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ABSTRACT

A review of stages in the evolution of the language laboratory shows that its function has changed in the past 20 years. Originally it was described as a way of providing a means for abundant practice of audiolingual drills. Currently, it is described as a learning center with multiple resources and functions. It might be characterized as a facilitative system whose purpose is to help learners cultivate and fulfill their own expectations. Two case studies illustrate its form and function. First, beginning language classes might have three features; large group, small group, and independent study sessions. The small group conversation sessions would be held near the laboratory and would use its materials. All the independent study and practice would be done in the laboratory or at home. In this framework, instructors are freed from more mechanical aspects of teaching, and so have the time and energy to facilitate learning. Different approaches and time-divisions can be adapted to students' personalities and learning styles. For intermediate, advanced, and literature classes, the laboratory functions as a resource center, providing materials and a multi-dimensional context for learning. A sizable bibliography, a glossary of terms, and examples of integrative techniques are appended. (AMH)

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Integrating the Laboratory into the Curriculum

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The Past

From the outset it should be understood that the only realistic purpose of the language laboratory is to provide a convenient means of hearing and responding to audio-lingual drills (Stack, 1971).

When Stack first formulated the basic tenets of language laboratory configuration and use in 1960, structuralist methods were at their peak. Laboratories sprang up like weeds at every level of learning, criticism was muted, instructors were awed. By 1970, criticism had turned to a mighty roar, instructors rebelled, and the language laboratory was almost abandoned.

The 1970's saw the elaboration of many new methods of second language teaching, of which the most prestigious is perhaps the communicative approach (Threshold *Niveau seuil*) (see Appendix A). It is striking that while *le Niveau seuil* gives great importance to recorded authentic materials, nowhere is a "laboratory" mentioned (Conseil de l'Europe, 1977). In contrast, the American-based audio-tutorial or individualized instruction methods (Abe et al., 1975) resurrect the laboratory, but it is a laboratory which bears little resemblance to the one described by Stack.

In the 1980's, the term "language laboratory" has been replaced by words such as Language Centre, Language Learning Centre, Communication Centre, Audio-Visual Centre, *la Sono-videothèque*, the Sound and Video Library. The term "laboratory" seems proscribed among the avant-garde, reflecting the gradual rejection of "scientific" models.

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Let us not forget that the implied or overt disdain of their literary colleagues. Language teachers sought refuge in the analogy language machines, hoping perhaps to gain some reflected prestige. Language teaching was not an art, claimed psychologists and linguists. Its methods and results were measurable by statistics, its techniques were not teacher dependent but based on universal systems which could and should be applied impersonally in every situation.

While this stance did not eliminate the criticisms of the *littera* camp, it did stimulate a vast outpouring of research into language, language learning and technology. By the time the 1920's rolled around, researchers had proved that structuralist methods, while not improving upon the traditional grammar translation model, at least produced students as competent in language (Ismer et al., 1977). Unfortunately, that level of competence was definitely seen by both students and instructors as rather inadequate.

In addition to inadequate achievement in communication, other problems arose. Machinery, bought in the heyday of optimism but unused, seemed to proliferate, breeding in obscure corners of the classroom or laboratory, reproducing new offspring which gathered dust just as quickly as their parent machines. Classes mushroomed, instructor numbers dwindled. Language teachers began to feel like minority groups threatened with academic genocide by administrators intent on reducing personnel costs.

The pressures from both literary specialists and administrators for language teachers to justify their existence in terms of intellectual prestige in one case and rentability in the other, had, however, positive results: a movement towards innovation and integration.

The language laboratory has gone through several stages. It began as a mechanic tool in the hands of behaviorist-oriented theoreticians: a key to accurate, measurable "scientific" learning. If, in fact, many teachers viewed it with a jaundiced eye, no wonder some theories implied a wish, if not the capability, of replacing the human element entirely.

When behaviorist theories fell from grace, when it was seen that learning did not in fact increase by leaps and bounds, reaction set in. The language laboratory was demoted to a mere adjunct, a tool as humble as the typewriter, useful only in a very limited type

of learning structural and phonetic reinforcement. Indeed at some times vanished from the scene altogether.

