
A MODIFIED CALLA (COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE LEARNING APPROACH)

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This paper proposes to offer a modified CALLA (Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach). It starts with a review of the state of the art, and in addition offers research done in the Philippines at the University of the Philippines, College of Education. Then it will proceed to illustrate the concretization in light of the review of the Communication Skills English courses for Freshmen at the University of the Philippines in their General Education Program.

This paper is addressed mainly to the practitioner, the classroom teacher, and the syllabus designer who wish to articulate and operationalize the instructional model of CALLA designed by O'Malley and Chamot (1990). This CALLA is an approach to teaching and learning a language at the upper elementary and secondary levels. It is best introduced for instruction at about these levels for the reason that at these levels the language learner will have then attained some degree of proficiency in the first or second foreign language as a tool.

CALLA's theoretical base can be traced to cognitive psychology. It rests on the assumption that "language is a complex cognitive skill developing through a series of stages, which requires extensive practice and feedback in order to operate at an autonomous level" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990:191). This simply means that the learner is an active agent involved in "processing" information that comes to his attention. As a result of this processing, learning or retention is said to happen.

CALLA systematically distinguishes between two kinds of knowledge; namely, the declarative knowledge or knowledge of what we know, and the

procedural knowledge or knowledge of how-to-do what we know. It is on the procedural knowledge that CALLA rests its case. The developers of CALLA clearly state that in language acquisition, the acquisition of the procedural skills are of significance if they are to reach an automatic level of use in the mainstream of learning in the content areas.

This assertion would mean that procedural skills, if and when consciously integrated into the syllabus or plan of a lesson, will enhance the learning of topics of content subjects.

CALLA underscores a process whereby, in the early stages of CALLA instruction, the procedures or how-to-do-things are the focus. In the later stages of CALLA instruction, the learner would have acquired a degree of automation so he could at that point then automatically choose the appropriate learning strategy to match the content/topic item being learned at that moment.

Research on learning strategies in language acquisition came to the fore in the mid-seventies with Rubin's (1975) and Naiman's (1978) definition of the "good language learner". Concentrating more on the use of the new error analysis hypothesis, Ravina (1982) took a look at what communication strategies the students in the Philippines were using to see what they used more or less in relation to their linguistic error frequencies. While using Rubin and Naiman et al's studies as guides, she was able to name those strategies that have to do with processing and rule-formation learning strategies, and those that do not have to do with rule making in the mental processing of information production strategies. The

findings revealed that the greater number of strategies used, the greater the likelihood of fewer linguistic errors.

Another Philippine study done at about the same time was that of Seroy (1981). Seroy's study looked at the comprehensibility of 30 high school freshmen learners' oral narrations in terms of their communication strategies in the target language (English). These communication strategies were classified into verbal and non verbal. The verbal were further classified as (1) approximation, (2) appeal for assistance, (3) circumlocution, (4) code switching, (5) literal expression, (6) message abandonment, (7) modeling, (8) repetition, (9) self-correction, (10) simplification-reduction, (11) topic avoidance, and (12) word coinage. This study found that "there exists a significant relationship between the use of communication strategies and oral language proficiency as well as between the use of communication strategies and message comprehensibility" (Seroy, 1981). It also noted that while the learners obviously used a number of mostly verbal and some non-verbal communication strategies, linguistic proficiency was one aspect in learning that is crucial for comprehensibility and communicability. In other words, those who used more strategies produced oral narratives that were comprehensive, although not necessarily free of linguistic errors.

Both Rubin's (1975) and Naiman et al.'s (1978) studies were available to Ravina and Seroy. While exploring the Filipino learners use of communication strategies early, they did not, however, fine tune the classifications of their uncovered learning communication strategies.

Rubin's classification are grouped into those that directly affect learning (namely, clarification/verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning, and practice) and those that contribute indirectly to learning (namely, creates opportunities for practice and production).

On the other hand, Naiman et al's (1978) groupings are: active task approach, realization of language as a system, realization of language as a means of communication and interaction, management of affective demands, and monitoring L2 performance. These are what have been more appropriately termed techniques.

Over the past decade and a half, continuing interest in strategies have produced studies that

mostly looked at reading comprehension skills of first language speakers of English. Although research on learning strategies have not yet been done on a wider range of tasks, it has, however, been established that training learners to systematically use strategies enhances their learning performance. A few of those who have pursued studies on learning strategies are Brown et al (1983); Chipman, Segal and Glaser (1985); and Danserean (1985).

Learning strategy research has followed through the third component of the communicative competence theoretical framework of Canale & Swain (1980): ie., strategic competence. Follow through and refinement of the research on strategic competence has distinguished between (1) learning strategies whose goal is learning, and (2) communicative strategies whose goal is that of maintaining the flow of communication (Tarone, 1981).

Meanwhile, there are Bialystok (1978) and Wong Fillmore (1984) whose models contrast with that of Krashen's Monitor Model (1982) "which does not allow for contributions of explicit linguistic knowledge (learning) to implicit knowledge (acquisition)" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990:10).

