligently." Also, the teacher, according to Ms. Been, "must help the student exploit the redundancies in the language by demonstrating how information is supplied from more than one source."¹⁵⁾ The student needs to know what signals a new idea, a restatement, a contrasting idea, or supportive data. He needs to be able to distinguish between facts and ideas.

In a "reading for language" approach, a small amount of material is intensely studied; in "reading for meaning" a great deal of material is covered quickly with an eye either to finding answers to specific questions, ignoring all extraneous material, or to understanding the main point or intent of the author even if every word is not understood. This kind of reading can be frustrating because it is unfamiliar and gives the student an insecure feeling when he ignores obvious gaps in his knowledge, but when the student relaxes and

13) Frank Smith, *Understanding Reading: a Psycholinguistic Analysis of Reading and Learning to Read* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971), pp. 90-94.

14) Nicholas Ferguson, "Some Aspects of the Reading Process," *English Language Teaching*, 18, 1 (1973)

15) Been, p. 237.

understands the limited objective of the activity (i.e., no one expects him to understand every word or to remember every detail), it can build up his self-confidence. In speed reading courses, students are usually amazed at how much they actually understand at rates of speed far beyond their comfort. This is possible in one's own language because of the large amount of redundancy built into the language. Certain aspects of redundancy may be taught to second-language learners. Sheila Been¹⁶⁾ and M. Eleanor Pierce¹⁷⁾ have made some suggestions on this, but there is much more research to be done.

Robert M. Stevenson, professor at the University of Isfahan in Iran, has developed a successful program for his freshman students (who like Korean freshmen have had six years of English usually taught by the grammar-translation method) requiring inexpensive equipment.¹⁸⁾ He puts a reading selection on a 35mm slide and projects it on a screen for his students. They have a limited time to read it, enough time to read fairly slowly but not enough to linger over unknown words. Then another slide is projected giving multiple choice questions. He has found it very helpful to begin with scanning: ask a question about a specific detail, show the selection briefly, and then show multiple choice answers to the question.¹⁹⁾ This immediately gets the students away from word-by-word reading and translation, and shows them how much more capable they are than they had realized. He then moves into the more difficult area of stressing main ideas: he shows the paragraph and then multiple-choice possibilities for expressing the main point of the article. Later, questions can cover some of the supporting ideas as well. With this approach the student cannot write in glosses, translate, nor can he use his dictionary; in short, he is thrown on whatever resources he already has.

Mr. Stevenson starts with 150–250 word paragraphs written on single slides but at a more advanced level spreads a longer selection over several slides. The selections must be kept interesting, not too culturally foreign, and not too difficult. Questions must be straight forward and unambiguous.

The slides are made quite inexpensively. A typed sheet of paper is photographed with black-and-white 35mm film, the negative developed and mounted as a slide and projected. This produces a black background with white letters. A camera with a microscopic lens is necessary. The requirements for projection are simply a regular slide-projector, a screen or clean white wall, and a room that can be darkened.

16) Been, *op. cit.*

17) Mary Eleanor Pierce, "Teaching the Use of Formal Redundancy in Reading for Ideas," *TESOL Quarterly*, 9, 3 (September 1975)

18) Robert M. Stevenson, "Using Slides to Improve Reading Comprehension," *English Teaching Forum* XI, 2 (March-May, 1973), p. 12.

19) Robert M. Stevenson, "Report on Scan Readings," *English Teaching Forum*, XII, 1 (January-March 1974), p. 24–25.

Mr. Stevenson reports growth in the students' self-confidence and reading ability, although he feels the program has been held back some by traditionalist-minded co-workers. He emphasizes that faculty members must be enthusiastic about the method if it is to be fully effective.

Not only do we have to force our students to read for overall meaning by reading rapidly by "chunks", but also we must teach them to recognize redundancies and the signals of structural relationships.

A method of teaching redundancies and scanning clues proposed by Sheila Been might be adapted to the slide format.²⁰⁾ She suggests that the redundant elements—that is, the second expression of the same basic idea—be written in a smaller script. For example,

The two brothers Bob and Ed were quite different. Bob was tall, fair, and slim; ED WAS SHORT, FAT AND DARK,²¹⁾ The ideas expressed by the smaller script (she actually draws a line through it as well) can be easily inferred. For scanning she would highlight script certain cue words. For example,

Question: Which room is described in the following passage?

The lights are BRIGHT. It is painted WHITE and is AIRY.