The Present

And yet the language laboratory did not die but rather gave rise to the great disappointment of some who hoped for a more fitting end. It evolved in both shape and function. It was "born again" as it were in the form of a Language Learning Centre, defined as a central hub which permitted the implementation of the varied new techniques (Mendoza Harrell, 1976). The line between classroom and laboratory blurred. The new Centre took on aspects of the traditional library.

The right angled rooms and square boxes with robot tapes gradually widened and broadened into a startling and impressive variety of practical tools available to any teacher with interest and imagination. The laboratory no longer imposed a form, a technique, a set pattern, it responded to the needs of both teachers and students. As a Sound and Video Library, it included within its resources linguistics, history, art, music, all aspects of civilisation.

The basic principle which justifies the existence of this new type of laboratory is integration - integration of source materials, integration of techniques, integration of skills (see Appendix B). No longer a sterile room set apart (usually buried in the basement), visited almost as a penance once or twice a week by bored students and disaffected teachers, the laboratory is a core. More comfortable, with flexible hours for student use, it can access for the teacher those materials necessary to present, reinforce, illustrate or supplement ideas and structures. It can cater to any approach, any goal, structuralist to notional-functional, the literature class, the civilisation class, the clientele with specific purposes - professions, travel, sports, scientific studies.

In the current educational terminology, the language laboratory has changed from a "manipulative learning system" whose purpose is "to enable learners to fulfill other people's expectations of them" to a "facilitative system" whose purpose is "to help the learner cultivate and fulfill expectations of his own" (Teather, 1978).

Using the Language Lab

All this does indeed sound very fine. But how practical are the new options? Just how does the new language laboratory achieve integration? Two case studies can be used as illustrations: the beginning language class and the intermediate civilization or literature class (see Appendices C and D).

The Beginning Language Class

In beginning language, the American individualization theories have produced the most abundant models (Ervin, 1981). Based on techniques first tested in science courses, they have three features: "a general assembly session", "a small assembly session" and an "independent study session" using programmed audio-visual materials (Fisher et al., 1977). This structure reflects the basic theory that students progress at individual rates, have varied goals and need varied techniques for successful learning. Adapted to language courses, the results are a set of self-instructional modules, combined with floating contact hours.

The traditional grammar class becomes a problem-solving hour, the instructor is available at set times to discuss and correct specific, pre-announced structural problem areas. While this method is structurally oriented, it could be adapted to the communicative approach by defining situations rather than structural sets.

During the week, teaching assistants are available to lead conversation groups at a variety of posted times, with themes again pre-announced, so that one seminar missed can be made up later in the week. These seminars are located near the laboratory and use its materials: tapes, films, videos, slides, etc. All materials used in class are also available in the study lab; students may repeat, prepare, catch up, or advance.

All other work is done in the study lab or at home. Ideally, a trained monitor should be available at all times in the study lab for individual tutoring. Written and oral assignments are presented by way of workbooks and audio-video cassettes, in a self-correcting format. Computer-assisted instructional materials reinforce the workbooks. Workbooks and oral work may be checked by instructors or not, depending on the course definition.

strategies must be available, from the "highest" intellectual levels - politics, sociology, art - to the more humble interests - sports, cooking, swear words. These supplements to the more standardized core materials enhance motivation, accentuate the individual's importance and reinforce progress. In the seminar, the project-oriented approach (see Appendix A) reinforces this aspect.

So, given the same manpower, the integration of the language laboratory through the individualized approach has produced a system much more responsive to the individual.

The Intermediate Advanced Language Class

For language classes above the introductory level, the laboratory functions as a core resource, in a library mode. Comparative stylistics, translation, advanced grammar (given the proper individualized modules) as well as videos treating specific problems and situations, semantic areas illustrated by clips from film and television, advertisements, dialects, - all these language materials can be summoned at an instant's notice, in response to student interest and pedagogical need.

The Literature and Civilization Class

For literature and civilization courses, the visual media are extremely effective. The great literary treasures of the world have been superbly translated to the small or big screens; authors record their views at length; the best critics of the times debate on television and radio, their comments highlighted by relevant excerpts of the works under discussion.

