

**ELICITING THE LANGUAGE OF DECISION MAKING
THROUGH COLLABORATIVE REVISION OF COMPOSITIONS**

by

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ABSTRACT

Written and oral second language pedagogy have undergone a major shift from the traditional focus on form and end-product to a focus on the process of creating meaning. However, recent research indicates that a reliance on process alone is insufficient, and that specific linguistic and knowledge-related demands must be made within a process if second language learners are to develop proficiency in oral and written expository discourse. Interactive decision-making activities in the classroom may present such demands, but the pre-constructed, somewhat artificial tasks typically included in adult ESL classes are generally directed toward the limited goal of stimulating more talk, without verifying their value for generating the language that is cognitively linked to decision-making. While collaborative revision of compositions has been used to aid decision-making during writing, its potential as a language learning activity has not previously been explored.

The current study examines collaborative revision of compositions as a tool for eliciting oral decision-making language in the ESL classroom. Eight adult ESL students participated in two collaborative composition-related tasks and two interactive "constructed decision" activities. Using repeated measures ANOVA, the composition related activities were found to be at least as effective as the

constructed decision activities for eliciting decision-making language as measured by five categories of decision-making moves. Qualitative examination of the discourse indicated that the composition activities also offer a context for conscious reinforcement of principles of grammar and rhetoric.

The present results indicate that this activity may offer a natural alternative to pre-constructed decision-making tasks, and in doing so provides a context for the integration of oral and written language learning. In addition, by evaluating the discourse of activities in language terms, this research may help provide a bridge between processes and products not only for writing but for communicative language teaching.

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INTRODUCTION and IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Recent developments in the field of language education have identified the advantages of incorporating interactive "problem-solving" into both first and second language classroom activities. With the shift of emphasis from "correctness" to the communication of meaning, research has begun to examine how learners can be helped to communicate meaning more effectively. Research on first language (L1) composition has provided an insight into the composing process and has indicated that conditions which are most beneficial to the development of good composition skills involve problem solving activities and peer collaboration (Clifford, 1981; Hillocks, 1986). These have been applied to some extent in teaching writing to learners of English as a second language (ESL) (Ling, 1988; Ling & Rothschild, 1989). A growing school of thought in second language acquisition theory suggests that problem solving approaches which increase learners' verbal interaction in the classroom will necessitate the learning and use of specific language structures associated with reasoning and decision making (Mohan, 1985). The underlying idea here is that we do not learn a language just to know the language, but to use it as a medium of communication and learning in the real world. The language that we need to use is dependent upon the

immediate situation. Furthermore, the ability to know what language to use in a situation depends on a theoretical understanding of the link between language and context. In a decision-making situation a learner not only becomes familiar with the vocabulary and communicative skills necessary for the immediate situation but is required to understand the concepts of evaluation and choice. In the course of learning the structure of decisions, students become aware of the language involved in the process. Ability to engage in this process, along with appropriate language use, will hopefully be transferred as knowledge to any decision-making situation.

Mohan (1986) proposes a framework for the structure of knowledge based on the concept of activity. Inherent in this is the idea that language is best learned through content; that in a second language classroom, form must be linked to content. An activity provides the opportunity for learning about some practical aspect of a content-based topic, and provides a contextual link for the language that needs to be used in similar activities or situations. The knowledge framework separates knowledge structures into those that are linked to practical situations (description, sequence and choice) and those that are linked to theoretical knowledge (concepts and classification, principles, and evaluation). The research to be described here is concerned with the knowledge structures of evaluation and choice. When faced with a specific choice,

an individual considers various possibilities for the immediate situation, but evaluates the possibilities based on background knowledge of values, standards and goals. Exposure to decision making situations requires the individual to use the thinking processes related to the knowledge structures of evaluation and choice, and to begin to understand that there are semantic relations represented by these structures. An interactive activity provides the opportunity for learning how these semantic relations are expressed in the target language.

The topics used for decision making activities are most easily found in the context of school-related content for children's classes and in the content of everyday life activities for adults. But whereas activities that young ESL learners participate in at school reflect required academic content, activities used for adult ESL students must appeal to a wide variety of interests and backgrounds. Numerous adult ESL textbooks which focus on the use of interactive decision making activities, state such goals as: encouraging students to express their "own ideas and opinions"; providing the "opportunity to hear and evaluate the opinions and ideas of other students"... while enabling them to..."reinforce the vocabulary and new language patterns that arise in the oral exchanges" (Byrd & Clemente-Cabetas, 1980); and "to stimulate discussion of topics which are of interest to adults and to enable the student to practise, in as natural a way as possible, the knowledge

s/he has acquired" (Bowers & Godfrey, 1985).

Despite the broad range of interaction situations offered in these and other texts, there are a number of problems with the content. First of all, though the topics are supposedly of general interest, there is no guarantee that the majority of students in a class will find a topic useful to his or her present or future situation. For language to be learned, it must be meaningful and useful to the learner. As stated by Tucker and d'Anglejan, "The student can most effectively acquire a second language when the task of language learning becomes incidental to the task of communicating with someone...about some topic...which is inherently interesting to the student (Tucker and d'Anglejan, 1975, 162). Once adult students get to the intermediate level and beyond (after the basic life skills have been used as content), there seems to be less and less "relevant content" in the ESL classroom. Secondly, adult ESL activities purporting to encourage interactive decision-making almost invariably supply the students with both the decision to be made and the various options to choose from. Recent research suggests that instead of having problems already laid out, learners need the opportunity to *identify* problems, and then figure out what needs to be done through a group exploration of various possible alternatives (Brice-Heath, 1989). Similarly, programs to improve decision making skills in the schools have described the first stages in the decision making process as "define the decision to be

made" followed by "identify available alternatives" (Ochoa and Shuster, 1980) or "identify the issue" followed by "identify possible solutions or alternatives" (Social Studies Resource Manual, 1986). Failure to recognize the importance of these stages in the language learning activity denies learners opportunities to access previously learned knowledge and apply it to new situations. And from a language point of view, they do not get the opportunity to learn the relationships between elements of language and these stages of decision making. Ross (1981) states that the knowledge component of decision making involves "the acquisition of appropriate bodies of information sufficient to ground decision-making in real life experience" (p.279). From both a content and language point of view, outside of very specific learning situations, such as an individual workplace or an English for Specific Purposes classroom, this type of opportunity is almost nonexistent for the adult ESL learner.

The limited opportunity for exploration offered by most currently available commercial materials (from which we can get a good idea of what is typically considered important in second language instruction) reflects a very serious shortcoming in terms of language acquisition. If the value of a decision making situation is that it provides a context for the maximum use of both practical and theoretical language, then activities need to be designed with this form-content link in mind. So, in summary, not only should

an activity be relevant and useful for later transfer of content knowledge, but it must also be designed to be maximally effective for eliciting both practical and theoretical discourse.

One possible solution, which would offer adult ESL students the opportunity to interactively make decisions based on content relevant for everyone, is to view the collaborative revision of student's compositions as an interactive decision making task. Writing is often the most difficult skill for second language learners, and even though many may feel that they do not "enjoy" writing, they realize that it is probably important for their future. The revision of written compositions has come to be accepted as a process of problem-solving or decision-making. Furthermore, there is evidence that revision in groups of peers can help students learn to improve their own writing. But in spite of the spreading use of collaborative revision and other "interactive writing activities", there remains a widespread hesitancy among adult ESL instructors to incorporate writing as a major component of their curriculum because it is still seen as an isolated activity which may take valuable time away from interactive, communicative listening and speaking.

If interactive writing activities, in particular the collaborative revision task, could be viewed as having additional value as effective oral interaction tasks, students would have the dual advantage of working on

writing and speaking (and in fact, reading and listening as well), based on the same relevant content.

Rationale for present study

There has been little exploration of the kind of talk that occurs in the context of peers discussing each others' writing in the L2 classroom, or of whether this context might be valuable for improving L2 learners' ability to engage in oral expository discourse. The goal of this research, therefore, was to investigate the effectiveness of collaborative revision as an activity for encouraging the use of problem solving strategies and the language of evaluation and choice in the ESL classroom. In other words, is collaborative revision a valuable task for eliciting the language of decision making?

The approach chosen for this investigation was to compare collaborative revision tasks with tasks specifically designed for interactive decision-making. Collaborative revision was viewed as two tasks. Much current theory and practice in teaching ESL and first language composition stresses the importance of students first revising their compositions for meaning, content and organization, and later editing the compositions for grammar and mechanics. Therefore the investigation of collaborative revision activities involved two tasks, called revision and editing.

Because pre-fabricated problem-solving activities are widely used in adult ESL classes, it can be assumed that many ESL instructors consider these tasks to be valuable in

some way. The tasks are usually based on entertaining situations involving easy-to-teach content so that students will be instantly engaged and can get right down to the interaction activity. The activity is set up so that students need to use language functions such as evaluating alternatives, agreeing, disagreeing, and giving suggestions, while progressing through the pre-constructed decision situation. This type of activity, which will be called a "constructed decision" task or activity throughout this thesis, provided a ready-made basis of comparison to the collaborative revision activities.

In addition, a non-ESL activity was included in the comparison. Not all instructors are content to use commercial activities developed especially for adult ESL learners; many instructors go to great pains to develop problem solving activities based on content more relevant for the particular group of students they are teaching at the time. These activities, because they are part of an overall content-based goal, could be compared to problem-solving activities found in Social Studies texts designed for secondary school students. It was of additional interest to examine the effectiveness of such an "academic" task to elicit the language of decision-making. Part of the rationale for this was to see if the "academic" task would be too difficult and time consuming. If so, the composition-related tasks could be viewed as a "bridge" between tasks based on personal knowledge and more demanding

tasks based on academic knowledge.

In summary, the two broad categories of interactive tasks under investigation were composition-related tasks and commercially designed "constructed decision" tasks. The composition-related tasks included collaborative revision and collaborative editing. The constructed decision tasks included a popular activity from an adult ESL textbook and a task from an L1 Social Studies text.

Research problem

The purpose of this study was to explore the question of whether collaborative revision and editing might be equally effective problem solving activities, which would elicit the language of decision-making, as activities specifically designed for this purpose. This was based on the premise that interactive decision making tasks are not just activities to increase general talk in the second language classroom, but they serve the purpose of eliciting language that is cognitively linked to the stages of decision-making.

In addition, the study examined the use of a possible coding system which would allow the comparison of the four activities under investigation.

Research questions

There is evidence that writing is intimately linked with decision making, and that group problem solving can help improve writing. Furthermore, research indicates that problem solving activities are necessary in the second language classroom in order to stimulate the expository language of decision-making, which is linked to the knowledge structures of evaluation and choice. This language reflects behaviours commonly accepted as part of the decision-making process (identify the problem; suggest alternatives; evaluate alternatives based on criteria). Based on these indications, the research explored one central question:

1. Does the collaborative revision/editing task elicit the language of decision making as effectively as a task designed specifically for decision-making within an ESL class?

This question was addressed by considering the following:

2. Is the language which, in theory, should be produced during a decision-making task (requests/ offers, agreement/disagreement; advice (modals); preferences; evaluation adjectives; verbs of judgement; justification of opinions; and specialized vocabulary related to the content) exhibited with the same frequency during the collaborative revision and editing tasks as during the two "constructed decision" tasks?

3. Is there any difference in overall verbal participation of students between the four tasks under investigation?

The previous questions can be dealt with through quantitative measurement. The following must be dealt with qualitatively, by examining the actual content of the discourse and exploring its educational value:

4. What do participants talk about during each of the four tasks under investigation? What are the opportunities for learning?

5. In particular, is there a difference in the kind of background knowledge referred to when participants justify their suggestions and/or decisions?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

A review of research relevant to the current study must be drawn from several areas. Because the research was proposed based on the premise that interactive decision making activities are a valuable activity for second language learning, background on the evolution of this premise will be reviewed. This will include a discussion of the idea that these activities must be based on relevant content. Secondly, because the current study addresses the question of whether collaborative revision of compositions can serve as a worthwhile interactive oral decision making activity, research supporting the idea of written composition, specifically revision, as a decision making process, will be discussed. This will include research concerning the cognitive processes involved in composing, and proposed strategies for teaching. Finally research which suggests a possible connection between written composition and oral "decision-making" language will be addressed.

The Value of "Talk" in the ESL Classroom:
An Evolution in Thinking

Interaction and Group Work

In the last decade, second language instructors and researchers have become increasingly aware that if second language learners are going to learn to actually use a new language as a tool for communication, there must be more to talk in the classroom than repetition of phrases, dialogues and short answers to teachers' questions. This awareness led to an interest in using interactive activities in the second language classroom in order to elicit more "natural" talk from students instead of artificial classroom talk. Talk that is considered "natural" talk between native speakers (NSs) of a language is supposedly characterized by continued "negotiation for meaning" or "interactional adjustment" (Long, 1981). Therefore, non-native speakers (NNSs) should be given more opportunity to work in pairs or small groups on tasks which allow and encourage various types of negotiation for meaning, or "moves" such as clarification requests, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, repetitions and rephrasings (Long and Porter, 1985). Long and Porter cite studies providing empirical evidence for the value of group work. Some of the findings have been that both the range of functions and quantity of moves were greater in small group oral interaction activities than in teacher-led discussions; that L2 learners did not produce more errors in NNS-NNS pairs than in NS-NNS

pairs or in the presence of the teacher; and that as much negotiation or repair and appeals for assistance occurred in NNS-NNS pairs as by NNSs in NS-NNS pairs. Long and Porter also cite Barton and Samuda (1980) who found that learners are capable of employing various error treatment strategies, and suggested that they could be given explicit error monitoring tasks during group work. Other interaction research indicates that tasks should involve an information gap, that is, they should require every participant to contribute information nobody else has in order to solve a problem (Pica & Doughty, 1985, Doughty & Pica, 1986). This is meant to promote "optimal conditions for participants to adjust their input to each other's level of comprehension" (Pica & Doughty, 1985:117) and thereby increases language acquisition, according to Long's 1981 input and interaction model.

This research focus, while valuable in that it opened up new horizons in thinking about second language acquisition (SLA), has some major shortcomings in the areas of both content and language use. Proponents of input-interaction have complained legitimately that traditional classrooms do not incorporate enough group tasks requiring meaningful negotiation from all participants working toward mutual comprehension. They claim that ESL learners need to engage in tasks "which emphasize collaboration and an equal share of responsibility among classroom participants" (Pica, 1987:17). They have offered no adequate solution however,

and it is interesting that the sample tasks used to prove their point are largely irrelevant to real life. How then, do they reflect an attempt to offer "equal status" to the learner, an idea put forth quite adamantly by Pica (1987)? Although Long (1985) discusses the importance of content-based tasks related to learner needs outside the classroom, most input-interaction proponents miss the need to focus a task on a topic, and for that topic to be relevant to the learners' further expansion of knowledge and skills. The importance of content-based tasks will be discussed further in a later section. Furthermore, the idea that interaction and negotiation for meaning is enough to increase second language acquisition makes the assumption that the process is sufficient to lead to the desired end, without providing any evidence for that claim.

Practical and expository discourse: the distinction

While it is important to give learners the opportunity to engage in natural discourse, it is also necessary to focus on what we are trying to get a student to learn and practice; in other words, what value does the generated talk have? Even in the first language, a basic difficulty for many school children, and for many adults who never overcome this problem, is in the ability to speak in a cohesive manner, to adequately describe a static or changing situation, or to support an opinion. Brown et al. (1984) suggest tasks which focus on specific types of expository

discourse and which can help students understand where they need to make changes. An example is the use of peer teaching to establish the needs of an audience. If a speaker describes a situation that the listener does not understand, the listener can supply cues to help the speaker clarify. This process apparently also enhances the listener's awareness of audience so that his subsequent performance shows more audience sensitivity. The importance of developing skills in expository discourse is supported by research that indicates a difference between everyday conversation (what Brown calls "chat") and the kind of language used in academic or professional situations. Similarly Cummins (1984) distinguishes between "basic interpersonal communicative skills" and "cognitive academic language proficiency". While the former may be acquired within a few years of beginning to learn a second language, the latter takes far longer to achieve. Negotiation for meaning may indicate that language is being produced, but to what end?

Linking content, meaning and form

Swain (1985) argues that if negotiation for meaning has a positive effect on grammatical acquisition, it is derived from "comprehensible output: output that extends the linguistic repertoire of the learner as he or she attempts to create precisely and appropriately the meaning desired"(p.252). More recent work by Swain (1988)

describes classroom activities in the K-12 system which incorporate content in such a way that focuses on "form-meaning relationships" and which "demand longer, more complex, and coherent language from the learner" (p. 81). According to Swain, tasks need to be "contrived" to ensure the authentic use of language forms, particularly those that would not normally be used in either informal conversation or the traditional language classroom. So although basic communication skills may provide an important foundation for further learning, if expository language skills are to develop, the task must focus on a goal which encourages the use of language specific to the problem.