The lights are situated over the STOVE and the SINK as well as over the ceiling. There is a lot of cupboard space and several ELECTRICAL OUTLETS. . . .²²⁾

This specific example is not suitable for Korean students because it is culturally dissimilar from what they know, but it illustrates Ms. Been's technique for getting students to look for cue words.

The same technique should be helpful to make students aware of sentential connectives and other relational words.

Mary Eleanor Pierce has suggested some effective ways of perceiving quickly and accurately the overall structure of paragraphs and larger units.²³⁾ She deals with recognizing general ideas and their supportive facts, recognizing topic sentences and also being aware of a main idea when no topic sentence is given, seeing the relationship between topic sentences of a series of paragraphs including recognizing the signals of relationships (sentential connectors such as "on the other hand," "in short," "in addition"), and understanding transitional sentences. This article is a good theoretical analysis for a teacher to work from, but provides no real pedagogical methods or concrete suggestions for application.

There is a new textbook out on reading skills for English-as-a-second-language learners

20) Been, *op. cit.*

21) *Ibid.*, p. 240.

22) *Ibid.*, p. 239.

23) Pierce, *op. cit.*

called *Developing Reading Skills—Advanced*.²⁴⁾ I have not seen this book yet, but according to a recent review,²⁵⁾ it might be an excellent text or supplemental material for Korean college students. It contains readings which are easily timed and comprehension questions; the answers are also included in a separate section. There are exercises in many of the specific skills we have been discussing. This text is designed for either classroom or independent use. At the University of California at Berkeley, success has been reported with the use of a book called *Probe*²⁶⁾ with foreign students whose English is inadequate.

Most English Department faculty members are not familiar with reading skills methods. Special training would have to be provided. Seminars and exposure to some of the recent TESL literature and other materials on rapid reading should enable them to become effective reading skills teachers.

V. Setting Reading Skills Goals

The laboratory format would also make it easier to test students on their ability to handle English independently. Our goal should be to advance students to the point that they can read at some defined level comparable to a native speaker. Not until we have experimented can we set this level with any certainty of its validity. A reading expert²⁷⁾ has told me that in the United States an entering freshman in an average college must have at the very least a 2.7 or 2.8 reading level. This refers to the national average ability of students in the second year of high school (11th grade), the eighth month. Below this level, required reading in an average college will be more than he can surmount. The lower quality colleges and particularly the junior colleges would indulge a slightly lower level of reading ability.

Korean students read difficult college-level material, but not the great quantities required of American and British students. Therefore, until we have more information on the capabilities of our students, I would like to propose that the goal in reading level be

the best students	=	first year high school for n.s.E. ²⁸⁾
the good students	=	second year middle school, n.s.E.
the average students	=	first year middle school, n.s.E.
the poorest students	=	sixth grade elementary school, n.s.E. (It is said that Readers Digest

24) Louise Hirasawa and Linda Markstein, *Developing Reading Skills Advanced*, (Rowley, Mass.: Newberry House, 1974) 169pp

25) Reviewed in *TESOL Quarterly*, 10, 1 (January 1976)

26) Glock, Bender, Dennis, *Probe*, (Charles Merrill), 1965.

27) Joyce Eng, reading specialist at Seoul Foreign School.

28) Meaning "native speakers of English."

is written at this level)

Standard tests for native speakers could be used, though there is definitely a need for specialized tests for English-as-a-second-language students at a lower level than the TOEFL or University of Michigan tests or even David P. Harris' tests.²⁹⁾

I have been speaking of goals only. For actually grading students in the Reading Lab, it might be best to mark them on improvement over the semester rather than by an absolute standard.

VI. The Total Program

To summarize and put all of the above into perspective, I am proposing a freshman English course (3 credits per semester for two semesters) be set up as follows each semester:

Reading-one hour-one credit Emphasis on building vocabulary and analyzing syntactic structures; Students assigned translation, composition, paraphrasing or other out-of-class work each week with Spoken English teachers assisting in the correcting of composition papers

Spoken English-one hour-one credit Reinforcement of grammar and vocabulary taught in reading; Pronunciation, discussion of *ideas* presented in reading (for more advanced students); no homework

Language Laboratory -one hour- credit (no mid-term or final examination but small tests every period) Practice on grammatical patterns learned in Reading; practice in pronunciation; reinforcement of vocabulary etc., through the cloze method; no homework

Reading Skills Laboratory -one hour- credit (no mid-term or final examination but small tests every period) Development of reading skills such as scanning, skimming, through visual aids such as slides described above, and training in the signs of redundancy and relationships; no homework.

Note that since the reading professors will have a heavy load with homework assigned each week, the foreign teachers should be willing to assist with the correcting of composition papers. This is much easier for native speakers. There should be much emphasis on independent work, even though assignments do not have to be long or difficult.