No one is advocating an illiterate society, but stimulating discussion can spring from a viewing of *Le Grand Meaulnes*, followed by a prose analysis. To see Rohmer's *Perceval* is to facilitate understanding of a work as removed from the students' consciousness as that of Chrétien de Troyes. Or again, one can view *l'Année dernière à Marienbad*, listen to Robbe-Grillet or Resnais discuss the work, then plunge into the *nouveau roman*.

It is perhaps at this level that the communicative approach, with its emphasis on authentic materials, can produce its most exciting

results. A multi-dimensional context created by words, images and sound, by debate among authors and critics, by discussion among instructors and students, is as close to a true immersion situation as reality will allow in an academic setting.

Feature films are a possibly ideal tool in terms of authentic language (Carranza and Whitmer, 1976) and situations, at most levels of learning above zero. Useful exploitation of the material depends on adequate equipment: videotape, which allows stop/start, freeze frames, and quick playback. Some techniques for exploitation include vocabulary presentation, dialogue dubbing or substitution, role playing, sound-track recording for use with varied comprehension techniques (see Appendix B). Films allow student exposure to varied registers, especially the familiar spoken form used frequently in current films such as those of Diane Kurys and most of the *téléromans* from Radio-Canada.

Conclusion

Needless to say, success depends on a well-equipped, well maintained laboratory. Nothing is more discouraging than poor sound, static, or purple faces. Materials must be kept up to date; old-fashioned clothing and attitudes reduce students to helpless giggles. Effective teaching needs thorough preparation of materials.

Other requirements for success are psychological. First, teachers must give up the "God role"; they are no longer the sole source of knowledge for the student. Secondly, models are no longer as rigidly defined. Several pronunciations are acceptable, varied structures to ask questions or to respond. Authentic language is myriad and unpredictable. The language laboratory can offer to students those varieties of communicative acts and experiences that can give them the feeling that, plunged into real life, they would indeed have learned in the classroom/laboratory some of the necessary skills not only for survival in the target culture, but for meaningful communication at a personal level.

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Appendix A: A Glossary of Methods and Current Jargon

Audio tutorial method: see individualized instruction.

Authentic materials: include all materials NOT created for language teaching purposes, such as posters, commercials, cartoons, leaflets, interviews which are not rehearsed, all theatre and film, television plays and documentaries, etc.

= "A recording of a play in slow clear speech is more authentic than a text written around a structure" with professional actors reading the dialogue (Carranza and Whimer, 1976).

= "Condition nécessaire, quoique non suffisante, du bon emploi d'un document authentique, la compréhension de tous les éléments communicatifs qu'il met en jeu (à quoi bon introduire dans le cours un document authentique pour le réduire à une analyse grammaticale traditionnelle?)" (Conseil de l'Europe, 1977).

Audio-visuelles, méthodes: French appellation for the structuralist approach, also referred to as *méthodes structuro-globales*.

= The visual and auditory components are based on verbal structures, as opposed to the authentic materials, in which structures are discovered and examined as imbedded in a specific context, and implying differing types or responses including gestures or silence.

= Key theoreticians include Fries (1946), Brooks (1960) and Jakobovits (1970).

= Learning is either laboratory centered, with pattern drills as a key element, or classroom centered with the laboratory used to reinforce automatic habits. (See Appendix D.)

= The communicative approach has retained the technology developed by these methods. Riley notes that videotapes are three times as popular independent study materials as audio tapes (Riley and Zoppis, 1976).

"Il est certain que l'avenir [pour l'enseignement/l'apprentissage de la compréhension orale] est à la vidéo et au film" (Holec, 1975).

Behaviorism: based on B.F. Skinner's theory of learning through four phases: stimulus-response-positive response-reinforcement.

= It fails to "take full account of language activity as meaningful behaviour" (Izumi *et al.*, 1979) but is the basic principle behind the structurally-oriented laboratory.

Communicative approach: method based on studies begun in England in 1970 (Threshold) for teaching English as a second language to immigrants, and continued for continental languages under the auspices of the Council of Europe in 1971 (*Niveau-seuil*).

= Uses authentic materials from which structures are derived.