Mohan (1986) and Staab (1986) describe how tasks can be designed to elicit specific types of talk reflecting the "function" (Staab) or the "knowledge structure" (Mohan) involved in the performance of the task. Mohan's claim is that since language is the medium through which we teach and conduct our lives, language must be learned through content. Language is necessary for the development of content knowledge, and for linguistic proficiency to develop, there must be a focus on both the practical and theoretical aspects of any content situation. ESL students have difficulty linking language and content beyond the practical situation. Mohan offers a model which can help provide these students with a cognitive structure to integrate language and content - a knowledge framework which links aspects of any topic to the specific discourse involved.

The framework organizes discourse into two major categories: practical discourse (related to a specific situation), which includes the knowledge structures of description, sequencing, and choice; and theoretical discourse (related to background knowledge and generalizations), which includes classification, principles and evaluation. Any topic can be broken down into activities which reflect the six knowledge structures, and each requires and elicits the use of specific language. Similarly, Staab states that each activity has an "essence" or quality which causes certain language functions to be used. She found that though some language functions seem to occur over all classroom activities, only carefully structured activities effectively elicit the language function of *forecasting/reasoning* and *evaluation/choice*. Furthermore, this language function was most effectively elicited from children through questioning by the researcher.

A most important contribution of research by Swain, Mohan and Staab is that it examines and analyses actual discourse generated during classroom tasks.

The language of decision-making

The previous discussion suggests that without carefully structured or contrived tasks in the second language classroom, learners are unlikely to have enough opportunity to practice certain forms, specifically those related to informed reasoning and decision-making. Why, in fact, is it

so vital to ensure that students will use this type of discourse in the classroom? What exactly is the difference between situations which require the use of decision-making language and those that do not? Even though there has been a shift from a grammar-oriented approach to a communicative/situational/functional approach in second language instruction, coming closer to providing learners with a better understanding of appropriate communication in specific contexts, the typical situation often stops short of allowing learners to fully exploit the opportunity for language learning that a "real" situation might involve.

Real life situations almost always involve some kind of decision-making, and decision-making goes beyond the typical activities used in language instruction. In addition to familiarizing learners with the vocabulary and basic communicative skills associated with a situation, decision-making requires the learner to understand the concepts of evaluation and choice. According to Mohan (1986),

"Talk about choice is talk which goes beyond the limits of the immediate situation and calls for a wider language potential. From the decision-making point of view, a person in an action situation is making reasoned choices about what to say and what to do....(the decision-making situation) offers a nonlinguistic context of practical and theoretical knowledge which can be made explicit in discourse" (p. 55).

Relating Mohan's concept of knowledge structures to decision-making, it is evident that the decision-making situation, in requiring the evaluation and choice of

alternatives, also involves the language stemming from the other knowledge structures. Before evaluating, a person must be able to describe the various alternatives, classify them or portions of them in terms of categories one has previously learned, understand accepted principles or rules related to the situation, which will help in predicting what outcomes may occur as a result of a particular choice. Therefore, the decision-making situation is the most sophisticated in terms of its potential for eliciting language and in its demands for linguistic explicitness on the part of the learner.

It is necessary to explore more deeply what linguistic explicitness means, that is, what the actual talk is like. Using actual classroom discourse from first language content classrooms, Smith et al (1967) demonstrate how units of discourse can be classified into "ventures", depending on the speaker's objectives. For example, a "reason venture" concerns "the reasons someone has for doing something or for deciding to do something" or "something a person takes into consideration in deciding to perform an action" (p.27). Reasons can be based on intention to achieve a purpose or on a rule which authorizes specific action. Four specific moves in reason ventures are identified: action, purpose, rule and factual considerations, each of which interacts with the others in completing a reason-action venture, and each of which may be characterized by several sub-moves. Similarly, "evaluative ventures" involve the application of

some value term to an object, which may be a belief, an action, a person, an event, or anything that can be evaluated. In order to justify a rating or evaluation, "one should be able to explicate the value term and...provide criteria of its application" (p.33). Providing criteria requires an ability to describe the "value object" as well as a knowledge of and ability to describe the properties that would make that value object ideal. This knowledge may come from both academic learning and personal experience, but in either case requires a practical application and generalization of previous knowledge.

Looking specifically at situations which require evaluation and reasoning, what is the actual nature of the talk which occurs? Mohan (1985) links notional language as it is treated in the Communicative Grammar of English (Leech and Svartvik, 1975) with the thinking processes associated with his knowledge framework. The language associated with evaluation will include describing emotions, using adjectives such as satisfactory, unsatisfactory, or expressions such as like and dislike; stating preferences; invoking standards such as good/bad or right/wrong; stating points of view and wishes. The language associated with choice will include expressions of opinion such as "I think" and "in my opinion"; use of modals (should, must, can) when suggesting possible alternatives (giving advice); commands; requests; expressions of intention, willingness and permission.

The classroom research that contributed to the concept of "ventures", and further work by Smith and Meux (1970) indicate that particular types of presentation are necessary to encourage students to fully explore a "value question" and by extension, allow for the appropriate language to be used. In any content discussion, a teacher has the option to present questions that only require factual answers, or to include those that stimulate students to explore alternatives, discuss criteria, assemble facts, and make reasoned judgements. Similarly, as mentioned earlier, Staab (1986) found that the language of forecasting/reasoning and evaluation/choice were best elicited through specific types of questions by the teacher, not by an activity alone. And not unrelated is research indicating that referential questions, which require interpretation or opinion, elicit longer and more complex responses than do display questions, which call for the recognition or recall of factual information (Brock, 1986). So although the work of Smith and Meux is concerned with values clarification in the content classroom, it offers a strong argument for using a more exploratory technique in the second language classroom, in light of indications that the language of evaluation and choice will be elicited only in situations which require that specific mode of thinking.

"Constructed decision" tasks

Research has been cited stressing the need for classroom tasks or discussions to be specifically designed and questions structured in order to encourage the desired type of thought and discourse. Since interaction research has indicated that learners are capable of carrying on activities in small groups independent of the teacher, in which they get more opportunity to participate than in a teacher-fronted situation, it is not surprising that numerous commercial texts have become available which include collaborative, small group decision making activities *for the adult second-language classroom*. These activities are often designed so they can be completed within one class meeting, so they usually revolve around a limited pre-determined problem situation. Students are typically provided with a brief presentation of background information, a statement of the problem and a choice of alternatives to discuss. As previously mentioned, the decision(s) to be made is/are predetermined or constructed for the learner; therefore these tasks are referred to as "constructed decision" tasks throughout this study.

Some texts indicate an understanding that decision making situations have a particular value for producing what is being referred to in this paper as decision-making language. For example, the text *React Interact* (Byrd & Clemente-Cabetas, 1980) links communicative functions with

grammatical forms within a specific problem situation. In one activity, the functions "expressing opinions" and "describing" are linked with comparisons and contrasts, *if* clauses, and modals. Similarly, in an activity from the text *Decisions, Decisions* (Bowers & Godfrey, 1985), "make suggestions" and "predict outcomes" are linked to the grammar points "clause formation; (and) adverbial - concession, reason, result, condition". In addition it is stated in the introduction to this text that "many of the issues lend themselves to research: for example, what is the difference between a line of credit, a personal loan and a mortgage, what is a union, what does it do, and what are the legal requirements for a day-care centre", which offers the opportunity for students to talk about decisions based on background information that they may actually use in their daily lives.

While texts like these demonstrate some responsible tendency toward relating decision making activities to real life, several shortcomings are apparent. One is that the content may still not be relevant for all adult ESL learners in a class. Earlier discussion dealt with the importance of decision-making situations being true to reality; the content of these activities should be true to the reality of the majority of adult ESL students in a classroom. In the K-12 school system, language can be integrated with subject matter in the curriculum. If content is presented with Mohan's (1986) knowledge framework in mind, students should

become increasingly able to use theoretical discourse that relates to the thinking processes they employ when completing a type of task. Educational tasks in the K-12 system are the reality of a school curriculum. Talking about divorce or world issues or even employment are not necessarily the shared reality of a class of adult ESL learners.

The second and perhaps more serious shortcoming actually stems from the same root. One reason why short, well packaged interactive decision making activities are often used in the adult ESL class is that there is usually no content curriculum. But these packaged activities leave very little room for exploration, and hence, little opportunity for real linguistic expansion. This can be contrasted, for example, with tasks suggested in the text *ESL for Action; Problem-Posing at Work* (Wallerstein & Auerbach, 1987), which offers examples of possible situations workers may face, but leaves it up to the learners to determine the problem, the source of the problem, and possible solutions. Discussion of alternatives is based on relevant information that the participants often research themselves. Recent research suggests that most adult ESL activities do not simulate real life because the problems and possible solutions are already laid out (Brice-Heath, 1989). Making tasks more real means giving students ownership of the problems by letting them figure out when a decision needs to be made and explore their own solutions,

which would require them to use their existing knowledge and search for new knowledge as they see the need. Wallerstein and Auerbach state that when content comes from the students, it is "a powerful motivating factor in language acquisition" (p.2). Students learn to recognize a code, or representation of a situation, which has the purpose of promoting critical thinking and action, and is a starting point for language. This concept of a link between critical thinking in decision situations and the production of appropriate language is similar to the concepts inherent in Mohan's knowledge framework or Smith et al's discourse ventures. The discussion moves from the concrete to the analytical, including describing the situation, defining the problem, relating similar experiences, questioning why there is a problem, and discussing possible alternatives.

The purpose of discussing this approach for using decision making in the specific context of the workplace is to demonstrate the possibility of simulating real decisions in the classroom. The "problem-posing" approach originated for the specific purpose of empowering a group of people with a common problem to take control of their lives through literacy education that involved critical thinking and action. It has been adapted for ESL classes but some criteria do exist, particularly that it must be tailored to a particular community or class, so that the content is relevant.

One problem then, is to determine content which will be relevant to adult ESL learners of varied goals, interests and academic skill backgrounds. In addition it must expose them to both the practical and theoretical language of decision making, in a context where they have the opportunity to determine the problem, and explore solutions that emerge from both personal and academic knowledge of the situation. It must begin with a practical task but move to expository learning (Mohan, 1985: 101).

In the early stages of second language acquisition, an individual first needs to learn the language necessary for meeting immediate practical needs. At this point, content and language can be more easily integrated in the classroom, and the language does not move much beyond the here and now. As adult ESL learners move toward greater language proficiency however, assuming that the goal is to function in more cognitively demanding or academic situations, the content must become more theoretical. The task or activity needs to provide a bridge between what Cummins (1983) calls context-embedded and context-reduced situations. To emphasize what has already been stated, if talk is to be useful towards the development of both content knowledge and language proficiency, it needs to focus on both the practical and theoretical aspects of a situation. In trying to bridge the gap between a decision situation that revolves around a personal situation in an ESL classroom and one that might be faced in an academic content classroom, one

possibility is to focus on the task of written composition as a context for interactive decision making. Adult ESL students have a common need to improve their skills in written composition, and this improvement depends on their developing and using a theoretical background knowledge of the criteria for acceptable writing.

The following section will discuss the cognitive link between written composition and the concepts and thinking skills of evaluation and choice. Recent research on collaborative revision of compositions will also be described.

Decision-making and composing

Ever since composition research began to focus on the writing process rather than exclusively on product, writing has been linked with decision-making. Whether revision of compositions is viewed as occurring primarily through a series of drafts, or as an ongoing process, it involves identifying the need for change, evaluating alternatives, and choosing a course of action. Revision has been described as "re-vision, or taking another look at what has already been seen, but this time from a different perspective" (Mayher, Lester & Pradl, 1983); as "retranscribing" of text already produced, when writers decide "after reviewing text or their plans, that portions of the text are not what they had intended or not what their

readers need" (Nold, 1981); as seeing "in combination with memory the fuller reality" (Lloyd-Jones, 1981); as "substantive change -- re-seeing, restructuring, even reconceptualizing the entire discourse" (Flower, Hayes et al, 1986). In other words, revising involves comparing one's existing text to one's intentions and one's knowledge, evaluating whether intentions have been met, whether one's knowledge has been translated effectively, and then choosing alternatives if changes need to be made.

Linking choices to knowledge

What teachers and researchers find, however, is that unskilled writers do not realize the need for taking the step to transforming their writing for a reader (Mayher, Lester & Pradl, 1983); that in fact they are often not aware of the choices they do make, but feel that the way they write is inevitable (Smith, 1982); that they do not relate various parts of the text to an overall discourse theme (Perera, 1984); and that even when they locate a problem and want to revise, they are unable to generate a more promising solution (Nold, 1981). Martlew (1983) suggests that poor writers adopt habitual ways of approaching a task and may not even realize when a task is difficult and consequently remain unaware of their problems; not only do they not realize *in what ways* their writing is inadequate but they do not know *how* to make changes. Claiming that writers must become aware of how to utilize knowledge and structure

language, Martlew cites Flavell's (1974) work on metacognitive skills, which involve "reflecting on the properties of language and in communicative terms, being able to consciously select, evaluate, revise, and reject what is inappropriate in terms of given situations and listeners/speakers" (p. 307). Flavell's model of role-taking skills, to develop the ability to reflect and act deliberately, consists of four steps: 1) recognize a need exists; 2) recognize action is required; 3) find ways of acting upon the awareness of this need; and 4) maintain this awareness and appropriate action over time. This model is consistent with the concept of decision-making discussed earlier, where maintaining awareness and linking it with appropriate action involve generalizing background knowledge from situation to situation.

The "cognitive process theory of composing" (Flower and Hayes, 1981), sees writing as a recursive process of decision-making and also addresses the question of what criteria govern the choices writers make. The first criteria is apparently the writer's representation of the rhetorical problem, which includes "not only the rhetorical situation and audience which prompts one to write, it also includes the writer's own goals in writing" (p. 369). An inaccurate representation of the rhetorical problem can prevent the writer from attending to, not to mention solving, various parts of the problem along the way. Beyond understanding the rhetorical problem, the writer faces the

tasks of drawing knowledge from long term memory; setting a goal, generating and organizing information, translating this into writing; and reviewing, evaluating and revising the text produced so far.

Flower and Hayes stress that the writer is directed by his/her own network of goals. These are categorized into process goals, which direct what the writer does to carry out the process, and content goals, which specify what the writer says or the effect he wants to have on an audience. Organizational goals may be a combination of the two types. Flower and Hayes claim that skilled writers seem to have automatic or standard criteria and expectations governing their evaluation of a need for change. They not only have more conscious (but internalized) control over their own process but are able to do goal-directed searches for content which involves exploring and consolidating their existing knowledge.

The major point that Flower and Hayes raise is that choices made during composing relate directly to the writer's understanding of the demands of a particular situation; his knowledge of requirements of different genres; background knowledge of the topic; and perhaps most importantly his control over an ability to create a top level goal, explore sub-goals, and re-evaluate in terms of the original or revised higher-level goal. Less proficient writers tend to operate by a "what next?" strategy as opposed to intention or goal directed behaviour.

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1981) suggest that unskilled writers may lack the "internal feedback system which allows revision or evaluation to become part of the writing process" (p.35). They identify a need for "extensive experience of noting that something is not right, trying to do something about it, and noting whether or not the effort succeeds" (p. 39) in order to develop the internal feedback system which is vital for all levels of revision. Again, these can be directly linked to the knowledge structures of evaluation and choice.

Bereiter and Scardamalia found that children can be trained to consciously use their funds of knowledge for purposeful planning and revising. This involves the ability to redirect attention from the original text and to deliberately bring alternatives to mind at the right time. They found that the development of "accessibly coded knowledge and of executive procedures for assessing it" (p. 44) may be aided by 1) formal teaching of rhetorical devices such as strategies for highlighting ideas; 2) sentence combining; and 3) reading -- if students read with a writer's alertness to technique. An inexperienced writer may have extensive background knowledge on a topic and may even have conceptual knowledge about the structural elements of the text he wants to produce, but lacks the "functional means of using this knowledge" (p.50). Therefore, tasks must help students to "draw on their conceptual knowledge and to make it procedural" (p. 45). Bereiter and Scardamalia claim that

it is the engagement in problem solving tasks which gets procedural knowledge "harnessed to goals" (p. 45).