This program will meet the specifications of our goal as stated in the beginning of this paper, except for the corollary that individual differences in ability be acknowledged and provided for. We have stated that there should be different levels of expectancy for students

29) David P. Harris, *Reading Improvement Exercises for Students of English as a Second Language*, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966). The level of these exercises - and they can be used as tests - seems above the ability of Korean college freshmen. Yuko Kobayashi has also found them difficult for Japanese freshmen (*English Teaching Forum*, VI, 2 (March-April, 1970), p. 21.)

of different abilities.

Students should definitely be divided into sections according to English ability. This division could be made on the basis of their entrance examinations or some other test, but I would hope that the scheduling of classes would be such that there might be more flexibility than is usually the case. For instance, if a student was ill or nervous when he took his entrance examination and scored lower than he should have, this would be realized by his English teacher and he could be moved into a more advanced section. This mobility might also serve as competitive incentive as well.

Also, a flexible grading system should be devised by which the best achievers can still be challenged and the poorer students can be spared the feeling of complete hopelessness. Since the laboratories would not have mid-term or final examinations, the teachers could adjust their small tests to the students' abilities. Again, the possibility of grading by rate of improvement in reading skills should be considered. In Reading, an exact standard can be maintained (that is, the same test given to all students), while Spoken English could have a series of tests for the different groups, or one test graded on the curve rather than an absolute percentage of the material.

VII. Conclusion

These have been my proposals, with some reference to the rationale behind them, for enriching a general English course for freshman students. These have grown out of my experience, reading, and discussion with others in the field of Teaching English as a Second Language. I believe the program I have suggested to be balanced, pedagogically sound, and feasible. The variety of approaches should provide interest and the use of common material in Reading, Spoken English and Language Laboratory, more in-depth study. The need for teaching reading skills is obvious, and I have pointed out some directions that may be taken for meeting it.

APPENDIX

The following are remarks and suggestions specifically about the situation at Soong Jun University.

A Test on Independent Reading Ability

As far as independent reading of new material is concerned, a rather low level of ability is indicated by a test that was given some of our students and some native-speakers this

past fall (1975). For really accurate results, this type of testing should be repeated many times and a great deal of data gathered before any conclusions are made. But I believe the test may indicate a wide gap between the actual ability of our students, and our expectation, namely, the ability to make independent use of materials in the student's academic field written for college students who are native speakers of English.

The test was given to the Liberal Arts freshman students in the "Na" section, which were the average students according to their entrance examinations. ("Ka" students were the best students, and "Ta" were the poorest.) The same test was also given to fifth grade students at Seoul Foreign School (10- and 11-year-old native speakers of English). Thirty Soong Jun students were tested, two did not complete the entire exam, and therefore only 28 tests were considered. Twenty-four fifth graders took the test, but three of them did not answer all questions, so only 21 of their papers were considered.

The test consisted of a part of a test by David P. Harris which is a series of unrelated paragraphs with a multiple-choice question after each one concerning the main thought of that paragraph.¹⁾ It must be emphasized that Harris' test was designed for foreign speakers of English. In my test I chose one paragraph and the main-idea question following it, and then added five more questions on content and detail. The test paragraph was about Sir Walter Raleigh's interest in the New World. Soong Jun students had been reading in class short essays about the founding of America, so the subject matter was not entirely new to them. The paragraph was considered by the fifth grade teacher²⁾ and some of her colleagues in the high school to be about eighth-grade level (middle school, second year). Professor Yoku Kobayashi of Tokyo Women's Christian University considers the tests in Dr. Harris' book somewhat above the linguistic level of Japanese freshmen,³⁾ and Mr. Robert M. Stevenson has found them also difficult for his students in Iran.⁴⁾

The test in its entirety is given below:

A decade prior to their defeat of the Spanish Armada, the English made their first attempts to colonize America. Securing in 1578 royal permission for exploration and settlement, Sir Humphrey Gilbert twice set out for America. His first expedition was scattered by a storm, and on his second, in 1583, his frail vessel disappeared. Gilbert's half-brother, Sir Walter Raleigh, then took up the task and spent the remainder of his life and his large fortune in an effort to plant a settlement. His first expedition, in 1584, brought back glowing reports of the coast of Virginia; a second sent over

1) David P. Harris, *Reading Improvement Exercises for Students of English as a Second Language*, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), p. 69.

2) Miss Betty MacIver

3) Yoku Kobayashi, "A New Look at Reading in the College Program," *English Teaching Forum* VI, 2 (March-April, 1970), p. 21.