= See *Niveau-seuil, Redundancy*. For an evaluation see Perez, 1981.

Interlanguage: an intermediary system of language learning, developed by the learner on the way to assimilating the target language. May be a simplified system or containing predictable errors.

- Important to methods based on listening comprehension which consider errors as positive signs of learning, rather than mistakes to be corrected. (Corder, 1967) (Parks and Thibaudeau, 1981).

- "Modèle réduit pour faciliter une communication immédiate pour l'étudiant qui n'aura pas besoin d'arriver à la norme." (Léon, 1979).

Learning/acquisition: the distinction between *acquisition*, how a child learns his native language; and *apprentissage*, how a learner learns a second language.

- There is an ongoing debate between proponents of *acquisition*-type methods and *apprentissage*-type methods for second language teaching, a debate complicated by current theories which situate the two types of learning in different areas of the brain. Methods which are based on *acquisition* include suggestology, Tan-Gau, and the Monitor Method.

- By its insistence on context, situation and global communication acts, the communicative approach seems to lean towards *acquisition* theories, but also uses *apprentissage*-type materials.

Listening comprehension: defined as the primary skill in discourse analysis (Hatch, 1978, Brown, 1978, Gary and Gary, 1979).

- Of basic importance in the communicative approach (Séférian, 1976). Note however, that the communicative approach considers listening comprehension to include situational context and all visual components, such as gestures, so that audio-listening is a reduced system, less "authentic" insofar as we rarely use such a reduced system in "real" life.

Niveau-seuil: see Communicative approach

- "Se caractérise essentiellement par la prise en considération de la diversité des besoins de communication des adultes ... on peut déterminer les besoins langagiers des apprenants en fonction des actes de parole qu'ils auront à accomplir dans certaines situations, envers certains interlocuteurs et à propos de certains objets ou notions; par exemple, demander une information à un employé au guichet de la gare sur l'heure de départ d'un train ou adresser une requête à un subordonné dans une usine concernant la fabrication d'une pièce métallique. Dans cette perspective, et à la différence des pratiques en cours dans la pédagogie des langues, le choix du vocabulaire et des structures grammaticales est subordonné à l'acte et aux différents paramètres (statut social et affectif des interlocuteurs), canal (téléphone, face à face), support (écrit ou oral), situation (plus ou moins formelle), etc., qui en commandent la réalisation" (Conseil de l'Europe, 1977).

- Le dernier chapitre, Objet et notions (D. Coste), définit le lexique d'un niveau-seuil de compétence de communication en français. Partant de la description des principaux comportements langagiers que les adultes devront maîtriser dans divers champs de référence (par exemple,

être en mesure de demander ou de donner des informations sur sa santé ou sur celle d'autrui), il énumère les différentes catégories d'objets à prendre en compte. Il distingue ensuite, parmi toutes les notions auxquelles il est fait référence, celles qui apparaissent dans tous les champs considérés, appelées notions générales (taille, mouvement, vitesse, par exemple), et celles qui sont propres à un champ particulier, dites notions spécifiques (maladies, par exemple) et il énumère les mots les plus couramment utilisés en français pour exprimer ces notions". (Conseil de l'Europe, 1977).

Monitor Method: focusses on acquisition-type language learning through listening comprehension. (Krashen, 1978).

Notional/functional approach: early name for communicative method, using theories of Niveau-seuil.

Pattern drills: *exercices structuraux*. Application of behaviorist theories to language drills, with the aim of developing automatic reflexes in the second language.

— Type: Stimulus: Je mange le gâteau. Tu...
 Response: Tu manges le gâteau.
 Stimulus: cherches
 Response: Tu cherches le gâteau.
 Stimulus: le chat
 Response: Tu cherches le chat.

— In later adaptations, uses transformations to produce a more meaningful message (Calvé, 1977).

Peer teaching: student input and interaction used as teaching materials (Goldschmid and Goldschmid, 1976) (Teather, 1978).

Project teaching: a communicative approach *avant la lettre*. Teaching focusses on a particular subject or theme (pollution, transport, marketing), with supportive audio-visual and written materials, rather than on structures (Carranza and Whitmer, 1976) (Rivers, 1972).