Flower, Hayes et al (1986) identify two key, interdependent variables underlying the decisions made in revision: knowledge, or the ability to recognize features of the text and detect and deal with problems; and intention, which includes the reviser's image of the task as well as goals and criteria for evaluation. Their model of the process of revision involves an interplay between the evaluation -> strategy selection process and the sequence of goal -> problem representation -> identification of available strategies. The model involves a continuum with problem representation, or ill defined "detections" at one end and diagnosis, which is well-defined and carries implied strategies for problem solving, at the other. Depending on whether the problem has been "detected" or "diagnosed", the selected strategy will generally be "rewrite" in the first case and "revise" in the latter. The revision strategy implies that there is some justification for the change, that is, the writer is evaluating the situation using some kind of criteria. Although the detect/rewrite strategy ("running the original gist through the mental sentence generator") may work in some situations, problems can arise when the writer does not have a global plan and does not know why the first text was inadequate. For any problems susceptible to diagnosis, the diagnose/revise strategy should be used. This involves recognizing and categorizing

problems, and building up a repertory of meaningful patterns (Flower, Hayes et al. compare it to chess). This allows the writer to separate the problem from other noise and focus on specific features; maintain various levels of awareness depending on what is needed; bring past knowledge to bear; and process information by imagining a reader's response.

It is evident from the previous information that composing is related to Mohan's (1986) concept of choice. Whether decisions concern the conventions of written language; relating purpose, content, and organization to audience needs; word choice; or requirements such as layout, signaling and cohesion (Nold, 1982), it is clear that skill in writing involves making choices based on theoretical knowledge, and requires an ability to form a strategy by linking goals and knowledge. In order to learn to access and use background knowledge, Nold claims that students need explicit indications of inadequacies of meaning in their writing.

Faigley and Witte (1981) categorize revision into surface changes (grammar, mechanics, and minor meaning-preserving changes) and text-based changes (changes in meaning). They found that inexperienced writers made mostly surface changes, and the few meaning changes made were minor adjustments, particularly additions. More experienced student writers made more changes that involved considerably restructuring the text. Basically, Faigley and Witte conclude that successful revision results not from the

number of changes a writer makes but from the type of change, and the degree to which changes "bring a text closer to fitting the demands of a situation" (p. 411).

The ability to make these changes effectively seems to be related to the strategy a writer uses after detecting a problem. Cumming (1987), in a study of adult ESL students who were either expert, intermediate or basic writers in their first language (French), found that the way a writer approaches or attacks a problem in writing can range from simply making a statement or identifying a problem to using any of a variety of heuristic search strategies for evaluating the problem and reaching a solution. Whereas more proficient writers evaluated and resolved problems through searches, less proficient writers were able to identify problems to the same extent, but rarely evaluated or resolved them through a search. They did, however, frequently resolve problems without a search, which could be compared to Flower, Hayes et al.'s detect-rewrite strategy in revision. Apparently basic writers did not know how to apply a search and usually left problems requiring a search unevaluated and unsolved.

Cumming's research looks at writing ability and second language proficiency of ESL students as two separate contributors to quality of writing in the second language. Results support the idea that cognitive processes underlie writing ability and that writing ability may extend across languages. Cumming suggests that expert writers' ability to

perform may be due to an additional attentional capacity and relevant topic knowledge; an operational knowledge of rhetorical problems which "provides more expert writers with a basis for instantiating substantive knowledge in rhetorical forms" but which "appears to require a unique procedural knowledge to be put into writing" (p. 189); and/or an ability to "transform" their knowledge as they write, as opposed to the way less proficient writers "tell" their knowledge. Cumming suggests a revision of the commonly accepted (in recent years) idea that ESL students should attend first and foremost to meaning; instead students must be encouraged to focus on the gist (meaning) *in relation* to other aspects of their writing such as language use, discourse organization and intentions. In other words, they need to constantly bring theoretical knowledge to bear as they attend to each writing task.

Additional evidence that decision-making in writing is directly related to theoretical background knowledge can be drawn from Meyer's L1 and Carell's L2 (1984, 1987) research which indicates that teaching students to recognize top-level rhetorical structure in written text can aid in comprehension. Bereiter and Scardamalia's suggestion that students must "read with a writer's alertness to technique", implies that acquiring an alertness to technique or to the signals of hierarchical structure should carry over into the student's own writing.

Connor (1987) found that instructing students in

topical structure analysis could be useful as a revision strategy, to check for coherence in their own writing: "it encourages students to consider and reconsider the text as a whole and allows them to gauge for themselves the relative coherence of their writing" (p.683).

Benton and Blohm (1986) found that adjunct questions given to the students after the writing of the first draft enabled the students to elaborate on their texts with deeper levels of processing. The questions were designed to get writers to draw more extensively upon previous or existing knowledge, and to think about the topic in different ways, to lead them to produce lengthier and more elaborate passages. The questions were both general (drawing on rhetorical knowledge) and specific to the topic.

Similarly, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) demonstrate how providing the writer with cues can facilitate the development of better strategies. This is based on the idea that a writer must use the strategies of "compare, diagnose, operate" to work through the problem solving process in writing. Students were given cues to help them evaluate their work by applying criteria, and then choose the appropriate action or diagnose specific problems and suggest solutions. Although Bereiter and Scardamalia tend to advocate the use of these revision strategies *during* the writing of the original draft, the study did show that when the cues were given *after* the first draft was written, revision did improve.

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) offer a model of the reflective processes used in writing called the dual problem space model of reflection. According to this model, there is an interaction between the *content space*, responsible for idea production, and the *rhetorical space*, specifically tied to text production. Reflection within the content space occurs in everyday life, when one uses one's knowledge and beliefs as the basis for opinions, explanations and decisions. Reflection within the rhetorical space concerns plans for achieving purposes in composition, and is based on rhetorical knowledge and skills. Bereiter and Scardamalia claim that although novice writers are able to convert knowledge, or output from the content space, into rhetorical subgoals, or input for the rhetorical space, they have difficulty going back to the content space when faced with a rhetorical problem. They contend that Murray's (1978) claim that writing is an aid to understanding can only be true if there is an interaction between the two spaces. What is most interesting here is the similarity with reflective models of language learning and learning in general. The language and content interaction as described by Mohan (1985) involves an interplay between background knowledge and practical tasks. Writing a particular composition represents a here-and-now situation, but decisions depend both on the ability to put theoretical knowledge to use, and on knowing what background knowledge needs to be pulled out for a specific situation.

Bereiter and Scardamalia's "procedural facilitation" is designed to improve a writer's autonomous ability to reflect without an intermediate state of depending on another person's input. The writer learns to internalize cues that will help him alternate between the two problem spaces. Other literature, however, demonstrates the use of similar techniques in the context of teacher-student conferencing and peer conferencing.

Conferencing and collaboration

Beach (1986) suggests the use of teacher-student conferencing to help students begin to assess their own writing by learning what to look for during revision. Students are led through the processes of 1)describing topic and audience related goals and rhetorical strategies based on criteria for the specific text-type; 2)judging the perceived problems; and 3)selecting appropriate revisions to deal with these problems. Beach claims students need to be trained to understand the criteria implied by their own intentions. In the judging stage students may need constant reminders of criteria to help them eventually adopt a reader's perspective and be able to sense dissonance. They need to learn to apply the criteria, to specify a reason for each problem -- such as that something is missing or why something must be changed. If the problem is not clearly defined it is not possible to make a correct judgement.

Hillocks (1986) cites several studies which indicate

that learner-centered small group tasks involving criteria-based problem solving can be beneficial to writing skill and quality. Hillocks suggests that the application of criteria by students to their own and others' writing "results not only in more effective revision but in superior first drafts...that the criteria learned act not only as guides for revision but as guides for generating material" (p.160).

Clifford (1981) studied peer collaboration through the stages of composing, following a highly structured "invariant sequence" throughout 13 compositions. In small groups students responded to each others' first drafts using a feedback sheet which focused on criteria specific to each composition. Group work apparently yielded compositions superior to those of a control group.

Nystrand (1986) similarly claims that peer review is necessary in order to train writers to "experiment with text options that are essentially defined by the need for reciprocity (with reader) at the levels of topic, comment and genre" (p. 179). Nystrand cites research indicating that peer review "contributes to gains in critical thinking, organization, and appropriateness (Lagana, 1973); revision (Benson, 1979); attention to prewriting and increased awareness of one's own writing processes (Nystrand, 1983); and writer confidence (Fox, 1980)" (p. 180). He claims that writing groups that work "have extended discussions of substantial issues...considerations of the writer's purpose,

organization, rhetorical effect, and adequate development" (p. 188). He feels that intensive peer review is effective because of the process of intensive problem solving involved:

"used intensively, it creates an environment somewhat like the social context of initial language acquisition, where the learner can continuously test hypotheses about the possibilities of written text...in Vygotskian terms, we may regard intensive peer review as a formative social arrangement in which writers become consciously aware of the functional significance of composing behaviors, discourse strategies, and elements of text by managing them all in anticipation of continuous reader feedback...the composing processes and discourse strategies that writers take from their groups largely emerge in ways that are often evident first in the social interaction of peer review" (p. 211).

Effective use of group revision by ESL students is reported by Ling (1986), whose students respond orally to each others' initial drafts, line by line, to let each writer know what is missing or vague. Later, also in small groups, learners help each other correct mechanics, based on a criteria sheet developed specifically for that class. The essential components of Ling's program reflect what much of the literature indicates to be most beneficial for developing writing skill -- collaboration and problem solving based on criteria and specific skill development.

The preceding discussion of L1 and L2 research on written composition demonstrates that there is general agreement on a number of issues. First, that inexperienced writers seem to attend to more surface or meaning-preserving

changes in revision may be due to a lack of cognitive skills which prevents them from accessing relevant theoretical knowledge and from evaluating their writing with a reader in mind. Second, these skills seem to be teachable using techniques such as providing rhetorical cues and questions which reflect criteria. Third, there is an indication that group work, for both L1 and L2 students, is a viable way of helping students learn to write with an audience in mind, and that students in their peer groups are capable of helping each other focus on specific criteria.

Collaborative revision: an interactive decision-making activity

Cumming's (1987) research indicates that second language proficiency does not affect the cognitive skills involved in the decision-making processes in composing, though naturally language proficiency may affect the quality of compositions in other ways. Research has also shown that learners are capable of employing error treatment strategies and could be given explicit error monitoring tasks during group work (Long and Porter, 1985). It can be inferred that second language learners should be able to be trained in the skills of revision using the second language and could learn to apply criteria and monitor explicit aspects of their peers' writing.

Group revision may have an added dimension, however, in that it could be used as an interactive decision making task

that would elicit oral expository discourse. Studies focused on the interacting benefits of group work and L2 writing have so far only dealt with talk about writing as a way of improving writing; they have not actually isolated instances of valuable talk. Similarly the body of literature on co-operative learning indicates the value of structured group work for increased content learning (Slavin, 1987) and also language learning (Bejarno, 1987), but does not focus on the actual talk in the group that may be contributing to the process of learning. For example, peers, working together on a grammar worksheet may complete the task and retain the information from it, but the talk around the completion of the task is ignored in the research. It may in fact be the expository talk around the task that results in the most language learning. Cazden (1988) points out that the significance of focused talk among peers in the classroom is that it provides "an opportunity for students to practice forms of academic discourse -- the special ways of talking expected in school" (p. 134). Students get the chance to use language often limited to the teacher-role, such as questioning, exploring and directing; they can participate more fully in the language of teaching and learning (Cazden, 1988). This involves both practical (context-related) and theoretical (background knowledge related) talk, and where peers work together to complete classroom tasks this talk should involve the language of decision-making.

This concept is relevant to the use of collaborative revision as a language learning activity. Since revision is inseparable from decision-making, it follows that the "essence" (Staab, 1986) of the peer revision task is that it will elicit the functions of forecasting/reasoning; it involves the "knowledge structures" (Mohan, 1986) of evaluation and choice and should therefore generate the language of decision-making.

Finally, there is some indication that students do use evaluative language in the context of the writing group. Gere and Stevens (1985) explored the role of oral response in shaping subsequent revisions in children's writing, and analysed the talk of writing groups. They found that the majority of moves referred to the content of participants' writing, and often included judgement or evaluation. The next most prevalent type of move involved "suggestions to the writer about changes in wording, sentence structure or content" (p.92). In addition, interviews with teachers revealed reasons for using group work such as to help students learn to watch for certain features reflecting the purposes of the assignment, or to give students a chance to see how their writing affected others so they could "internalize that information and make whatever judgments they deem necessary" (p.87). Students also found the procedure more useful than a more traditional individualized procedure. By looking at naturally occurring talk, Gere and Stevens found that the language could be classified, in

this case as largely evaluative. Moreover, the authors found that writers did incorporate their peers' suggestions into their revisions and even small changes generally showed a closer relationship of text to the writer's intentions, and so an apparently greater ability to translate intentions and topical information into writing with consideration given to audience and principles of rhetoric.

In addition, a pilot study was done by this researcher to determine whether adult ESL learners working in pairs would use the language of decision-making and also refer to background knowledge they had learned in class when discussing their decisions. It was found that much of the talk was evaluative, and the students referred to principles of rhetorical organization and also to the use of sentence combining strategies (both of which they had been exposed to in class) when making judgements and suggestions related to their partner's writing.

As discussed earlier, the task of determining relevant content becomes more difficult with adult ESL students at an increased proficiency level, and who have varied goals, interests and academic or skill backgrounds. However, an interest in improving the effectiveness of their writing is usually a common goal. In this sense, "improving writing skill" can be seen as content. If writing is a cognitive skill to be developed, the various components of that skill can be addressed in class. Although it might seem on the

surface that teaching writing as a "separate skill" isolates it from other language skills, in fact, reading, listening and speaking are all vital components of collaborative revision. The concepts, principles and values related to "good" writing constitute the background knowledge to which group members can refer in discussing, evaluating and making suggestions related to each others' writing. It is with this concept in mind that the task of collaborative revision is explored in the present study.

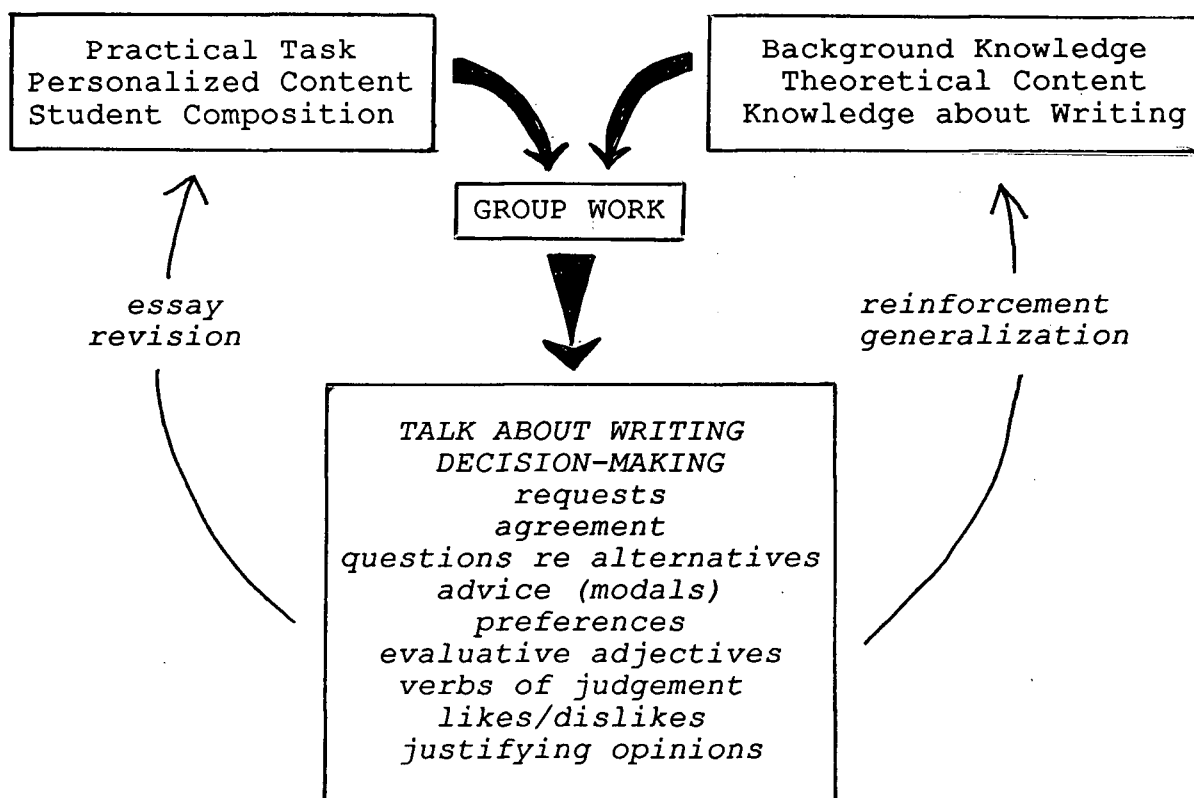
Hypotheses

Background and rationale

From the preceding discussion a number of concepts can be isolated which support a link between the task of collaborative revision of compositions and the use of oral decision-making language. Both L1 and L2 writing proficiency seem to be directly related to cognitive skills and an ability to make decisions based on the writer's goal, background knowledge and perception of the reader's needs. Inexperienced writers can be taught to make decisions more effectively by focusing attention on particular stages of the decision process and on particular aspects of writing and rhetorical structure. Collaborative revising among peers seems to help students become more sensitive to audience needs; participants are able to identify problems and suggest alternatives. By applying the concept of

activity as a context for eliciting specific language forms, it seems logical that the task of collaborative revision could elicit the language of decision-making (evaluation and choice). This dimension of the collaborative revision task has not previously been explored.

