

# Is Oral Proficiency Possible with Today's French Textbooks?

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"In Paris they simply opened their eyes and stared when we spoke to them in French. We never did succeed in making those idiots understand their own language."<sup>1</sup>

TO SAY THAT THE CONCEPT OF PROFICIENCY HAS come to dominate the field of foreign language teaching in the United States is almost an understatement. The October, 1984 issue of *Foreign Language Annals*, the Fall, 1984 issue of *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, the 1984, 1985, and 1986 volumes of the ACTFL Foreign Language Education Series, and the 1985 Northeast and Southern Conferences on Language Teaching, as well as a number of individual articles in other sources, are all dedicated to this theme.<sup>2</sup> Defined by Liskin-Gasparro as "the ability to function effectively in the language in real-life contexts," proficiency is most closely associated with oral proficiency, so much so that the discussions one reads seem to limit the concept to the speaking skill.<sup>3</sup> Magnan attributes this to the fact that the only proficiency test developed so far is one for speaking ability.<sup>4</sup>

Focusing attention on the speaking skill in classroom teaching should not surprise or cause worry. Students nearly always express speaking ability as their primary interest in learning a language, and teachers rely on it to develop the other skills. Oral proficiency is a logical extension of the emphasis on communication we have been reading about for fifteen years; it cannot be seen as a change in direction, but rather as a concentration of effort.<sup>5</sup> We wish to produce students who can communicate in the target language with monolingual native speakers.

The question this article asks is whether this goal is reasonable or even possible given the most important pedagogical materials avail-

able: textbooks. It will attempt to answer that question by using French as the language for analysis.<sup>6</sup> Since virtually all college-level foreign language textbooks published in the United States are written along structural lines, the description of the French language in these books has been examined to see if it lends itself to the acquisition of a functional speaking ability. While it seems logical that a notional/functional approach would be more appropriate for the development of proficiency, all the discussions of this approach during the last ten years have not led to more than token presentations in American textbooks. Since textbook authors and publishers have chosen a structural approach, they must be evaluated in that respect.<sup>7</sup>

This analysis is based on an examination of twenty-two textbooks for the teaching of college French on the elementary level published in the United States.<sup>8</sup> The level is important because most students of foreign languages in the United States are enrolled at the elementary level. The twenty-two textbooks were selected from those published or re-edited since 1981; all are widely advertised and sold. Although no precise statistics are available, these books probably capture most of the US market. The year (1981) is arbitrary, but is recent enough to allow authors to incorporate the latest theories in language acquisition and teaching for proficiency.

The textbooks involved are basically of two types: 1) written entirely in French (eight of the present sample). The teacher presents the material for the first time in class, and students study it at home afterwards; 2) grammar explanations in English (fourteen). Often, students prepare before class so that less time is spent in class on explanation and mechanical drill and more time is given to communication.

Several aspects of each book have been analyzed: 1) the goals set forth by the authors in the preface, introduction, or teacher's manual

will determine whether oral proficiency is an objective and how important it is; 2) phonology is represented by the pronunciation sections in the book. The argument over the accuracy of pronunciation versus comprehension of the message is not addressed here. This analysis will concentrate on the authors' attitudes toward oral language; 3) morphology is analyzed in several features since it must come to terms with the differences between oral and written forms, a striking feature of French. Depending on the structure, oral forms may be more (e.g., numbers) or less (e.g., postnominal adjectives) complicated than written forms. Obviously, for students to learn to speak, they must learn oral forms; 4) the syntax of spoken French is studied with regard to usage. Textbooks often present forms that are not commonly used, and most non-natives acquiring a language in a classroom learn a style that is too formal. In a worse case, they study forms that are not used by native speakers and that have little communicative value. On the other hand, certain syntactic constructions that exist only in speech must be taught if students are to learn to communicate with native speakers. Because the goal is to describe American textbooks of elementary French in general, references to specific texts will not appear.

#### ANALYSIS OF OBJECTIVES

The objectives set forth in all of the textbooks included in this study are general, even vague. That is not surprising, since the purpose of publishing a textbook is to create as large a market as possible; singling out specific skills to develop would only serve to eliminate potential customers. Given this fact, several authors do make relatively strong statements. Most talk of a "four-skills approach," yet the only skill singled out for mention is speaking. Three of the books have "conversational" in the title. Some of the authors' comments are: "speaking is seen as the major component of the class period"; "... emphasizes active use of the spoken language in meaningful contexts"; "listening, understanding, and speaking are of primary importance, and writing should not be allowed to come first. . . . Students will learn how to write what they can already understand and say"; "there will be no interference from reading and writing unless the oral language has been allowed to slip into second place"; "the

book's format enables students to learn to speak the language quickly." One author quotes the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies as saying that instruction should concentrate on speaking and understanding before other skills. It is safe to say that all the books include the speaking skill as a major component; most stress it. Conversely, none has reading or writing as the primary skill. Thus, it does seem valid to analyze the contents of the books for their ability to promote oral proficiency.

#### PHONOLOGY

Phonology is represented as phonetics in pronunciation sections in most of the books. Two books, both espousing the direct method, give only a note or two, no doubt relying on the teacher to model and correct pronunciation throughout the course. Of the other twenty, four present a full chapter at the beginning of the book or as an appendix, seven have sections in each chapter for half or more of the book, and five throughout the entire text, while four relegate pronunciation to the lab manual.