Redundancy: feature of the spoken code which involves repetition, paraphrasing and fillers which are relatively empty in semantic terms. Redundancy allows the listener to assimilate the meaning of the message, which would be too dense and rapid otherwise.
 — A study of English (Price, 1979) showed 99.9% redundancy.

— in contact with authentic language, the learner must learn to distinguish between utterance and message: "Although at the end of listening to an utterance we can no longer remember the exact words, we can remember very clearly what the message was. Listening comprehension has often tested the wrong skill in this particular area, namely "memory" (Price, 1979).

Suggestology: method developed by Lozanov in Bulgaria, dependent on right-brain acquisition of language chunks through relaxation exercises which permit the lowering of psychological barriers. It always sounds ridiculous but is in fact very impressive in demonstration. See Léon, 1979 and Hall, 1981.

Tan-Gau: acquisition-type method dependent on listening comprehension and interlanguage, in which the learner is never pressed to speak in the second language until he/she does so spontaneously. The instructor and all materials use only the second language, learners may use the first language as long as they wish. (Gauthier, 1963).

Appendix B: Integrative Techniques

Basic Principle: practice must be meaningful; it therefore must be contextualized, and based on authentic materials.

AURAL/ORAL

1. From an oral text (with or without vocabulary presentation)
 - Exercise*
 - a. supply missing words
 - b. open-ended questions
 - c. true/false, multiple choice etc. (Carranza and Whitmer, 1976) (Lowe, 1975)
 - Correction*
 - a. replay original tape with bleeps to indicate word location
 - b. model answers given, or immediate class discussion
 - c. answers given
2. Listen to an oral corpus, take notes. Discuss immediately in class.
3. Students are given specific items to be located in the oral text: i.e. how does the speaker show uncertainty, aggressiveness; what are the redundant items, which speaker dominates and how; other speech strategies. (Carranza and Whitmer, 1976) (Farrington and Richardson, 1978)
4. Use mixed speakers, standard and regional. But insert longer pauses between thoughts for regional speech. Do NOT slow the speech itself. (Carranza and Whitmer, 1976)
5. Use and contrast different registers: academic lecture, panel show, man-in-the-street interviews, native speakers in a social situation, interviews with people of specific professions.
6. Project teaching: the class defines certain themes for discussion, and divides themes into sub-themes for individual preparation. Themes include topics such as energy, pollution, transport, marketing, etc. Students present oral reports based on research with "raw" materials (tapes, videos, magazines, etc.) set in panel discussion or debate modes. A written class report can be issued on the theme, which could add to the corpus of "raw" materials for other classes. Gross suggests a McLuhanesque multimedia assault including multi-screen slides with overvoice narration and music before the general discussion. (Gross, 1975) (Berggren, 1979) (Knight, 1975)
7. Reduce feature film to slide series. (Halbig, 1977)
 - a. describe preceding context
 - b. discuss alternative actions
 - c. alternative dialogues
 - d. shuffle slides to produce alternative interpretations of actions; characters.
 - e. record the dialogue, have students identify dialogue with a slide scene.

8. Slides with narrative tape, Vocabulary handouts.
 - a. reconstitute sentences from key words. (Halbig, 1977) (Durousseau *et al.*, 1977)
 - b. reconstitute order of tape narration based on shuffled slides
 - c. correlate appropriate narration to appropriate slide
 - d. student to create own commentary on a slide.
9. Help tapes for individual work:
 - a. paraphrase the core tape in simple language
 - b. explain difficult vocabulary orally
 - c. give key points of a course for review or absentees (Gross, 1975)
10. Delayed-immediate correction. (Paramskas, 1981)
 - a. student chooses own "raw" material
 - b. records résumé on stereo cassette
 - c. instructor corrects at leisure
 - by using the second track, immediate correction of pronunciation structures and vocabulary.
 - by recording comments at the end
 - by leaving written comments
 - d. student listens to the corrected tape, and hears both his errors and the corrections.
11. Translation; give the first-language equivalent of selected sentences in the oral text. (Metford, 1978)
12. For pronunciation; repeat part of an authentic text overvoicing the speaker and accentuating rhythm and intonation. (Durousseau *et al.*, 1977)
13. Dialogues:
 - a. listen to dialogues
 - b. blank out second speaker; student takes his part
 - c. blank out first speaker, student responds to his own role as first speaker
 - d. compare with the original
14. Peer teaching; Student A: listens to oral text and makes up questions on it for Student B. Student B listens to Student A questions and answers them and vice versa. Switch tapes among different pairs of students, resulting in different questions, then use for class discussion. (Segerman-Peck, 1976)
15. Dubbing a videotape familiar in the first language (i.e. *Dallas*, *Mork and Mindy*, etc.)
 - Variant; locate a version already dubbed and compare it to the student dubbing.
 - Best for *québécois*; the *Flinstones* — the dubbing is the best I have heard for register, idiom and pronunciation
 - Also useful: Ads running on both CBC and Radio-Canada. Some differ, some do not. Good discussion topic on differences.