The following diagram illustrates a possible model for the collaborative revision process as a bridge between context-dependent practical tasks and context-reduced academic tasks. While the practical task is based on familiar, student-produced material, the discussion and decision-making depends on theoretical background knowledge. Decision-making language is generated and theoretical knowledge is reinforced.



The present study compared two components of collaborative revision (content/meaning revision and editing) with two "constructed decision" activities found in commercial textbooks. Participants were audiotaped during the four interactive activities, and tapes were transcribed and coded for five measures of decision-making "moves". The basis for comparison was frequency of the five moves as well as a qualitative examination of the transcripts.

Operational statement of hypotheses

1. H_0 : There are no differences between the four tasks in terms of subjects' performance as measured by frequency of total decision-making moves.
 H_1 : There are differences between the four tasks in terms of subjects' performance as measured by frequency of total decision-making moves.
2. H_0 : There are no differences between the four tasks in terms of subjects' performance as measured by frequency of specified individual decision-making moves.
 H_1 : There are differences between the four tasks in terms of subjects' performance as measured by frequency of specified individual decision-making moves.

In addition to the statistical analysis required to test the hypotheses, an in depth discourse analysis was considered necessary in order to address more subtle concerns brought up in original research questions 4 and 5.

4. What do participants talk about during each of the four tasks? What are the opportunities for learning?

5. Is there a difference in the kind of background knowledge referred to when participants justify their suggestions and/or decisions?

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The primary objective of this investigation was to explore the value of collaborative revision of compositions as an oral, interactive decision-making activity for the ESL classroom. To make this possible, a secondary but necessary objective was to develop a technique of analysis that could be used to study "decision-making language" over a range of oral ESL classroom activities.

A pilot study was conducted in a classroom setting similar to that used in the actual study. This allowed the investigator to confirm the feasibility of the plan for data collection and also provided some experience with the process. Discussion with classroom instructors involved confirmed the appropriateness (to the proficiency level of the students) of the tasks meant for use as "non-composition-related" decision-making activities.

The methodology in this study included gaining access to one Intermediate level ESL class; selecting two groups of four students each, based on the classroom teacher's recommendation, to serve as subjects; audio-taping these groups of four during two composition-related activities normally done in this class; introducing two non-composition-related oral interaction activities to the class and then audiotaping the two subject groups during these

activities; transcribing the audiotapes; and analysing the data provided by these transcriptions.

Setting

The setting for this study was a classroom in the "English Language Skills" Department, English as a Second Language Division, of Vancouver Community College. The classes in this department range in proficiency level from lower beginner to upper advanced, with the objectives including the development of the four language skills. Students in this department must take oral and written examinations to pass each level. Classes meet 12 hours per week. Many students in this department have the goal of continuing on into classes in the "College Preparatory English" Department and eventually to enter post-secondary level content courses.

The level chosen for this study was Upper Intermediate, because it is at this level that instructors in this department begin to include more sophisticated composition work in their classroom. The particular class was chosen because the instructor was using a structured approach to collaborative revision and editing of compositions, which would (it was hoped) make data analysis more straightforward. In addition, this instructor habitually audiotaped the students during these activities, which would solve any problem of students being uneasy about

being taped during the data collection.

Participants

Participants were eight members of an Upper Intermediate level ESL class at Vancouver Community College. As part of their composition studies, they had already been introduced to the concept of collaborative revision and editing, and the groups they worked in during these activities were already formed and remained constant. It was a concern of the investigator that this study remain as naturalistic as possible, so these groups were not altered for the study. The choice of the two groups of subjects was made largely on the instructor's recommendation, which was based to some extent on the likelihood of the students attending class on all four days of data collection, to ensure that the groups would remain intact.

The procedure for data collection, and a brief description of the purpose of the study, were explained to the prospective participants, none of whom were reluctant to participate. Information on the students' educational background in both their native countries and in Canada prior to enrolling in this class was collected, in order to provide possible insights into findings later in the study.

The eight participants were all immigrants to Canada: two from El Salvador, one from each of Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Iran and the Philippines. Seven had completed secondary school in their native countries, two had completed grade nine, one had a semester of college, and one had a degree in Nursing. Ages ranged from 19 to 45. Previous English Language study ranged from eleven months in Canada to six years in the native country. Arrival in Canada ranged from ten months to eighteen years ago. Table 1 shows the background information for each subject.

Table 1
Background of Subjects

	Gender	Age	Years in Canada	Country of Origin	Formal Education	Years English Education
S						
"A"						
1	F	35	5	El Sal- vador	Gr. 12	1
2	F	22	3	El Sal- vador	Gr. 9	1
3	M	19	1	Hong Kong	Gr. 12	7
4	F	31	7	Viet Nam	Gr. 9	4
"B"						
5	M	20	1	Iran	Gr. 12	2
6	M	20	1	Korea	1 term college	6
7	F	45	18	China	Gr. 12	4
8	F	42	6	Taiwan	Nursing Degree	6

From the experience of the investigator as an instructor, and from knowledge of the usual make-up of intermediate level classes in this department, this range is not unusual. It was felt that this was a good variety of participants which would allow the findings in the study to be applicable to other "general skills" ESL classes at a similar level.

It is recognized that differences in gender, cultural background, education and amount of time in the new country may all be contributory factors to individual performance in

a classroom task. The repeated measures design used in this study reduces the likelihood of differences in tasks being confounded with differences in individuals. While it is also recognized that there may be an interaction between the above differences and task-type, those possible effects will not be discussed in this study. In other words, this is not to say these differences do not exist, but simply that they were not the focus of the study.

Variables

Independent variable

The independent variable in this study was task type. Four different group decision-making activities were engaged in by the participants. These will be discussed in detail in subsequent sections of this chapter.

Dependent variables

The dependent variable in this study was the effect of the task type on eliciting the oral language of decision making, specifically the following moves (related to the steps in the decision-making process discussed in the literature): elicit response (evaluation or suggestion); rate or evaluate course of action; generate alternatives; identify purpose of action; and justify action based on a standard or rule. The effect of task type on the frequency of each move being made was measured by coding and collating the individual participants' contributions during the

activities. The specific moves examined will be dealt with in greater detail in the Discussion.

Experimental materials

The primary purpose of this study was to compare the effectiveness of four separate "decision-making" activities for eliciting the language of decision-making from ESL students. These four activities can be classified in two types:

Composition related activities:

- 1) revising one group member's composition (content)
- 2) editing one group member's composition (mechanics)

"Constructed decision" activities:

- 3) a fictional "personal" problem
- 4) a fictional "world issues" problem

The two types of tasks were chosen because of their underlying purposes. The primary purpose of "constructed decision" tasks is to generate discussion and decision-making around a pre-determined problem. Learning the content or background knowledge used to solve the problem is not necessarily an objective. For ESL purposes, the constructed decision-task has the single objective of eliciting talk. The composition tasks, on the other hand, are designed for the purpose of students helping each other to improve their compositions. The steps involved encourage

students to use their knowledge of writing in the discussion. The oral interaction during these tasks is built in, and is, in effect, a natural by-product of a task designed for acquiring and reinforcing knowledge about writing. The composition task can be compared to a content-based task in first language academic situations. The primary goal is content learning, both for the immediate situation and for the generic situation. The result, however, should include not only composition improvement and learning about writing and grammar, but also oral decision-making about the composition in particular and about grammar and writing in general.

The content for the composition related activities was entirely student-produced. Discussion revolved around problems with the student composition as perceived by the participants. The procedure followed in these activities was co-designed by the classroom teacher and can be found in Appendix B. The content for the constructed decision activities came from textbooks. The "personal problem" was from an ESL textbook and was known to be frequently used by teachers of intermediate level ESL students. The "world issues" problem was from a secondary school social studies text, and was approved of by this classroom instructor as an activity that her students would be able to tackle. The purpose of this "non-ESL" activity was to explore the possibility of using a decision-making activity that would require participants to reason based on learned,

academically-related knowledge as opposed to stating opinions related to emotion or personal experience alone. The non-ESL activity was the most "context reduced" because the content was totally unrelated to the students' lives. The content of the composition activities, on the other hand, was entirely student produced, so there were always elements of familiarity and personalized content. Background reading and procedures for the two constructed decision activities can be found in Appendix B.

Procedure

Research Design

The design for this study was repeated measures, in which subjects participated in four different group interactive activities designed for classroom use. The responses of each subject in each situation were measured individually.

The repeated measures design has been considered to have an advantage over other experimental designs because it allows the researcher to reduce overall variability by using a common subject pool for all treatments (Howell, 1987).

Although it is preferable, when using repeated measures designs, to balance the order of the experimental situations rather than have them presented in the same sequence to all subjects in order to avoid confounding of the problem (Wiersma, 1986), this was not possible in this study. Because this was a naturalistic study done in a classroom

where the composition related activities had to be done in a specific order and at a specific time during the semester, and because the research had to be scheduled at the convenience of the class, activities were presented in the same order to all participants. The order of presentation is included in the following section. As the possibility of a practice effect cannot be ignored, this issue will be discussed in the Analysis section.

Experimental task

The students used in this study worked in groups of four which had been in existence prior to the study. The two groups used in the study were chosen by the classroom teacher based largely on the likelihood of the particular students to be in attendance for all four activities, thereby hoping to ensure that the groups would remain intact throughout the study so that each subject's responses could be measured in each situation. The students had already worked on the revision and editing of one series of compositions, which had familiarized them with the procedure and the types of composition problems they should be looking for. They were used to working interactively in groups and also to being tape recorded during the activity. They had also previously participated in other oral interactive tasks not related to writing.

Each activity was run on a different day. The researcher told the students she was working on a graduate

study research project and would be audiotaping the groups during their revision and editing activities as well as two other group activities to be presented later in order to investigate the kind of discussion that occurred.

Tasks one and two were discussions about student compositions. The idea of this composition was to develop a narrative based on a picture. Students chose a picture provided by the teacher or one they found themselves. They used the picture as the stimulus for a story that would relate events before, during and after whatever was happening in the picture.

The first activity was the revision of one group member's composition. The purpose of this activity is to focus on the message, not on grammar and/or mechanics. It occurs after draft I has been shaped by the writer. In this activity the group followed a focus sheet from Oral and Written Composing (Ling & Rothschild, 1988), co-authored by the classroom teacher (see Appendix B). The writer of the composition read her composition, stopping after the title, introduction, each paragraph, and conclusion. At each break, specific potential problems were explored by the group. Members of the group were free to ask questions to the writer and were encouraged to suggest ways of clarifying, adding and deleting information. They were also required to discuss whether each part was suitable to the whole composition.

The second activity was group editing of one group

member's composition. This procedure focuses on grammatical and mechanical problems, and occurs only after revision, so the students are editing draft 2. Each group member had a photocopy of the composition so they could read along with the writer and find any errors. The group followed the Peer Editing focus sheet from *Oral and Written Composing* (see Appendix B) and a "class editing key" (Ling & Rothschild, 1988). The class editing key is a list of common errors with examples, rules and marking symbols. In this activity, the writer reads her composition, sentence by sentence, after each of which the others must identify any errors. Each group member writes the symbol of the error in the margin closest to the error, but the group does not fix the errors for the writer. Students are reminded to think about the grammar points they have worked on in class.

The third activity was from *React Interact* (Byrd and Clemente-Cabetas, 1980), a text designed for adult ESL classes. In this activity, a problem was presented: Sophie, a young, attractive professional woman, has the options of marrying one of three men, or remaining unmarried. The characteristics of each option are listed, but it is up to the students to decide whether they are advantages or disadvantages. The students must go through the list of points for each option and decide the best choice of action for Sophie. The groups followed the instructions provided by the text book (see Appendix B).

The final activity came from a secondary school social

studies text entitled *Involvement* (Greig, Ito, West, 1972). This text consists of readings on a variety of community and world related problems with accompanying activities designed to get students involved in the actual decision processes faced in these situations. The problem chosen concerned the transport of oil from one geographical area to another by either a sea route or a pipeline. Students were provided with a list of potential advantages and disadvantages and they had to decide which of these favoured the sea route and which favoured the pipeline, after which they had to decide which option was preferable. This topic was considered quite relevant by both the researcher and the classroom teacher because of public concern over the recent Exxon Valdes accident. Before students worked in groups on this task, the investigator conducted a short session reading the accompanying map so that students would be able to refer to the map during their discussion. Vocabulary from the texts for Tasks 3 and 4 were not pre-taught because this was considered a potential source of discussion for the groups.

It is possible to see from these descriptions that all of the activities presented the opportunity for participants to verbally offer opinions and suggestions, and justify these with some kind of knowledge. A major difference between the composition-related activities and the constructed decision activities was that in the former, participants were required to discover the problems and look for solutions based on learned knowledge, while in the

latter the problems and alternatives were provided and participants had to classify and rate the alternatives in order to decide on one solution.

During each data gathering session, the subject groups were audiotaped as they participated in that day's activity. For the revision activity, where students generally keep their own tapes for home use in revising their compositions, the researcher had these tapes copied for use in the study. For each of the other activities, the researcher kept the original tapes.

Tapes were transcribed by the researcher. Names of students were replaced by numbers. It was possible to distinguish between individual students' voices and accents so that the individual students' responses could be recognized.

Coding

A coding system was devised so that responses could be categorized into specific "moves". A search revealed that coding systems had already been designed for examining the following decision-related situations: teacher-led classroom discourse during exploration of a decision situation, (Smith et al, 1967); the language of the L1 writing group, (Gere and Stevens, 1985); decision-making during composing (individual protocol analysis), (Cumming, 1987); and steps in the decision-making process, (Ross, 1981). However, no one coding system existed that would cover all of the

activities used in this study. Because writing group activities had not previously been compared to other group activities it was necessary to construct a new system based on features that already existing systems had in common.

Gere and Stevens (1985) found that the most frequently occurring moves by participants in a L1 writing group were judgements and suggestions, which were sometimes justified by referring to knowledge about the topic or about general standards for essay writing. Cumming (1987) found that individual writers would make evaluative statements about their own writing and sometimes refer to rules or standards when generating possible solutions to their perceived problems. Smith et al (1967) showed how a teacher can elicit rating responses, suggestions, reasons and justifications by asking specific leading questions. In the absence of a teacher, then, these questions could conceivably be asked by students. Ross (1981) outlined steps in the decision-making process which include: identifying alternatives; selecting criteria; assessing alternatives; summarizing the information; and self-evaluation. Finally, Mohan (1985) proposes that when students are involved in thinking processes and activities which are associated with rational choice, and "since rational choice springs from a person's evaluative attitudes and feelings towards the alternatives, it relates to the section of notional grammar that deals with the emotions and attitudes of the speaker" (p. 87). In other words people

will make statements of approval or disapproval, volition, comparison and preference, and assessment which may include reasons and references to standards, all of which require a variety of specific structures, parts of speech and vocabulary.

An initial look at the transcribed data revealed that moves identified in previous research could be isolated throughout all four tasks. These included: eliciting ratings and suggestions; evaluating alternatives; generating alternatives; giving reasons for action; and providing justification for a rating or suggestion based on some rules or standards. These five moves, then, were used as coding categories of "decision-making language" and the frequency of their occurrence in each of the four tasks was recorded.

Moves were coded by both the researcher and another experienced ESL instructor, with an inter-rater reliability of 95%. Definitions, examples and coding conventions for the moves can be found in Appendix C.