4) Robert M. Stevenson, "Using Slides to Improve Reading Comprehension," *English Teaching Forum*, XI, 2 (March-May, 1973), p. 12.

the following year to plant a colony returned in discouragement; and a third, left isolated on the island of Roanoke, disappeared from history, leaving as the only evidence the word "Croatoan" carved on a tree. With his fortune exhausted, Raleigh retired from active colonization, but he remained until his death a strong supporter of English expansion.

Questions:

1. Humphrey Gilbert was Sir Walter Raleigh's
 - a) friend
 - b) father
 - c) half-brother
 - d) older brother
2. Humphrey Gilbert tried to get to America
 - a) once
 - b) twice
 - c) three times
 - d) four times
3. On Roanoke Island the word "Croatoan" was left
 - a) carved in stone
 - b) carved on a tree
 - c) written in the sand
 - d) written on a piece of paper
4. Originally Raleigh was a
 - a) rich man
 - b) poor man
 - c) middle-class man
 - d) merchant
5. Raleigh stopped trying to colonize America because
 - a) he had no more money
 - b) the war broke out
 - c) nobody wanted to go
 - d) he lost interest
6. The central idea of this paragraph is
 - a) If it had not been for the knowledge he gained from Gilbert's expeditions, Raleigh would probably have been far less successful in his explorations of the American coast.
 - b) Although Raleigh was more successful than Gilbert in exploring the American coast, his efforts at colonization ended in failure, too.
 - c) Gilbert and Raleigh are remembered as the first Englishmen to conduct successful exploration of the American coast.
 - d) Both Gilbert and Raleigh, the first two Englishmen to attempt the settlement of America, lost their lives in the course of their explorations.

The following procedure was used for both times the test was given: the test was mimeographed and then folded so that one could only see the paragraph or the questions but not both; the students were given a brief introduction, simply a statement that the paragraph was about Sir Walter Raleigh's efforts to start colonies in the New World, and then an explanation of the procedure to be used; the students were given $2\frac{1}{2}$ minutes to read the paragraph (this would allow one to read the paragraph twice at 125 words per minute) and then they were told to turn their papers over and had another $2\frac{1}{2}$ minutes to answer the questions.

The results indicate that the fifth graders understood and remembered more than he SJU students.

The following tables indicate the performances of the two groups:

			<u>Native English Speaking</u>					
<u>Grade</u>			<u>SJU Students</u>			<u>5th Graders</u>		
0 missed—100	%		0— 0.00%			1— 4.75%		
1 missed— 83 1/3	%		2— 7.1 %			6—28.57%		
2 missed— 66 2/3	%		8—28.57%			2— 9.52%		
3 missed— 50	%		8—28.57%			8—38.1 %		
4 missed— 33 1/3			8—28.57%			3—14.29%		
5 missed— 16 2/3	%		2— 7.1 %			1— 4.75%		
6 missed— 0			0— 0.0 %			0— 0.0 %		
			28 100%			21 100%		
 <u>Accumulative Grades</u>			 <u>SJU Students</u>			 <u>5th Graders</u>		
100%			0.00%			4.75%		
83 1/3 or above			7.1%			3.33%		
66 2/3 or above			35.67%			42.84%		
50 or above			64.25%			81 %		
33 1/3 or above			92.8 %			96.3 %		
16 2/3 or above			100 %			100 %		
Average Grade)			50			59.5		

Responses to specific questions were as follows:

<u>Question Number</u>	<u>SJU Students</u>	<u>5th Graders</u>
#1	75% correct	92.25% correct
#2	78.5% correct	81% correct
#3	60.75% correct	85.71% correct
#4	18% correct	33.33% correct
#5	43% correct	19% correct
#6	24.14% correct	42.8% correct

The sixth question, taken directly out of Harris' book, is the most crucial, because, if a student cannot choose the central idea, he has not understood the reading. It was interesting that 45% of the SJU students chose answer d) for this question. Because the text said that Raleigh continued his interest *until his death*, SJU students thought that he had died in active colonization attempt.

A Reading Lab at SJU

I believe that a one-hour-a-week reading skills program, based on further research, is possible at Soong Jun. Classes should be kept small. Room 115 in the Science Building would be the obvious choice of a reading lab room because it is easy to darken, if we choose

to use certain types of visual aids, and it is near the Liberal Arts Office where any equipment could be kept. When this room is not in use as a reading lab, it could be used for other classes.

Dividing into Ability Sub-sections

Though there is a natural leveling of ability in English between the colleges, the Engineering College being the weakest, still within each college students must be divided into ability groups. I propose combining each two sections of 50 students and then dividing the 100 according to English ability into four ability sub-sections of 25 each.