Other names to remember in the field of research on language acquisition and communicative competence, particularly in learning strategies in the eighties, are McLaughlin, Rossman, and McLeod (1983) who view the learner as the active agent in "the organization of incoming information, with processing limitations and capabilities" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Cognition in second language acquisition became more definitively significant, whether the automaticity of language learning was arrived at from the so-called top-down approach, or from the bottom-up approach. Top-down makes use of the "internal schemata," while the bottom-up approach makes use of "external schemata."

Spolsky (1985) proposes a model that identifies the necessary conditions upon which the cognitive processing of language learning can optimally take place. These conditions are: the necessary condition, the gradient condition, and the typicality condition. Spolsky's model does not specify the strategies of language learning, but these are underlying in the conditions that have been identified and classified by him.

O'Malley and Chamot in their book *Learning strategies in second language acquisition* (1990), have situated their own research and instructional model within the historical/chronological contexts of the studies on language learning strategies from the mid-seventies to this date. In their pursuit on the subject, it becomes very clear that the more involved the learner is in second language acquisition, insofar as the conscious use and choice of learning strategies applied to the learning of content/topic in context, the far better the chances are for success. There are still some doubts, though, on whether it necessarily follows that when the learner knows all about strategies, and frequently uses them, that second language learning will naturally follow.

The instructional model of O'Malley and Chamot has three components: the metacognitive set of strategies, the cognitive set of strategies, and the socio-affective set of strategies:

Based on their research, these categories of learning strategies are very effective and applicable to varied tasks in different contexts for second language learners.

One finding of the Philippine Education Commission that is presently studying the state of education in the country has found out that the teacher factor is critical. Simply put, the teacher is a significant factor in the child's learning. In this connection, O'Malley and Chamot have addressed the needs of both learners and teachers.

O'Malley and Chamot's instructional model assumes that the teacher takes an active role in planning the embedding of the learning strategies in the lessons of content subjects. They in fact exhort the teacher to find out how their students are using learning strategies, and what strategies they are using. This finding out can be done by interview, by exhorting the students to think aloud, or by asking them to write down how they had arrived at the accomplishment of the learning task. Once the teachers have listed what strategies the students have used by their own admission, the teachers could then consult the listings offered by the different learning-strategies instructional models so that they could then present new strategies to the students.

METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES	COGNITIVE STRATEGIES	SOCIAL/AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES
Planning for learning Monitoring one's comprehension and production Evaluating how well one has achieved a learning objective.	Making mental images Elaborating on previously acquired concepts and skills Grouping items to be learned in meaningful categories Taking notes on important information to be remembered	Learner interacts with another person Cooperates as in asking question Uses some kind of affective control to assist a learning task

To present the new and, heretofore, not used strategies by the students, the teachers must do the following: "first explain the purpose and utility of learning strategies in general, name the strategy to be taught, and explain the benefits students will derive from using it" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990:200). This is what is meant by directly teaching the strategies. In other words, this is what scientific teaching of learning strategies means.

To illustrate the instructional model called CALLA, take the subject of literature as a case in point for content. Take a poem with the title "Telephone Conversation" written by Wole Soyinka. This poem is about a telephone conversation between two people, one who is looking for a place to stay, and another at the other end of the telephone line who is the prospective landlord. The former inquires about the possibility of renting a room/lodging. The landlord asks the caller if he is black or white. The caller does not answer directly or categorically. Instead, he answers in a roundabout way by using euphemisms. He emphasizes that the palms of his feet are white, and says he is sepia. The landlord insists on a black or white answer. The caller hedges. In the end, the landlord cuts the conversation, and the next thing the caller realizes is that he has been cut off by the click of the telephone at the landlord's end. That is the telephone conversation.

For the preparation stage of CALLA, the teacher, upon assigning the poem "Telephone Conversation" for the following day's lesson, can lay the ground work through brainstorming by asking the students about their experiences on discrimination in whatever form - whether the experiences have been those of their friends or their relatives. This stage of preparation for the full discussion on the lesson is excellent for a sharing period. At this juncture the tie-up with the forthcoming lesson can be established; the objectives of the lesson assigned can be clarified; and in this connection, the vocabulary central to the poem's themes, or the vocabulary that is potentially difficult, as well as potential impediments to accurately lining up the narrative facts can be listed on a cooperative level. Suggestions on what would go into the list for meaning clarification are elicited.

This preparation stage just described illustrates the development of skills strategies in the metacognitive category.

For the presentation stage of the lesson, the information as regards the telephone conversation is presented by means of asking the students about the situation pertaining in the telephone conversation. Contextual clues can be ferreted out from the text and a semantic mapping can be constructed by going through the length of the poem and singling out those terms that directly or even indirectly point to the theme of the poem. Selecting the vocabulary in the text that speak about or support the main idea insures comprehension of the information. The learning strategy used here is called selective attention. In the course of selecting vocabulary items that are central to the poem's meaning, the likelihood of some of the descriptive words moving into the realm of imagery also ensues, providing, of course, that the teacher has taken care about first illustrating how description stops being only description, and how it begins to be imagery instead.