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents statistical analysis of the coded data for the purpose of comparing Tasks 1 and 2, collaborative revision and editing of student compositions, with Tasks 3 and 4, two interactive "constructed decision" activities. The first comparison is of overall decision-making moves made by each subject during each task, to examine the possibility of an overall superiority of one task for eliciting decision-making talk. Both the parametric Analysis of Variance and the non-parametric Friedman Test were used for this comparison. Next, the comparisons were done for each of the five individual moves. To review, the purpose of these tests was to explore the general question: Does the collaborative revision/editing task elicit the language of decision making as effectively as a task designed specifically for decision-making within an ESL class? This question was operationalized into two hypotheses, and it should be noted that in order to answer "yes" to the above research question, it was sufficient to accept the null hypotheses:

- 1) There are no differences between the four tasks in terms of subjects' performance as measured by frequency of total decision-making moves;
- 2) There are no differences between the four tasks in terms of subjects' performance as measured by frequency of

specified individual decision-making moves.

In other words, ideally, results would show that Tasks 1 and 2 elicit a significantly greater number of decision-making moves than do Tasks 3 and 4, but for the purposes of this study, it is sufficient that Tasks 1 and 2 elicit an equal number of decision-making moves as do Tasks 3 and 4. Although Task 1 and Task 2 could be viewed as two parts of the same task because they are two complementary parts of the composing process, in this study they are viewed as separate tasks. They take place on different days, have slightly different procedures, and require somewhat different knowledge to be used.

This chapter also addresses the possibility of a correlation between tasks and moves using a chi square analysis. Finally, another chi square looks at individual participants' total moves for each task, addressing the possibility of one or more participants being responsible for the bulk of the decision-making moves for any one task.

As mentioned earlier, while there may be a relationship between participants' individual differences and the likelihood of their making particular moves, that interaction is not addressed in this study.

Before applying any statistical tests to the data, it was necessary to deal with one obvious inequality between the tasks - the length of time subjects needed to complete each one. Transcriptions of the two composition-related tasks were noticeably longer than those of the two

constructed decision activities. The time needed for revision and editing can never really be estimated since the number of decisions to be made will vary from composition to composition and will also depend on the ability of the group to identify a problem, whereas in a constructed decision activity, the number of decisions to be made has been pre-set and the problems are fairly obvious. In order to judge the tasks as if they were of equal length, moves were coded for an equal number of total utterances for each task. All transcripts contained at least 100 total utterances (including all utterances, not only decision-making moves); therefore only the first 100 utterances made during each activity were considered when counting frequencies of the five decision-making moves.

Detailed findings

An overall look at the data is presented in Table 2. This shows the frequency of each type of move made by each subject during each task.

The data indicate no immediately obvious patterns. Each subject appears to vary in the number of responses made for each category during each task. Slight tendencies might be noted, particularly that six of the eight subjects made their highest number of "R" moves during task 3 and five of the eight students made their highest number of "GA" moves during task 2.

Table 2

Frequency (in 100 utterances) of
Individual Decision-Making Moves
by Individual Participants, for Each Task

Move	Task	Participants								Total
		S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	
ER	T1	0	1	0	0	1	4	0	7	13
	T2	0	1	5	4	4	2	1	1	18
	T3	5	3	0	0	0	1	2	0	11
	T4	1	1	1	1	3	3	2	0	12
R	T1	1	0	3	4	4	4	2	2	20
	T2	2	3	2	2	2	7	5	1	24
	T3	10	6	6	6	2	6	4	3	43
	T4	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	5
GA	T1	4	6	6	6	3	5	1	3	34
	T2	6	7	7	0	2	9	8	7	46
	T3	1	3	3	1	0	6	2	1	17
	T4	4	2	3	4	4	0	0	0	17
IP	T1	2	2	2	4	1	1	1	8	21
	T2	1	0	6	1	1	1	1	1	12
	T3	1	0	0	3	0	3	1	1	9
	T4	3	2	2	0	4	2	0	0	13
J	T1	2	10	6	4	1	7	2	4	36
	T2	5	3	10	1	3	7	4	1	34
	T3	5	3	6	1	1	8	3	1	28
	T4	5	5	6	2	4	2	2	0	26

ER = Elicit response

R = Rate

GA = Generate alternative

IP = Identify purpose

J = Justify

In order to address the central question of whether there would be any variation in subjects' performance across tasks, it was first of interest to examine the effect of task on subjects' total decision-making moves across tasks, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Total Decision-Making Moves, By Task, For Each Subject

Subject	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4
1	9	14	22	14
2	19	14	15	11
3	17	30	15	13
4	18	8	11	8
5	10	12	3	16
6	21	26	24	7
7	6	19	12	4
8	24	11	6	0

This analysis would indicate any overall superiority of a task in terms of eliciting the language of decision-making. The question was explored using both parametric and nonparametric statistical tests. Although there is some disagreement as to whether analysis of variance is a valid statistical method for the type of data being examined in this study, there is at least one precedent in the literature. Doughty and Pica (1986) used a two way analysis

of variance to measure the effect of task on producing various discourse features. However, because there may be some uncertainty, the data in the present study was also analysed using the Friedman Test.

Total decision making moves for each subject were used as the dependent variable in an analysis of variance using the program SYSTAT. This test yielded a non-significant effect of task on total decision making moves ($F(3,21)=2.197$, n.s.). Results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Analysis of Variance for Effect of Task
on Total Decision Making Moves

SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	D.F.	MEAN SQUARE	F	F PROB.
Hypothesis	268.094	3	89.365	2.197	0.118
Error	854.156	21	40.674		

An appropriate nonparametric test in situations where subjects are tested under a number of different experimental conditions is the Friedman two-way analysis of variance by ranks (Ferguson, 1971). Using the program BMDP3S - Nonparametric Statistics, this test was carried out on the total decision-making moves for each subject. This test also yielded a non-significant effect of task on total decision-making moves (Friedman Test Statistic (F_T)=5.250, n.s.).

To determine if there was a significant effect of task type on frequency of response with any specific move, both analysis of variance and the Friedman test were run for each of the five moves shown in the five individual categories of Table 2. Frequency of response for each subject was again the dependent variable with the tasks as repeated measures.

The effect of task on subjects' responses with each of the five isolated decision making moves was first examined using analysis of variance. A significant effect of task was found for the move "Rate" using a univariate repeated measures F test ($F(3,21)=9.410$, $p<.001$). Results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Analysis of Variance Table for Effect of Task
on Eliciting the move "Rate"

SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	D.F.	MEAN SQUARE	F	F PROB.
Hypothesis	91.750	3	30.583	9.410	0.000
Error	68.250	21	3.250		

Further analysis by pairwise comparisons (Scheffe method of post hoc comparisons) revealed a highly significant difference between Task 3 and Task 4 ($F(3,7)=33.693$, $p<.001$). All other contrasts were non-significant, although the difference between Task 1 and Task 4 approached significance ($F(3,7)=10.430$, $p=.014$), in favour of Task 1.

In addition to comparing all possible combinations of single tasks, Tasks 1 and 2 were collapsed and compared to Tasks 3 and 4 collapsed. This revealed no significant difference between Task 1/2 and Task 3/4 in eliciting the move "Rate" ($F(1,7)=0.111$, n.s.).

Using the Friedman Test, a significant effect of task on frequency of a particular move being produced was also found for the move "Rate" ($F_r = 14.18$, $df=3$: $p<.01$).

The rank sums for this move were as follows:

Variable	Rank Sum
Task 1	19.500
Task 2	22.000
Task 3	28.500
Task 4	10.000

This shows that the frequency of "Rate" occurring in each task ranks, from highest to lowest, in the order of Task 3, Task 2, Task 1, Task 4. In order to determine where the significant difference occurred between any two tasks for the move "Rate", multiple comparisons were done, revealing a significant difference between Task 3 and Task 4 ($Z_{stat}=3.68$, $p<.05$), in favour of Task 3. All other differences were nonsignificant.

The analysis of variance also revealed a significant effect of task on the move "Generate Alternatives" using a univariate repeated measures F-test ($F(3,21)=4.852$, $p<.01$). Results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6
Analysis of Variance Table for Effect of Task
on Eliciting the move "Generate Alternative"

SOURCE	SUM OF SQUARES	D.F.	MEAN SQUARE	F	F PROB.
Hypothesis	75.125	3	25.042	4.852	0.010
Error	108.375	21	5.161		

Pairwise comparisons showed a significant difference between Task 2 and Task 3 ($F(3,7)=19.429$, $p<.05$). Possible trends were also indicated between Task 1 and Task 3 ($F=8.190$) and between Task 1 and Task 4 ($F=8.758$). In both cases the trend would be in favour of Task 1.

As was done for the move "Rate", collapsed Task 1/2 was compared to collapsed Task 3/4. Interestingly, the comparison revealed a highly significant difference favouring Task 1/2 ($F(1,7)=26.640$, $p<.001$). This result is especially significant in terms of the qualitative exploration of the tasks which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Using the Friedman Test to measure the move "Generate Alternative" across the four tasks, the result was nonsignificant ($F_r=7.54$, $p=.0566$) but is worth noting as indicative of a possible trend. Because the results approached significance, multiple comparisons were also done. This revealed a difference that approaches the critical Z value (2.39 at $p=.1$) between Task 2 and Task 4

($Z_{stat}=2.32$) in favour of Task 2.

Effect of task on eliciting all other moves was non-significant. Using analysis of variance, for the move "Elicit Response", the result was nonsignificant ($F(3,21)=.265$, n.s.); for the move "Identify Purpose" the result was nonsignificant ($F(3,21)=.868$, n.s.); and for the move "Justify" the result was nonsignificant ($F(3,21)=.665$, n.s.). Using the Friedman Test, for the move "Elicit Response", the result was nonsignificant ($F_r=1.538$, n.s.). For the move, "Identify Purpose", the result was also nonsignificant ($F_r=1.837$), and for the move "Justify", the result was again nonsignificant ($F_r=.563$, n.s.).

To summarize so far, the first finding is that there was no significant effect of task on overall use of decision-making moves. Thus, the first null hypothesis, which stated: there are no differences between tasks in terms of subjects' overall performance, is accepted. It should be kept in mind that "no significant difference" was the expected result.

To examine the effect of task on individual moves, Hypothesis 2 was developed. The null hypothesis stated: There are no differences between the four tasks in terms of subjects' performance. For the move "Rate", the null hypothesis is rejected in favor of the research hypothesis, which stated: There are differences between the four tasks in terms of subjects' performance. More in depth

investigation revealed that a definite difference in performance lay between Tasks 3 and 4 and a possible trend was indicated between Tasks 1 and 4. Thus, in no case was a constructed decision task significantly more effective than a composition-related task in eliciting the move "Rate".

For the move "Generate Alternative", the null hypothesis is accepted but it is worth noting that differences between some tasks approach significance. According to the analysis of variance, there was a significant difference between Task 2 and Task 3, in favour of Task 2. This difference approached significance according to the Friedman Test. Possible trends were indicated by the ANOVA between Task 1 and Task 3 and between Task 1 and Task 4. Again, in no case did a constructed decision task show superiority over a composition-related tasks. In addition, a comparison between the combined composition-related tasks (Task 1/2) and the combined constructed decision tasks (Task 3/4) revealed that a significantly greater number of "Generate Alternative" moves were made during the composition-related tasks. Possible explanations for the effects mentioned will be discussed in the following chapter. Finally, the null hypothesis is accepted for the remaining three moves: Elicit Response, Identify Purpose, and Justify.

The results indicated by the Friedman Test and ANOVA represent the major findings for this study, which address

the central research question. However, there are other questions of interest which can be addressed by exploring the data from other angles. While the previous statistical tests addressed the relationship between subjects and tasks, it is also of interest to address the relationship between moves and tasks. In other words, are certain tasks more effective for eliciting certain types of moves?

This question was addressed by applying a chisquare to the sums of the frequencies of the moves produced during each task. Table 7 shows the observed and expected counts for each move. The value of chi square with 12 degrees of freedom is 41.10, which is significant at $p < .001$.

Table 7

Chisquare Table: Frequencies of Moves by Task

(Expected counts printed below observed counts)

Move	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Total
1 (ER)	13 15.3	18 16.1	11 13.4	12 9.2	54
2 (R)	20 26.4	24 27.6	43 23.1	6 15.9	93
3 (GA)	33 30.6	41 32.1	17 26.9	17 18.4	108
4 (IP)	21 15.6	12 16.3	9 13.7	13 9.4	55
5 (J)	36 35.1	34 36.9	28 30.9	26 21.1	124

Chi Square = 41.2, $df=12$, $p < .001$

This table indicates that in several cells the observed number of times a move was made was greater than the expected frequency. The difference is particularly striking for move 2, "rate", in task 3, as was indicated by the other tests. Furthermore, the contribution from this cell to the total chi square of 41.10 was 17.04, the largest contribution from any cell. In all other tasks the observed frequency of the move "rate" was smaller than the expected frequency. This would indicate that there is a positive association between task 3 and the move "rate". In contrast, the observed frequency of "rate" during Task 4 was far below the expected frequency, and the contribution to the total chi square was second largest (6.13). The contrast between these two tasks reflects results previously discussed, but most importantly, it further emphasizes the need to examine the nature of the task to determine why one would be so effective and another so ineffective for eliciting a particular move. The next largest positive association is found between task 2 and move 3, "generate alternatives". The observed frequency is 41 while the expected frequency is 32.4. The contribution of this cell to the total chi square is 2.47, which is one of the larger contributions. This can be contrasted with the negative association between task 3 and the same move. Again, the individual tasks need to be examined qualitatively in order to explore this contrast.

The chi square also indicates that there may be some association between Task 1 and move 4, "identify purpose" and between Task 4 and move 5, "justify". A very slight association can be noted between both Tasks 2 and 4 and move 1, "elicit response". In other words, each task seems to have some relation to one of the moves, but no one task is more effective for eliciting all of the moves.

The Chi Square analysis that was just examined dealt with the totals for each move made by all subjects during each task. This cannot account for differences in performance by individual subjects. It was of interest to explore the extent of each subjects' contribution to the totals, because of the possibility of one person being responsible for the majority of the moves. It was also of interest to examine whether any one task would show an increased participation by most students over another task. Another Chi Square was applied to the *total decision-making moves* made by each subject during each task. In other words, moves were not separated into the five categories. The observed and expected counts are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Chisquare Table: Total Moves by Individuals for Each Task
(Expected counts printed below observed counts)

Subject	Task 1	Task 2	Task 3	Task 4	Total
1	9 16.7	14 17.5	22 14.7	14 10.1	59
2	19 16.7	14 17.5	15 14.7	11 10.1	59
3	16 19.8	25 20.8	15 17.4	14 11.9	70
4	18 12.8	8 13.4	11 11.2	8 7.7	45
5	10 11.6	12 12.2	3 10.2	16 7.0	41
6	21 22.1	26 23.2	24 19.4	7 13.3	78
7	6 11.6	19 12.2	12 10.2	4 7.0	41
8	24 11.6	11 12.2	6 10.2	0 7.0	41
Total	123	129	108	74	434

Chi Square = 66.75, df = 21, $p < .001$

Results indicate that somewhere there is a significant association between individual subjects and tasks. The most striking positive association is between Task 1 and subject #8. The contribution of this cell to the total chi square of 68.75 was the highest from any cell, at 13.19. If we

refer back to Table 2, it is evident that this subject made more "elicit response" and "identify purpose" moves than any other subject made in Task 1. Task 1 also seems to have a positive association with Subject #4, but Table 2 shows that this person made no "elicit response" moves and slightly more "generate alternative" moves than did other subjects during Task 1. This person also made more "identify purpose" moves than the others the that activity group (subjects 1,2,3 & 4). Another significant effect seems to occur between Task 4 and Subject #5. Table 3 shows that this person seems to have dominated the discussion (at least in terms of decision-making moves) during this task in comparison to the other subjects in the group of four (Subjects 5, 6, 7, 8). There also appears to be an association between Task 2 and Subject #7, with the majority of this person's moves in the category "generate alternative", although many other subjects made a comparable number of this type of move. Finally, a large positive association is seen between Task 3 and Subject #1. It is interesting to note that this person made 10 of the 43 "rate" moves in Task 3, so that while Task 3 showed a significant relationship to the move "rate", we find that nearly one quarter of the contributions came from one person. In fact, this person made more "rate" moves than anyone else during any one task. On the other hand, if the total number of "rate" moves across tasks are totalled for each subject, it is clear that this person did not make more

total "rate" moves than most other subjects. There are a number of smaller associations which do not need to be mentioned.

The indication made by this analysis is that for each task, different people seem to be the major contributors. It is also apparent from the table that no student systematically produced more or less than the expected number of decision making moves across all four tasks. No one task appears to bring about an increase or decrease in participation by all or even most subjects. In addition, no one move appears to dominate the contributions across all the tasks.