TRANSFER SKILLS: oral to reading/writing

1. Group composition after exposure to oral text and class discussion. (Segerman-Peck, 1976)
2. Transcribe authentic familiar speech into formal written language. Discuss the necessary changes in class.
3. Transcribe a play into a novel, a scene into a short story.
4. Place reading passage on overhead. Cut into parts. Have oral questions on tape at fixed intervals. This forces the student to learn to read more quickly, for the message, not the words. (Roseblum, 1977) (Mendelsohn, 1979)
5. Give audio taped critique of written assignments (Hughett, 1977) (Gross, 1975) (Farnsworth, 1974)
"A point made orally somehow contains an explanatory power more immediate than in the form of a written statement" (Hicke, 1977). It also avoids writer's cramp and student complaints of illegible comments.
6. Compose an essay orally. Transcribe, including all redundancies, then adapt to written form. (Gross, 1975) (Davis, 1975)
7. Read a written text, have a group of students collaborate on translating into a play, videotape or record the play, use the recording for comprehension exercises. (Mendelsohn, 1979)

APPENDIX C: THE INDIVIDUALIZED OR AUDIO-TUTORIAL CLASS

Traditional structure: 2 hours lecture, 1 h conversation, 1 h lab

Clients: 90 students, normally divided into 3 sections, kept together except for a division into two groups for conversation

Staff hours: instructor: 6 lecture hours + 3 lab hours = 9 hours

Teaching assistant (s): 3 conversation hours

Total staff hours: 12

Definition	Staff	Schedule	Student Attendance	Method	Correction
<i>Student preparation:</i> text, workbook*					
<i>Hour 1</i> Problem solving themes; the participative adjective agreement	instructor	1xweek on same theme	optional: may attend more than one	question/answer	none
<i>Student follow-up:</i> computer-assisted exercises*, revision of written work					
<i>Student preparation:</i> audio/video cassette viewing*					
Hour(s) 2 + (3)	TA (s)	9 + xweek, on same theme; i.e. pollution, drugs...	mandatory, 1xweek, but may attend more than one	see Appendix B	optional
<i>Student follow-up:</i> review of cassettes, * supplementary materials (including video mini-grammar lessons, remedial and help tapes) *, individual interest tapes.					
Tests: written oral	TA (s) instructor	every 3rd week, multi-level	optional	workbook style interview	yes yes

Staff hours: instructor: 3 large group hours; Teaching assistant(s): 9 + seminar hours; Total staff hours: 12

APPENDIX D: THE INTEGRATED CIVILISATION CLASS

Traditional structure: 3 lecture hours including random slides and/or video

Clients: 30 students

Staff: instructor + lab monitor

Definition	Staff	Students	Method	Location
Student preparation view or listen to background materials: audio/video cassettes				
Hour 1 + 2 Lecture: i.e. the Renaissance.	instructor	30	lecture illustrated with slides/video excerpts	lab as audiovisual centre (no booths)
Hour 3 seminar	instructor	2 x 15 or 3 x 10	discussion based on pre-announced theme from prepara- tion materials. Or spontaneous discus- sion of lecture	seminar room ad- joining the lab
Student follow-up: alternative reports using lab centered "raw" materials written: authentic texts (letters, ads, proclamations, literature) oral: authentic language materials				