Scheduling

For scheduling purposes, two 50-student sections at a time could be assigned a block of four hours for Freshman English. Then all 100 students of the two sections would be divided according to English ability into four sub-sections. Each sub-section would have one hour each of Reading Lab, Language Lab, Spoken English, and one hour with another sub-section for Reading. For instance, 9:00 on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday could be assigned to the two sections of the Liberal Arts freshmen for their general English course. The 100 students would be rated by their entrance exam scores into KA, NA, TA, and RA ability sub-sections. Each of the two labs would be used by one section each day. The Reading part of the course would be taught by the same professor twice. The Reading Labs would be taught by another Korean professor four times. Below is a sample schedule for the Liberal Arts College freshmen assigned, as in the example above, 9:00 on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday for their English courses. (Abbreviations used: R. L. = reading lab; L.L. = language lab; S.E. = Spoken English)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Ka	Reading	L.L.	R.L.	S.E.
Na		R.L.	S.E.	L.L.
TA	R.L.	Reading	L.L.	S.E.
RA	L.L.		S.E.	R.L.

The teaching load would remain the same as it is presently. For the Liberal Arts College, Korean professors would be responsible for 6 hours (two hours of Reading and four of Reading Lab), foreign teachers for 4, and the language lab assistant for 4.

In the case of the Engineering College which has 7 sections, two groups of two sections

each could be handled in the same way as described above, and the remaining three sections would be divided into six sub-sections according to ability. Six hours would have to be blocked off for the Freshman English for these students. This would not be quite as efficient as the case of combining two sections because each ability sub-section would use only four of the six hours.

	Monday 11:00	Tuesday 11:00	Wednesday 11:00	Thursday 11:00	Friday 11:00	Monday 12:00
KA	Reading	L.L.	S.E.			R.L.
NA		S.E.	L.L.		R.L.	
TA	L.L.	Reading		R.L.	S.E.	
RA			R.L.	L.L.		S.E.
MA	R.L.		Reading	S.E.	L.L.	
PA		R.L.		S.E.		L.L.

Flexibility in Student Placement

Setting the same time frame aside for all students in one grouping (that is, two sections, e.g., all the Liberal Arts students), and having the same professor teach all of the Reading for one grouping and another professor all the Reading Labs in the same grouping, it would be possible to shift students from ability sub-section to ability sub-section according to their mid-term and end-of-the-semester grades. This flexibility might serve as competitive incentive, as well as a corrective to any circumstances that might have caused an unduly low grade on the entrance examination, e.g., illness, or nervousness.

A Suggestion on Grading

A composite score for Freshman English could be given but a student should have at least 50 (49.5) in each part of the course. Students who fail to achieve 50 on one or two parts of the course, but have an overall average of 60 (59.5) or better could be given an INCOMPLETE rather than F and be made to achieve a certain level of competency in the area(s) of their difficulty. Periodic re-tests could be given the following semester.

To illustrate this scoring system, here are some examples of failures, almost-failures, and incompletes:

	<u>Reading</u>	<u>S.E.</u>	<u>L. Lab</u>	<u>R. Lab</u>	<u>Result</u>
	(1/3)	(1/3)	(1/6)	(1/6)	
Student A:	63	54	61	65	Passes. Ave: 60
Student B:	66	47	65	67	INC. Ave: 60 Must pass S. E. re-test
Student C:	63	47	60	60	Fails. Ave: 57 Must repeat whole course
Student D:	56	65	61	59	Passes. Ave: 60
Student E:	61	60	50	50	Fails. Ave: 57 Must repeat whole course
Student F:	72	48	49	70	INC. Ave: 60 Must pass S.E. and L. Lab re-tests

A Seminar for Faculty

Since none of us on the faculty of the English Department in Seoul is trained in this kind of teaching, I propose that in the fall, 1976, a 10-week seminar, meeting once a week, be held for us. An outsider could be brought in initially, but each professor could present a paper or two on this topic, doing some research in the literature and creating ideas of methods that Soong Jun can use. Together we could work up an outline for a year's program. If no outsider were needed, a grant of W220,000 would suffice:

$$8 \text{ professors} \times 10 \text{ sessions} \times \text{W}2500 = 200,000$$

$$\text{mimeographing and other expenses} = \frac{20,000}{\text{W}220,000}$$

This could be expanded to include professors from the Taejon campus as well, which would be W100,000 plus transportation. Additional funds would be needed for slide or other audiovisual preparations, of course.