Summary

Quantitative analysis of the data indicates that there is no significant difference in the effect of task on eliciting overall decision-making language. Based on a nonsignificant F, the first null hypothesis: there will be no significant difference in subjects' overall performance across tasks, must be accepted. As mentioned previously, the null hypothesis was expected.

The second null hypothesis: for any given move, there will be no difference in subjects' performance across tasks, must also be accepted for the moves "Elicit Response", "Identify Purpose", and "Justify". On the basis of a significant F, however, the null hypothesis is rejected for the move "Rate". Furthermore, Task 3 had a significantly

greater effect than Task 4 on eliciting this move, and there was a trend towards a greater effect for Task 1 than for Task 4. For the move "Generate Alternative", a slightly significant F and also a nonsignificant result from the Friedman Test indicate that the null hypothesis should again be accepted. However, the Scheffe method indicated a significantly greater effect on eliciting this move for Task 2 than for Task 3, and a trend toward a greater effect for Task 1 over Task 4, and for Task 1 over Task 3. To conclude, in no case were significantly more decision-making moves generated during a constructed decision task than during a composition-related task, and in several cases there was a trend towards decision-making moves being more frequent during composition-related tasks.

Analysis of a chisquare indicated that certain tasks under investigation may be more associated than others with the likelihood of a particular move being elicited. It seems that Task 3 has a positive association with the move "Rate" while Task 4 has a negative association with that move. Similarly, Task 2 apparently has a positive association with the move "Generate Alternative" while Task 3 has a negative association with that move. Task 1 may also have a positive association with the move "Identify Purpose".

A second chisquare explored the question of participation by students. It is apparent that subjects' participation varied across tasks, but that no one student

dominated the discussion throughout all the tasks. Referring back to the original data, no one student consistently made more of one kind of move than another.

All results reported in this chapter, and their possible implications will be discussed in the following chapter.

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Discussion

The discussion addresses the research problem from two angles. First, the quantitative findings are reviewed and second, a qualitative analysis is applied to the discourse to explore more subtle differences. The primary concern of the quantitative analysis is to compare the frequencies with which five different decision-making moves were generated during four different tasks. The concern of the qualitative analysis is to describe the actual discourse in terms of both language and content value. One reason for looking at actual raw data is to demonstrate how the coding of moves was arrived at. The primary purpose however, is to explore the suggestion that even when two moves are classified under the same heading, there may be distinct qualitative differences between them in terms of the kinds of knowledge they represent.

Quantitative analysis

Results of this study showed that two composition-related tasks were at least as effective as two constructed decision tasks in eliciting the language of decision-making, as measured by five "moves": "Elicit Response"; "Rate"; "Generate Alternative"; "Identify Purpose"; and "Justify". When pairs of tasks were compared, there was a trend favourable to one of the decision-making tasks for eliciting

the moves "Rate" and "Generate Alternative". Moreover, the combined composition-related tasks elicited significantly more "Generate Alternative" moves than the combined constructed decision tasks.

The first hypothesis in this study dealt with the effectiveness of the four tasks in eliciting overall decision-making talk. Results showed no difference in effectiveness between the four tasks. This supports the contention that since revision of written compositions is essentially decision-making, and a task that requires decision-making can be structured to elicit the specific features of language associated with decision-making (Mohan, 1986), that revision can serve as the context for eliciting that language. Mohan identifies the two key knowledge structures related to decision-making as "evaluation" and "choice". Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) have shown that revising involves the cognitive processes of "evaluation" and "tactical decisions". Gere and Stevens (1985) found that the most frequent comments made by L1 students involved in collaborative revision were evaluative and the next most frequent were directive, "commonly suggestions to the writer about changes..." (p.92), in other words, looking at a choice of alternatives. Assuming that a "constructed decision" ESL task, designed so that students work collaboratively towards a decision, is more effective in eliciting the language of evaluation and choice than a task not designed for this purpose, then collaborative revision

and editing should be effective as well. The term "effective" as used here refers only to the frequency with which decision-making language is elicited. The possibility that the composition tasks may be more effective in a deeper sense will be discussed further on.

The second hypothesis concerned the effectiveness of the four tasks in eliciting five individual decision-making moves. For all of these moves, it appears that the composition-related tasks are at least as effective as the constructed decision tasks. For the move "Rate" there was a highly significant difference between Tasks 3 and 4. Since the differences between these two tasks are not of concern in this study, they will not be discussed. The difference is interesting to note both for the classroom and for future studies however, because it underscores the important role that task design plays in generating specific features of language.

Of interest here is that the frequency of the move "rate" was not significantly greater during Task 3 than during Task 1 or 2, and that the combined Task 1/2 was at least as effective as the combined Tasks 3/4 in eliciting the move "Rate". The design of Task 3 can account for the high frequency of evaluative comments, because the instructions read specifically, "What are the advantages and disadvantages of each option?", and the characteristics of each option are very clearly laid out. In fact, there is the potential to make at least one evaluative comment on each of

31 characteristics. In the revision task the students are instructed to judge whether the title is "OK" or whether the introduction, body and conclusion are "suitable", but they are responsible for identifying the characteristics of those parts of the composition that merit an evaluative comment. Likewise in the editing task, students must find the errors that they will label "incorrect". Considering that in the two composition-related tasks the students were responsible for identifying the situations where ratings could be made, it seems admirable that the move "rate" was not made significantly less often than during Task 3. Later on, a look at the actual contexts in which this move was made will provide additional insight into the value of the composition tasks.

"Generate Alternative" was the other move where some significant difference or at least some difference approaching significance was found. The parametric test showed a highly significant difference ($F(1,7)=19.429$, $p<.01$) between Task 2 and Task 3; however the nonparametric test showed that the difference only approached significance at the .05 level. That there may even possibly be a difference in favour of Task 2 is worth discussing. First of all, as mentioned before, the design of Task 3 is such that four options, with their characteristics, are laid out. The task is structured so that students must at least refer to alternatives provided in the text, which for this task was equivalent to generating alternatives. Therefore, the

design of Task 3 assures that alternatives will be discussed. There is also the possibility for students to suggest other, original alternatives but, as will be shown further on, this was rare. In the composition-related tasks, again, students must not only identify when an alternative is necessary, they must generate that alternative from their own knowledge. The importance of generating alternatives autonomously has been stressed in the literature on decision-making, on composition, and on second language acquisition. Ross (1981) identifies the first skill required in decision-making as "identifying a set of alternative courses of action". He further states that this skill can be employed on five levels of maturity: 1)single alternative identified; 2)small list of alternatives; 3)brainstorming alternatives; 4)constructing alternatives by classifying; and 5)constructing alternatives using criteria. Task 3 provides a small list of alternatives, and as will be shown later, the students did not go beyond these but expressed opinions about the information they were given. In Task 2, alternatives were generated spontaneously and, as will be seen later, seemed to build upon each other through brainstorming. Thus, Task 2 seems to encourage identification of alternatives at least at Ross' level 3 of maturity and at the same time elicited an equivalent if not greater number of suggestions from the participants than were elicited by Task 3.

Other indications of the need for an opportunity to

generate alternatives comes from composition research. Cumming's (1987) comparison of basic and proficient writers indicates that proficient writers employed heuristic search strategies for resolving problems in composition. This search involved "generating and assessing alternatives" which required accessing background knowledge and knowing how to apply it. Basic writers, on the other hand rarely tried to search for alternatives and left problems which required a search unsolved. It has been pointed out extensively in the literature on composition that developing skill in composition means developing an awareness of one's knowledge and understanding how to operationalize it. Hillocks (1986) cites several studies indicating that the use of learned criteria helps generate suggestions, revisions and new material. Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) dual-problem space model stresses the need for a writer to know how to transfer knowledge from the rhetorical space to the content space, that is, to be able to access content knowledge when faced with a rhetorical problem, and form opinions based on that knowledge. A task designed to encourage a two way flow of information between the two problem spaces was especially effective in stimulating "attempts to resolve opposing points instead of simply noting pros and cons" (p.308). In light of the present study, perhaps problem solving tasks that stimulate participants to access background knowledge stimulate not only more attempts but more creative attempts at resolving

the problem.

Finally, the major focus of this study is on the value of the composition-related tasks in relation to second language acquisition. Therefore, it is most important to find support from SLA research for tasks which give students the opportunity to generate original alternatives when faced with a decision situation. Brice-Heath (1989) found that while real-life situations which require collaborative decision-making always require participants to generate possible solutions, there is a marked absence of the opportunity to participate in this step of the decision-making process in the adult ESL classroom. Based on Mohan's language and content model, it is necessary to include this step in order to provide a link with the use of associated language. This link can be provided when students have some background knowledge that they can access, and when they are confronted with a situation that stimulates them to access this knowledge.

Qualitative analysis

In this second section, actual discourse is examined to show the kinds of decision-making exchanges that took place during the four tasks. The quantitative results of this study showed that overall, and for most individual moves, there was no difference between the tasks in effectiveness for producing decision-making talk. The deeper question remains then; why bother to distinguish between tasks as

long as they produce the desired language? The answer lies in the content value of the task, in the value and generalizability of the theoretical knowledge involved. Throughout this section, the terms "theoretical knowlege", "theoretical background knowledge", "academic knowledge", and "expert knowledge" are used to refer to the kinds of knowledge people acquire through academic or skill learning situations and need to be able to generalize to similar situations. As mentioned earlier, the kind of talk that revolves around this kind of knowledge has been referred to as "academic discourse -- the special ways of talking expected in school" (Cazden, 1988:134). There is no implication here that "academic knowledge" as it is traditionally thought of in North American/European style academic institutions is inherently superior to knowledge that is learned through cultural and home experiences. However, using academic or theoretical knowledge, which includes the ability to talk about it and generalize it, is a necessary skill for all those who wish to pursue higher education or skill training. Basically, the predicted potential value of the composition tasks was that they would provide a sort of "bridge" task where students could use and talk about theoretical knowledge in a situation less threatening than a totally "context-reduced" situation but where they would still be reinforcing knowledge they needed in their academic skill development.

Beginning with the move "elicit response", there was no significant difference between the tasks' effectiveness in eliciting this move. This move generally occurred at the beginning of a decision situation, serving as a way to identify the issue. In the composition-related tasks, the writer often asked the others for an evaluation:

"OK. Any unclear pictures?" or

"So now we have to discuss...is the title OK?"

"... 'and they didn't have good communication', right? Is that good? Is that enough?"

or asked for suggestions:

"How about things to be took out?" or

"OK. Give me ideas"

In these tasks, the writer is involved in a process that will hopefully become internalized; this is the process of looking at sections of written text and questioning whether it is appropriate to the rest of the text or whether the message will be clear to a reader, and initiating a search for alternatives.

In the constructed decision tasks, the move seems to serve a somewhat different purpose. In task 3, students must rate three different men on their suitability as potential husbands. The move serves primarily as a device to move from one alternative to another:

"OK, this one first. Give reasons."

"OK, next one. What do you think?"

"How about the first one?"

and occasionally to challenge a rating or seek clarification

"How about 'sees a psychiatrist regularly'?"

"Is something wrong with him?"

In task 4, the talk involved mainly categorizing given information into reasons which supported the use of a pipeline and those which supported the use of a sea route to transport oil. The move mainly involved seeking agreement with one's interpretation:

"Its reason for the sea route, right?"

Basically, the difference between this move during the composition tasks and the constructed decision tasks is that the former served as sort of a prompt for dialogue between writer and reader, and asked participants to think like writers, using critical skills they were learning to tap. In contrast, eliciting a response in the constructed decision tasks was almost exclusively specific to the practical task at hand, and did not serve to generate any theoretical background knowledge. This will be more apparent when the other moves are examined.

The second move was "Rate", which involved making evaluative statements about some state of affairs. In the revision task, a rating was made after the writer read a portion of text:

Writer: How about things to be took out?

Listener: No. Is OK. Its good information.

In this case the writer could continue, but in other cases the rating would be negative:

Listener: I think you need more in the introduction.

or

Writer: OK. 'Last year he decided to quit the drink'.

Listener: But that is sudden. I don't know, for me its a suddenly conclusion.

or

Writer: Title OK? "The Drunk Man".

Listener: But finally he not drunk...

Listener: I don't know...for me..."The Drunk Man is not quite suitable with your composition."

In this case, the participants made other suggestions which would be rated as well:

Writer: ...or maybe "Drink can't solve your problems".

Listener: Oh yeah. That's right...

Listener: That's good. Exactly.

Sometimes the writer rated a suggestion that was made:

Listener: ...this part put in your introduction.

Writer: In the introduction?

Listener: So you know...

Writer: I thought if I can put it in the introduction, but I think it is much better in the conclusion.

Similarly, in the editing task, readers needed to note when something was "not right" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1981), but this time it involved problems with word usage and grammar. Most often, a rating was not made in so many words, but an alternative was offered immediately. In a few cases, however, an evaluative statement came first:

Writer: "...but he forgot put the money in the parking pay"
 Reader: I don't think so...he forgot to put the money in
 the 'parking pay'.

The students eventually figured out that the correct expression was 'parking meter'.

In Task 3, as was evident from the quantitative results, the move "rate" was made frequently. This task, however, is particularly conducive to generating this move, because it provides a list of qualities for each person and directs participants to figure out whether the qualities are good or bad. The only background knowledge needed here is an understanding of the meanings of the particular words used in these descriptions.

S: No. He is not good person for Sophia.

S: How come? Give me a reason.

S: He had many girlfriends in the past.

S: But why he go see a psychiatrist regularly? Maybe something wrong here.

S: Yeah. No good. Crazy.

S: Wants Sophie to be full-time wife...This is no good point.

S: And three children.

S: Three children.

S: Yeah. Is big problem.

The exchanges that these ratings led to will be discussed further on.

In contrast to Task 3, quantitative results showed that Task 4 was not likely to elicit the move "rate", and the reason is probably that this task is more one of classification than evaluation. Occasionally an evaluative type of move was part of the classification process:

S: Well the sea route is dangerous, you know why?
S: Sea route's danger, yeah.
S: Numerous ship have been wrecked in this water. I mean
lot of ship that is breaking, right?
S: So, for the pipeline.

The examination of individual student participation indicated that most of the rating moves were made by one person, and this person was also responsible for most of the explanations that accompanied ratings. In general, making the cognitive connections required to classify the given information was difficult for this group of four students.

The basic difference between the composition related tasks and the constructed decision tasks is that in the former, ratings are made based on background theoretical knowledge about writing and about grammar and word usage. The knowledge brought to bear during these tasks is transferable to other writing tasks. Research indicates that when one participant notes that something needs to be changed, it helps not only the writer but other readers become more aware of potential problems in subsequent compositions (Hillocks, 1986). In the latter tasks, the ratings are mostly based on information in the immediate text. In task 3, reasons for ratings are based on personal experience, so students do not need to search very far. In Task 4, ratings are rare, and take the form more of reasons for classification, which, as was mentioned, was often a difficult jump for these ESL students.

An examination of the move "generate alternatives" reveals similar patterns. Suggestions during the revision task show an attempt to help the writer be more explicit and find a way to make meaning more clear to the reader. It goes beyond rating, but sometimes takes the place of an evaluative comment, as a rating is implied:

S: You should have another reason. One is not enough.

S: You can say that ... "but now he realize that drinking is not the solution of his problem" ... sound good? Then go on.

S: So maybe you can write more about around where she live, the place where she live.

S: Maybe we don't call it a house, we can call it a shelter, a hut...

The next exchange deals with an inappropriate title. The composition was about the student's aunt and uncle and their children, but the title was "My Aunt and Her Children"

S: Why is the title like that? Her husband still alive...

S: Why he...he's outside the title?

Writer: No, he's there.

S: No, "My Aunt and Her Children"

Writer: "My Aunt and Her Family", maybe?

S: You can say "My Aunt's Family", yeah.

S: Because in your composition you are talking about your uncle, your aunt and their children.

All of these comments are part of a search for more explicit meaning. Although they are directed towards a practical task, they again represent part of a process that writers must get used to using over and over again.

Similarly in the editing task, students make suggestions based on their knowledge of grammar and word usage.

Writer: "He parked his car the other side of street".
 Reader: He parked his car on the other side of street.
 Reader: On...with on, the preposition.
 Reader: How about with 'the street'?
 Reader: Of the street.
 Reader: 'He parked his car on the other side of the street'.

Writer: And is that a 'police ticket'? That called 'police ticket'?
 Reader: Is not police ticket...
 Writer: Is there any other...?
 Reader: I think its a parking...parking...
 Reader: 'Parking ticket'...yeah.

In contrast to the composition-related tasks, the other tasks required very little original or background knowledge related generating of alternatives.