With deftly handled questioning, about what really is happening in the poem, the necessary requisites for clarification are met.

The next stage of the lesson would be the lesson proper as the traditional term in lesson planning puts it. This stage is referred to as the practice stage. Here the students get the chance to practice what they have prepared for in the preparation stage. One activity that would utilize cooperative learning would be a role play in which one student reads the lines of the caller, another reads the lines of the landlord, and a third student reads the lines of the teacher, the proper intonation patterns and contours can be explained and illustrated so that the nuances in the poem with regards to racial discrimination - no matter how subtle - can be brought out. Trying out different ways of intoning the lines that speak of the landlord's prejudices against the blacks are printed in bold capital letters in the text. This visual presentation of an oral language aspect must not be ignored. The student could be reminded to mind this print.

The teacher is also best advised to resort to the constant use of the social/affective learning strategies. Working in dyads or small groups to decide on even small matters like the truth or falsity of a statement, or the ranking of evaluative words, or the arranging in proper sequence of events in a story in a narrative poem (that have been jumbled for precisely that task of arranging) - provide an excellent learning opportunity as a cooperative venture. The teacher's role in providing

the necessary formulaic expressions and cohesive devices for negotiations can be given to the dyads/ small groups to facilitate their interactions.

From the reading out of the poem, the subsequent activity/task could be writing about prejudice, either experienced or observed, or the discourse pattern to model could be one of illustration or example, as contradistinguished from narration. The teacher can provide some basic cohesive devices apropos the chosen discourse pattern.

Many other tasks fall under the cognitive learning strategies. Summarizing is one. The students may be asked to render a prose version of the poem, or they can be asked to write a summary in so many words only. A rule would be for the summary to avoid the use of evaluative words and to stick to the use of the denotative or the literal words. Then they can look at their own written work to clear out words that evaluate.

Extension of the narrative thread of the telephone conversation is another task for the students. This is, of course, another story/narrative altogether. Carter (1985) in his list of language-based strategies for teaching literature calls this prediction. This activity calls for the student to surmise what happened after the telephone conversation was cut.

Evaluation is the third phase of the CALLA lesson model. Still on the lesson above, the students at this stage can be called upon to evaluate, for instance, the role-playing of the situation in the poem, or of the chamber theater performance of it, paying particular attention to the appropriate intonation patterns, and vowel sound productions, especially those that are absent in the student's native language. They could also try out so called 'new' English varieties. In this case the English variety could be tried out for effect.

Caution is the word to remember for this stage. For second language learners, a number of linguistic

errors are to be expected. The teacher is best advised not to overdo corrections every step of the way; otherwise unproductive silences will ensue instead. If the proficiency level of the class is average, the rudiments of self correction can be taught, especially in rewriting their written activities. If, for instance, the written work was narrative discourse, perhaps the use of the past tense can be the focus of correction by the students themselves. Alternatively, the students can write down the questions they themselves can answer, then write those answers. This way, the art of asking questions can be consciously developed. The distinction between what are low level questions on the one hand, and what are the high-level questions on the other hand can be sampled with teacher's instructions to guide the performance of the desired activity.

The culminating stage of a CALLA lesson is called the expansion activities. At this stage, the learners are called upon to infer new applications of the newly acquired information, concept or skill. Along with the development of these higher order of thinking skills are newer ways of thinking and doing things.

Another reminder is now in order; that is, that the phases of learning strategies are recursive, meaning to say that they can be repeated over and over again until understanding is ensured, sufficient practice is done, and the new information and procedures are integrated/consolidated.

The next and final part of this paper is on a recent attempt at incorporating CALLA in the Communication Skills Freshmen Course Syllabus at the Department of English and Comparative Literature at the University of the Philippines.

After the inputting of the notion of communicative competence theory and practice by a paper read by one of the faculty, a workshop decided to modify a traditional syllabus whose original columns are:

Weeks	Units	Topics	Activities	Methods Techniques	Text/ Reference
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The workshop group decided, after much debate, that the renaming of the column on methods/techniques be more suggestive for utility and guidance purposes of both teachers and students. The renaming of Methods/Techniques to Learning Strategies was decided upon as an efficient measure in carrying out tasks and in ensuring that through deliberate teaching of the learning strategies, the student will imbibe the habit of consciously/automatically choosing the appropriate learning strategy for the given lesson/task for maximum learning. The faculty whose tasks are teaching language, but whose preparations are in Anglo-American Literature/Philippine Studies/Comparative Literature/Creative Writing will best benefit from such a seemingly small attempt at renaming a column in the syllabus.

It was further agreed that stock names from lists in the literature of Language Acquisition/Learning Strategies be given more explicit and descriptive labels whenever possible. The traditional literature minded/oriented faculty of the department have come a long way by renaming "Methods and Techniques" to "Learning Strategies".

The Department now looks forward to providing more measures for its students for their ESL learning, especially in literature. It also now looks forward to providing the opportunity for recursive use of the learning strategies on the metacognitive, the cognitive, and the socio-cognitive categories in the hope of serving the needs of the other disciplines.

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