S: If I were her, I would get married with Winston.
 S: I think maybe just...just keep alone...forget marry.
 S: Just wait for another...better guy.
 S: And she loves children, so she might really like to get married with somebody.
 S: I think she should keep her job.
 S: She shouldn't marry with him.

Students did not go beyond the information provided for this particular task. In Task 4 there was a bit more creativity:

S: We cannot choose any of these one because they both are dangerous.
 S: What about the airplane? You can build a big airplane.
 S: We can buy oil from other places.

In this task some students decided, from the information given, that both options offered were unacceptable. They tried several alternatives. However, as the quantitative results indicated, these suggestions were rare compared to the frequency in some other tasks.

Again, in summary, the composition-related tasks seem to have elicited suggestions based on academic knowledge which could be useful at another time. In Task 3 the suggestions that were made reflected participants' emotions and personal opinions. While personal opinions and experiences are valuable, one might suggest that they do not contribute enough to the development of proficiency in expository discourse because they do not require a cognitive connection to be made between practical experience and theoretical knowledge. In Task 4, while some suggestions may have moved beyond the immediate text, there was an indication that this task was too difficult for some of the students.

The coding "identify purpose" was assigned to moves which provided an explanation or reason for a rating or suggestion but did not refer to either experiential or theoretical background knowledge to do so. For example, in the revision and editing tasks a reader might explain the purpose of a comment or question, or a writer would identify the reason for a particular word or part of the text but not justify it with an accepted standard or rule:

Writer: But I really like that title to fix to that story because what I like to describe is the drunk man.

Writer: Because I don't want to repeat 'study' again. I want to try this word.

Writer: So first, in the introduction, I just say what happened in that moment, right?

Reader: I did the question because you are telling that your uncle doesn't have land.

Sometimes purpose referred to the instructions for the composition:

Writer: I imagine the story because she (the teacher) said we have to imagine the story...so that's why I say, you know, first the picture I saw...and then I said "Jack is our neighbor".

In Tasks 3 and 4 purpose refers more to reasons for making a choice, but the reasons are taken directly from the text:

Task 3

S: How come she need to continue her job?

S: Because ...she have a chance for the leadership with her company...she like her job and she will better chance to promotion.

S: He has two qualities: he is in excellent physical health and he expresses his love openly.

Task 4:

S: ...the location had several earthquakes...

S: So that's the reason for the sea route.

S: The cost of building pipeline is much greater than the cost of transporting the oil by sea...so that goes to sea route.

It looks like reason-giving in tasks 3 and 4 served as a way to help classify given information as part of the evaluation process. In tasks 1 and 2 it served as part of the search for ways to become more organized and explicit in writing,

and required, once again, thinking of the gap between a writer's product and a reader's understanding, and creating a dialogue that could work towards bridging this gap.

Perhaps the most interesting and important of the moves is the one coded "Justify". This coding was assigned when participants made an evaluative statement or a suggestion and backed it up by referring to some criteria or rule. The criteria could be experiential knowledge or more academically related knowledge, as long as it's source was outside the immediate situation or text.

In the revision task standards or criteria were rooted in the student's understanding that a writer needs to be aware of the background knowledge of the audience:

Listener: The problem is you need to describe the poverty. Because in our mind our poverty, we know our poverty, but in Canada is different. In Canada, we speak about the poverty, we are poor, but we have house...

This comment led to a long search for content and language that would help the writer be more explicit, eventually ending with this exchange:

Writer: OK, I talk about that because they are sick - the big stomach... and they don't have clothes...they are...they don't have home...this is house (shows picture)...you know? Look at the house, the walls...

Listener: Yeah, you can say a few sentences about her house...

Listener: If we put a name...

Listener: Look like in Viet Nam...

Listener: Maybe we don't call it a house, we can call it a shelter, a hut...

Writer: A hut...could you write the name here?

Listener: I know because I saw in my country too, people in the war, their house was blown, so they had a blanket on something.

Writer: Yeah, see...plastic...maybe I will talk about the house, about the place, describe a little bit...

Even though the information provided by the students comes from their own experience, the knowledge that prompts them to access that information is knowledge about writing.

Similarly, when one listener disagrees with the title "The Drunk Man" for a story about a man who eventually stops drinking, she explains why:

Listener: Because there is a lesson why, I mean there is a lesson by being drunk...his life is not good...but in the last paragraph he changes...I mean your conclusion is he's changed, right? So at least there is a lesson of being drunk.

She felt that the title should reflect the final message, and eventually the group agreed on a new title.

In the editing task, justifications generally referred to rules of grammar and mechanics:

Reader: I think the sentence is a run-on sentence, so many subjects...

Reader: He has to use "another" because this is the second time.

Students were also supposed to keep track of their frequent error-types, so when they named the type of error or the rule, this was considered justifying:

Writer: (reading) 'She relax with a cigarette'
 Reader: 'Relaxes'
 Reader: 'e-s'
 Reader: This is agreement.
 Writer: I put the 's' but I forgot the 'e'.
 Reader: So...spelling.

The process of making decisions about grammar and spelling may help individuals learn what kind of errors they are prone to.

Students also shared what they had learned during individual conferences with the teacher:

S: ...because, last time when I talked to the teacher...she corrected mine, she said if one sentence, even that is only short sentence, if you got a subject, verb and object, that's already good for one sentence.

In Task 3, justifying typically involved taking given information and turning it into a generalization:

S1: ...he has many mistakes and I think she's not going to get married him.
 S2: What kind of mistakes?
 S1: What kind of mistakes? He had many girlfriends.
 S3: No, it say in the past...
 S1: But he had a lot, but he will continue.
 S2: How do you know?
 S1: Because the man who had a lot of girlfriends before...

and from the other group:

S1: Too many girlfriends is no good?
 S2: Maybe you are the next one...I mean so many girlfriends, right? Maybe she is the next one, and the next one is another one..
 S3: Yeah, maybe...he used her. So she better don't get married with him.

and similarly

- S1: And also you see (characteristic) number 2, right? 'He expresses his love openly'.
 S2: Is a bad thing? I don't think so.
 S1: You don't think so? You know, some boys even maybe he doesn't like you or maybe he doesn't love you he say "ohhh...I love you so much..."
 S3: Saying lie?
 S1: Oh, maybe not liar, but they just like to say something too much.
 S3: To make her interested.

and another sequence concerning a man who is 20 years older than "Sophie"

- S1: But you know when they got some children, and the children say "my Dad is too old..."
 S2: No, I don't think the children going to say anything about my dad is too old...
 S1: But when they see their other friends have a young father, is make it bad...

It is quite apparent that the students are thinking in terms of their personal knowledge. They are thinking beyond the immediate situation only to the point that they are considering the possible future of the unreal characters in the text. While it is conceivable that the generalizations they make may be useful in some future personal decision, it is doubtful that the knowledge they are accessing to justify their decisions will be of use in future academic tasks.

Finally, in Task 4, moves were coded "Justify" when the students were able to make some inference about the information in the text, that is, elaborate or explain the meaning of a statement in the text:

- S: 'One half of the pipeline has to be laid over the... permafrost'. So that's a ...difficult to build it.

or

S1: Unexplained breaks and leaks in oil pipelines is fairly common...
 S2: No but they say its less...
 S3: Yeah, not more than a few thousand gallons.
 S1: Unexplained breaks...common...although...
 S2: So the meaning is...if they have damage..it is not so...
 S1: It is less than...
 S3: Not a big damage.
 S1: So this one is for which one? For the pipeline or sea route? Because is...I guess the meaning of the accident is not a big deal.
 S3: Yeah, so that's why I put the pipeline.

Generating interpretations of the information items provided in this text appears to require somewhat more complex thinking than does justifying opinions about the information provided in Task 3. Interpretations which are not based on personal experience require the students to think more in terms of a global situation; for instance, this "imaginary" situation can be linked to a larger goal of making decisions about worldwide environmental problems.

Returning to the concept of a decision-making process, another skill required in decision-making defined by Ross (1981) is "identifying appropriate criteria", which is similar to justifying an alternative or a rating according to criteria. Ross identifies five levels for this skill:

1)no criteria; 2)good things and bad things; 3)self-referenced criteria; 4)criteria refer to other people; and 5)criteria are general principles. After looking at the moves coded "generate alternative", it can be suggested that alternatives suggested during the composition activities were often at the highest level of maturity: "constructing alternatives using criteria". Moreover, it is suggested

that the criteria used were largely "general principles", described by Ross as a combination of "self-referenced concerns and consideration for other people into a general set of principles...that could have universal validity" (p.283). In the revision task the ratings, alternatives and criteria were related to an understanding of the need to make meaning explicit to a reader and that in order to do this one must meet some general criteria. All of this had to be worked out within the author's goal for the particular composition. In the editing task, the criteria were largely rule-based, and these learned rules had to be drawn from the repertoires of the students. In contrast, it is difficult to see how criteria used for alternatives in Task 3 could move beyond Ross' level 4 ("criteria refer to other people"), and they were often at level 2 ("good things and bad things").

One other comment can be made concerning the attitude of the students toward the four tasks. Although the students were not asked directly how they felt about the tasks, the feeling of the researcher was that there was more enthusiasm about the composition-related tasks. This judgement is based largely on the students' willingness to stick with the revision and editing tasks even though they were time consuming, while the students tended to cut off the constructed decision activities as soon as possible. If this is true, then one explanation is that the students recognize that they have a personal stake in the writing

activities.

In any future research of this type, student comments about the various tasks could provide additional insight.

The primary goal of this discussion was to suggest that since the composition-related tasks were as effective in generating decision-making language as two "constructed decision" tasks, that collaborative revision and editing offer a natural alternative to contrived decision-making tasks in the adult ESL classroom. That they are "natural" means that these tasks are already considered valuable for other aspects of language development, specifically for improving composition skills. At the same time as they build on the student's existing knowledge base in the area of composition, they provide a context for students to move through the decision-making process, generating the language of decision making.

Implications

A review of the literature on interactive group tasks in the ESL classroom indicates that while there is an increasing awareness that some connection exists between task and the use of certain language functions, and that small group interaction increases the amount of verbal negotiation between non-native speakers, this awareness stops short of understanding the actual qualitative value of tasks for the larger discourse structures and patterns that

they can generate. Although recent research indicates that activities need to access theoretical background knowledge in order to elicit expository discourse, the general assumption seems to remain that more talk is better talk, without assessing what really happens in the discourse generated during an activity. In addition, the extensive body of research on written composition establishes that there is a cognitive link between writing and decision-making, and there is reasonable support for the value of collaborative revision for improving composition skills, yet there has been no examination of the value of collaborative revision as an interactive decision-making activity.

The purpose of the present study was to explore the effectiveness of collaborative revision as an activity to elicit the language of decision-making in the adult ESL classroom. This was done by comparing the frequency of decision-making "moves" generated during two composition-related activities and two "constructed decision" tasks, and also by applying a qualitative analysis to the discourse. The quantitative findings indicated that the writing tasks were at least as effective for eliciting decision-making language, but the real difference between the tasks appears in the qualitative analysis of the decision making discourse. Basically, during the writing tasks the decision-making moves drew upon knowledge that was informed or "expert", while during the constructed decision tasks the moves drew upon knowledge that was largely

experiential or personal. Thus, one implication from this study is that the collaborative revision activity can offer a natural alternative to constructed decision activities; as a natural step in the process of learning to write compositions, the task provides a content-based decision-making situation in which adult ESL students can use both practical and theoretical knowledge and language.

While it might seem predictable that the constructed decision tasks would produce what might be called less than serious participation and that writing tasks would naturally be more motivating and serious, the fact is that this expectation has never been tested. This study provides an analytical view of what actually happens in the discourse of four "decision-making" activities. While many commercial texts include activities claiming to generate language that is linked to decision-making, an analysis of the discourse is necessary to provide evidence that the process is actually achieving this end. Another contribution of this study therefore, is that it establishes that discourse during interaction can and should be analysed on other levels than have been examined previously.

By analysing the discourse generated during activities, researchers can work toward providing quality language experiences for people. The value of decision-making tasks for generating expository discourse is an aspect of quality that has barely been addressed, particularly in relation to the content of the task. The

importance of discourse structures such as evaluation and choice has not been on the research agenda either in terms of analysing process or in making decisions about what should be happening in the classroom. This study is hopefully a small step towards a "re-vision" of both the process and the product of the interactive small-group ESL activity.

Limitations of the present study

The main limitation of the present study is that it was exploratory. To begin with, because it did not closely resemble any previous research, a new coding system had to be devised. Therefore, before making any broad generalizations about the results it would be necessary for other researchers to evaluate the applicability of this coding system to new data. However, the coding system was carefully drawn from relevant existing coding systems, and should be valuable as a starting point for future studies.

Secondly, the study is based on a sample of only eight subjects, although the repeated measures design produced 160 measures of response. Replication studies would need to be carried out in order to confirm the current findings.

Finally, in terms of the qualitative analysis, the value judgments may be seen as one personal opinion. They are, however, based on recent literature that emphasizes the need for a structured integration of content and language so that activities will have maximum language learning value.

In any case, it could be valuable for this data to be reassessed in relation to the recent literature.

Suggestions for future research

This study was intended to be exploratory, to raise some consciousness about an aspect of second language learning that has not been closely examined, and so to provide a possible basis for future research. The use of a coding system and quantitative measurement was mainly to determine if such analysis is feasible, and the qualitative analysis was aimed at examining the role of decision-making tasks in language teaching.

As mentioned before, further research could concern itself with replicating the present study, either to confirm the results for a similar population or to attempt to generalize to other populations. Subjects in the present study were adult ESL students at the "upper-intermediate" proficiency level. Further research could explore the same question with lower or higher level students.

Another adaptation of the present study might be to vary the constructed decision tasks, as it is possible that other tasks could offer a better context for eliciting expository talk.

Further research might also employ a more elaborate coding system, in order to examine the smaller components of the language of evaluation and choice. This would probably necessitate a much larger subject group in order to collect

enough frequency data to apply statistical tests to each small component.

The most interesting research would involve looking for lasting effects of different tasks on increases in ability to evaluate and use both the practical and theoretical language of decision-making. This could become very complex, however, involving large experimental and control groups over several months, and could raise some definite ethical concerns.

Finally, it would be interesting to explore the effects of pre-teaching aspects of decision-making language and monitoring their use during tasks such as those used in the present study.

Summary

The purpose of this research was to explore the effectiveness of the collaborative revision/editing tasks for eliciting the language of decision-making. Eight adult ESL students participated in two collaborative composition-related tasks and two interactive "constructed decision" tasks. Oral interaction during the tasks was audiotaped, transcribed, and coded for five decision-making moves based on a combination of existing coding systems. The study compared the frequency of the five decision-making moves elicited during the four tasks. In addition, a qualitative analysis was applied to the discourse.

Findings indicate that, under the conditions of the present study, the composition-related tasks were as effective as the constructed decision tasks in eliciting the language of decision-making. Moreover, the qualitative analysis suggests that the language generated during the composition-related tasks can be described as "expository talk", or language which is linked to theoretical or generalizable background knowledge. In contrast, the language generated during the constructed decision activities is almost exclusively related to either personal experience or the task immediately at hand.

Results of this study suggest that collaborative revision and editing can provide a natural context for interactive decision-making at the same time as they serve as part of the writing component in the ESL classroom. In addition, the in depth analysis of discourse may add to the small body of existing research that has begun to bridge process and product.

Background to the problem, a review of related literature, the description of the research design and procedures, and details of the information summarized above were presented in previous chapters. Copies of materials used during the procedures are contained in the appendices.

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APPENDIX B
Task 1: Revision
(Oral and Written Composing, Ling & Rothschild, 1988)

STUDENT'S PAGE

TO REVISE DRAFT 1

(NARRATIVE)

Students sit in a group with a tape-recorder on.

STEPS:

	WRITER	LISTENERS
1.	READS: TITLE of composition →	PREDICT: Maybe this composition is about _____ _____
2.	INTRODUCTION → (Paragraph 1)	DISCUSS: YES NO A. Suitable? _____ _____ IF NOT, DELETE/ADD _____ (WHAT?)
3.	Body of composition PARAGRAPH BY PARAGRAPH REPEATS/EXPLAINS, IF NECESSARY.	DISCUSS: Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5, etc. A. It is mostly about _____ B. Information missing on _____ C. Unclear pictures on _____ D. Things to be taken out _____ QUESTION WRITER, IF NECESSARY.
4.	CONCLUSION (last paragraph) →	DISCUSS: YES NO A. Suitable? _____ _____ IF NOT, DELETE/ ADD _____
5.	DISCUSS TOGETHER THE COMPOSITION AS FOLLOWS: A. Is the title OK? Why/ Why not? _____ _____ B. What do you like best about the writing? _____	
6.	WRITER, using tape, rewrites into draft 2. Keeps it for editing.	

Task 2: Editing
(Oral and Written Composing, Ling & Rothschild, 1988)

STUDENT'S PAGE

TECHNIQUE TO EDIT: PEER EDITING

BEFORE CLASS:

1. A. Give your teacher draft 2 (the revised draft) so that he can make enough photocopies for your group.

STEPS IN CLASS:

1. B. Sit in a group. Make sure you have <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. a good "grammarian" and a good "speller" in your group; ii. a dictionary, a grammar reference book and the class editing key on the table. 	
2. <u>The WRITER</u> (the chief editor) Gives a copy of his draft 2 to —————→	GROUP (called editors) each editor in the group
3. A. Reads aloud one sentence. Stops. Asks, "Is it OK?" —————→	Listens and says "Yes/No"
B. If not OK, writes the symbol in the margin on the line where the error is. If OK, continues with the next sentence.	Does the same as the chief editor.
C. <u>When you are not sure or when you disagree</u> . <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Use your grammar book and the dictionary; ii. Write down what the group thinks is best, for the time being; OR iii. Put question marks in the margin and ask the teacher later on, or at Conferencing time. 	
NOTE: You may not be able to find all the mistakes, but you will find some.	
4. When the writer finishes editing his draft 2, he becomes one of the editors in the group. —————→	
5. Choose another student's draft 2. Follow steps 2 - 4 above.	

Task 3: ESL Interactive Activity
"Sophie's Dilemma"
 (React Interact, Byrd & Clemente Cabetas, 1980)

Sophie is a beautiful and intelligent young career woman. She works at an international publishing company. Her job is editing writers' manuscripts. Since traveling is an important part of her work, she has already seen many parts of the world. Through her work and travel, she has met many single men who are interested in her romantically. Right now she feels a little troubled because three men, Derek, Winston, and Ethan, want to marry her. She also feels a commitment to continue her career. Her options are as follows:

MARRY DEREK

- 1 Handsome young actor; doesn't have much money
- 2 Expresses his love openly
- 3 Takes her to plays when he can get free tickets
- 4 Gives her lovely gifts for her apartment
- 5 Ambitious and egoistic
- 6 Had many girlfriends in the past
- 7 In excellent physical health
- 8 Wants Sophie to continue working

MARRY WINSTON

- 1 Rich older industrialist
- 2 Always kind to her but never talks of love
- 3 Takes her to chic places
- 4 Gives her expensive jewelry
- 5 Conservative and established
- 6 Two previous marriages; three grown children
- 7 In good health; twenty years older than Sophie
- 8 Wants Sophie to be a full-time wife

MARRY ETHAN

- 1 Young, middle-class professor
- 2 Writes love poems to her
- 3 Takes her for long walks and to concerts
- 4 Brings her flowers that he has picked himself
- 5 Quiet, serious, and intelligent
- 6 Had one love affair that lasted five years
- 7 In good physical health; sees a psychiatrist regularly
- 8 Wants Sophie to make her own decision about her career

CONTINUE HER CAREER

- 1 The chance for leadership with her company
- 2 Exciting and interesting work
- 3 Has her own money in the bank
- 4 Can travel anytime she wants to
- 5 Occasionally lonely
- 6 Loves children but has little time for them now
- 7 Enjoys an active, changing life

INSTRUCTIONS

Look at Sophie's options. Decide what she should do. What are the advantages/disadvantages of each option?

Each student should state his or her opinion about which man Sophie should marry or whether she should remain single. Give reasons for your opinion.

Try to reach a group decision to the problem.

Task 4: Non-ESL Interactive Activity
 "Let's Study a Problem"
 (Involvement, Greig, Ito, West, 1972)

A huge oil discovery has been made near the northern outpost of Tern Inlet. The discovery is in a corner of Zanoland that is cut off from the rest of the country by a high range of mountains. Two plans have been proposed to move the oil to large refineries in the southern part of Zanoland where most of the people of the country live.

The first plan calls for port facilities to be built at Tern Inlet from which huge tankers, capable of carrying millions of gallons, will be loaded for the trip to the city of Port Race. These ships will follow the coast of the Republic of Kel, but will travel the whole route in international waters.

The second plan suggests the building of a pipeline from Tern Inlet across Kel to refineries at Zana.

Here are some of the facts and opinions that have been presented.

The area in which the oil is located has had severe earthquakes capable of destroying port facilities and breaking pipelines.

The sea route is dangerous. Numerous ships have been wrecked in these waters.

Ocean currents and wind along many parts of the coast-line are on-shore.

Almost one-half of the pipeline has to be laid over permafrost. Experiments have suggested the the oil can be heated to make it flow, but the pipeline must be insulated to prevent damage to the frozen surface.

The pipeline route follows the rivers. One of these rivers is the spawning ground of a rare fish. Pollution of this river will exterminate the fish.

The cost of building the pipeline is much greater than the cost of transporting the oil by sea.

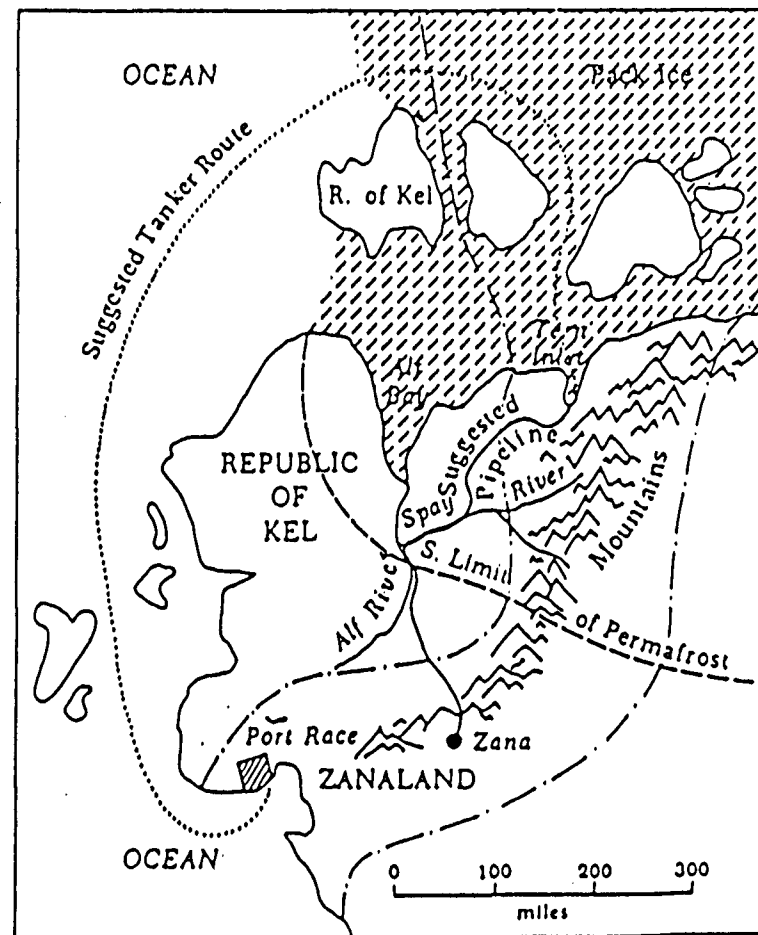
Many people in Kel make their living by fishing and from tourists.

Scientists have stated that oil spills in the ocean will severely damage marine life along the coast.

Scientists believe that the huge machines required to build the pipeline could create gashes in the soft covering of the frozen land which may never repair themselves.

Unexplained breaks and leaks in oil pipelines are fairly common although the spills are usually no more than a few thousand gallons.

The Government and most of the people of Kel are strongly opposed to the sea route. They can do nothing to prevent the Government of Zanoland from using this plan if that decision is made. Suppose that your group must advise the Prime Minister of Zanoland regarding which plan his country should follow. You are Zanolanders. The following map will be useful in developing your recommendations.



APPENDIX C

Decision-Making Moves:
Definitions, Examples and Coding Conventions

Notes:

1. A decision-making move is defined as an utterance which serves some purpose in the process of reaching a decision about a problem. An utterance is a thought or meaning-unit, not necessarily a complete sentence.
2. Only utterances related to making a decision about the task were coded. Discussion of class or task procedure, and personal remarks unrelated to the task are not coded.
3. Exact or near exact repetitions of an immediately preceding utterance are not coded.

The decision-making moves under study were:

1. Elicit Response (ER): Used to elicit alternatives, evaluative statements or information, or to identify a problem; usually in question form.

Functions: detecting problems, proposing alternatives

Structure: questions re alternatives, requests, vocabulary

a) eliciting alternatives or opinions re reasons

- "How can I change it?"
- "Should be "A Drunk Man" or "The Drunk Man"?"
- "How come she needs to continue her job?"
- "Which one do you agree to build?"

b) eliciting evaluative statements

- "Is the grammar OK?"
- "Is the title suitable"?
- "Do you think he is a good person for her"?
- "Which one is better?"

c) identifying a specific problem - (may serve to elicit evaluations or alternatives as well)

- "Excuse me, you said there are two reasons to divorce...you said only one reason...what was the other reason?"
- "Do we need 'one day' and a comma?"
(a student questions the writer's use of a comma following the phrase "one day")
- "What about "Sees a psychiatrist regularly?"
(the text of Task 3 informs that one of the men they are considering "sees a psychiatrist regularly" - the student is bringing this up as a possible problem)

d) eliciting information necessary to solve the problem

- "How do you spell 'meter'?"
- "Is that called "police ticket'?"

Can also be a request in the imperative form:

- "OK. Give me ideas."
- "Give me a reason."

2. Rate (R): An evaluative statement serving to provide support, identify a new problem, or disagree with an alternative.

Functions: evaluating, ranking, judging, criticizing
Structure: evaluative adjectives, verbs of judgment

a) make a positive statement (give support)

- "Nice title. Great."
- "Ethan is the best choice."
- "Past tense is right."

b) identify a problem initially

- "I think it is a run-on sentence."
- "But this is a total unclear picture, you know?"
- "The spelling is wrong."
- "20 years older than Sophie...is not good."

c) respond negatively to an alternative (disagree)

- "I do not agree."
- "Money? Is not good reason."
(response to "Maybe they didn't have enough money.")
- "No, that's too weak."
(response to a suggestion given to a writer)
- That is not a bad thing.
(response to "He expresses his love openly.")

3. Generate Alternative (GA): Includes offering original suggestions or opinions based on alternatives provided in the text at hand.

Functions: proposing alternatives, expressing opinions
recommending

Structure: modals, conditional

a) offering original suggestions

- "I think it should be a new paragraph."
- "You should add some information."
- "So you can use "and" to connect the sentences."
- "We can buy oil from other places."
- "Maybe later she can have a baby and quit her job."

b) offering opinions based on alternatives provided in the text at hand

- "I think she can continue her career."
- "Another reason for sea route is 'pipeline is expensive'."
- "If I were her I would get married with Winston."

4. Identify Purpose or Reason (IP): Refers to a reason that does not go beyond the practical task and does not refer to rules or standards. Includes describing or defending action taken, elaborating a reason for a question or statement, or categorizing advantages/disadvantages.

Functions: giving reasons

Structure: subordination

a) a writer describes/defends what s/he has written

- "I know him, that's why I said 'That was Jack again'"
- "I tell what she is thinking about."

b) a group member elaborates a reason for asking a question or making a statement

- "I did the question because you telling about your uncle doesn't have land."

c) the advantages/disadvantages of alternatives are categorized

- "He's OK because he is rich and always kind to her."
- "Earthquake will affect the pipeline: this is a reason for sea route."

5. Justify (J): Supplies a reason for an evaluation or a suggestion, but must refer to some background knowledge based on accepted standards or criteria, or on experiential knowledge enabling generalizations to be made.

Functions: justifying opinions, concluding, predicting, generalizing

Structure: subordination, conditional

- a) academically accepted standards or criteria are referred to:
- "If you put that in your conclusion your body will be too short."
 - "The problem is you need to describe the poverty. In our mind, we know our poverty, but in Canada is different...we are poor, but we have house, we have...." (criteria that the average reader needs clearer information is implied)
- b) rules are referred to (found almost exclusively in the editing task):
- "Should be a period here. Otherwise is run-on sentence."
 - "You need 'on' - the preposition."
 - "I say 'harder' because I compare."
- c) experiential knowledge which enables generalizations or predictions to be made is referred to:
- "He is too old...you know when they got some children and the children say 'My dad is too old'."
 - "He had many girlfriends...he will continue... because the man who had many girlfriends before..."
 - "So that mean the pipeline will follow the river and make pollution...the oil could kill the fish..."

EXAMPLES OF CODING

Revision

ER R: So, now we have to discuss the...Is the title OK?

R S1: Title's OK. Drunk Man.

ER R: Should be "A Drunk Man" or "The Drunk Man"?

J S3: But finally he not drunk.

J S2: Because here...you talk...the process of being drunk and the process why he got divorce, you got lots of...I mean...you tell lots of...I think you better find a better title.

IP R: But I really like that title to fix to that story, because what I like to describe is the man...how he changed his life style.

IP S2: OK that's why you...I mean you're talking about ...when you say "The Drunk Man" you're talking about drunk, right?

S3: But finally he not drunk.

R: But when I started the story he was drunk.

S2: ...about what time...about 3 years? Before that he wasn't drunk, and after that he quit.

IP R: That's why I wanna describe that part. Only that part. When he was drunk, right? And how he quit from the drunk man to the normal people.

R S2: I don't know...for me "The Drunk Man" is not quite suitable with your composition.

ER R: OK. Give me ideas.

J S2: Because there is a lesson why, I mean there is a lesson by being drunk...I mean...his life is not good...

GA S1: How about "A New Life"?

Editing

R: OK, the title: "Anxious About Her Future".

R S1: Nice title. Great.

S2: Good.

R: OK. Introduction: "People go to school because they need to improve their knowledge or skills."

S1: Go ahead.

R R: "When they can established their career...", oh, "their career" is wrong..."what they have interested in"...no wait, wait a minute...wrong word -- WW.

GA S2: Oh. "and that they are interested in".

R: "interested in"?

S3: "they have interested"

S2: No...just, no "have", "they are interested in".

GA R: No "have", take it out.

S2: "They are interested in".

R: OK.

S3: Yeah, good.

R: "So is Janet, my friend. Today she..."

ER S2: How come "So is Janet"?

S1: So is Janet. Go ahead.

IP R: I mean, you go to school, you want to learn English, so am I. I mean like that.

Problem-Solving Activity
(Sophie's Dilemma) from React Interact - ESL Text

ER S1: OK. This one first. Give reasons.

S2: Why Sophie should marry Derek?

S3: Should marry?

ER S1: Are you thinking you are good person for Sophie?

R S3: No, he is not good person for Sophie.

ER S1: How come? Give me a reason.

J S3: He has two qualities. He express his love openly and he is in excellent physical health. But he has many mistakes and I think she's not going to get married him.

ER S1: What kind of mistakes?

GA S3: What kind of mistakes? He has many girlfriends.

S2: No, it say in the past...

S1: That's not a mistake.

S3: But he had alot...but he will continue.

S1: How do you know?

S2: It say in the past.

J S3: Because the man who had alot of girlfriends before...

S2: No no...is just...

GA S3: He's ambitious and...egoistic

R S4: Yeah, this is not good point.

S3: Is not good point...she will be mad.

S1: So this guy is not good person because...

J S2: My opinion is different. He take her...to place when he can get free tickets. It means he cheap. Why if he love her why don't he buy the ticket and inviting her instead of get free ticket?

"Academic" Problem Solving Activity

(Should "Zanaland" built a pipeline or use a sea route to transport oil?) - from *Involvement*

- GA S1: So...reasons for the pipeline...yeah...the location had several earthquakes...
- IP S2: That's the reason of sea route...
- S1: No, no...its for the pipeline.
- S2: No...the sea route.
- S3: Earthquake will affect the pipeline.
- S1: Yeah.
- J S2: So that is the reason for build the sea route.
- S3: Use the sea route, yeah.
- S4: Pipeline is...what's pipeline?
- S2: The pipeline...it make like a line, long line.
- S1: You ever see water under the ground?
- S3: Transport the...oil.
- S4: Oh I see.
- S3: Which point are you talking about this one?
- S1: The area...OK?
- S3: Oh OK.
- GA S2: So the other one...ocean currents and wind along
IP many parts of the coast line are on shore.
That's the reason for the pipeline.
- S1: No no. How about the sea...the sea route?