Eight books use a phonics approach, which starts with spelling and attempts to derive the correct pronunciation. This method reflects what some think students ordinarily do in their study of the language. On the negative side, phonics encourages students to concentrate on spelling irregularities rather than on the more coherent oral forms, it perpetuates the false notion that pronunciation is based on spelling, and it leads to bizarre statements such as "nasal vowels . . . are caused by the presence of *n* or *m*" and "pronounced consonant other than *se*." Twelve books use a phonetics approach, which starts with a French sound, describes it, and then gives possible spellings that represent it.

Regardless of the approach they use in presenting French pronunciation, textbook authors seem dedicated to conveying information on the theoretical level. Fifteen of the twenty books examined give articulatory information, while five provide only exercises for practicing sounds that (we assume) the teacher has described in class.<sup>9</sup> Surprisingly, seventeen of the twenty books present even more theoretical information on the phonological level, especially with respect to the distribution of mid-vowels, nasal vowels and consonants, and mute *e*. Such information implies the authors' belief that, even at

the elementary level, students are capable of assimilating information of an abstract nature about pronunciation and that such an assimilation will result in improved pronunciation.

#### MORPHOLOGY

On the morphological level, adjective agreement is a structure where written forms may be more numerous than oral forms. Sixteen of the books mention the pronunciation of a silent consonant in the feminine and another reminds teachers of it in an overprint students do not see, leaving five that do not give any information on one of the most basic features of spoken French. However, only two mention concurrent phonetic changes such as denasalization (e.g., *italienne/italien*). This generally accurate element is not represented in the authors' grouping of adjectives, which is based entirely on spelling. We see adjectives ending in *-al* together with those in *-eau* in the plural because they both take *-x*, totally inappropriate groupings such as *cruel, gros, and canadien*, or *bleu, brun, and content*, and a number of cases where adjectives such as *blanc, long, and naturel* are described as "irregular" even though this classification is valid only in writing. While students are reminded of pronunciation, most descriptions are *structured* according to the written forms. The frequent mention of the adjective *marron*, invariable in French, so early in these elementary texts seems to show that authors were searching for as many different kinds of written forms as possible rather than for a useful vocabulary.

The situation worsens considerably with prenominal adjectives. Because of *liaison obligatoire* whenever a noun starting with a vowel follows, the oral system for this class of adjectives is quite complex. A prenominal adjective may have only two oral forms (*joli*) or as many as six (*grand*). Only four of the twenty-two books mention pronunciation changes. Nine books mix pre- and postnominal adjectives in the original presentation and as early as page 19 in a 485-page book. Many books present this class of adjectives before page 60. In contrast, in an older textbook written by a noted linguist, singular prenominal adjectives appear on page 195 and plurals on page 346. Clearly, the author has taken into account the complexity of the oral system and has delayed its introduction until students have a better grasp of the

language. A typical textbook presents twelve adjectives showing fifty-two oral forms. From a strictly oral point of view, prenominal adjectives are more complicated than all the regular verb forms of French, yet no book would ever introduce *-er, -ir, -ir + -iss, and -re* verbs in one lesson. Spelling is clearly the only difference. All books teach the masculine, prevocalic forms of *beau, nouveau, and vieux*, but almost none mention adjectives such as *dernier*, which undergo the same phonetic change with no concurrent spelling change.<sup>10</sup> As a result, students can say they have "*un nouvel appartement*," but it cannot be on the "*premier*" or the "*dernier étage*." This will serve as the first example of a possible answer to the complaint that language textbooks in the United States are much too long and complicated to be taught adequately in one year.<sup>11</sup> Failure to take into account the complexity of oral forms in a program stressing the speaking skill may be one cause of this problem.

Another example of ignoring complexity is the presentation of numbers. Unlike regular, variable adjectives (e.g., *vert*) with two oral and four written forms, numbers are more complicated in pronunciation than in writing (e.g., six = /sis/, /siz/, or /si/). Fourteen of the twenty-two books give complete information on the different pronunciation of numbers *one* through *ten*. However, one teaches *zero* through *sixty* at one time, or a total of approximately 109 oral forms (albeit with considerable redundancy). Three texts present *one* to *a billion* in one lesson. The numbers *zero* through *ten* alone have twenty-two possible oral forms, yet twelve of the twenty-two books attempt to teach more, and very early in the beginning course. A typical presentation of *60* to *1,000* includes the spelling of each form, comments on the idiosyncratic spelling features (e.g., *deux cents* vs. *deux cent un*), and no pronunciation. Thus, books often teach written forms twice and oral forms not at all for words frequently spoken and almost never written. In order to write comprehensive descriptions of grammar, the authors are obviously relying on the fact that written forms are superficially much simpler than oral forms.

Another aspect of morphology where oral forms are not more complicated than written forms would be verbs. Among the twenty-two presentations of stem-changing verbs such as *acheter* and *préférer*, eleven do not give a reason



for the accent or spelling change (two of them stating inaccurately that it causes a change in pronunciation), and two say it is due to a pronunciation change but do not indicate what that change is. Seven indicate the pronunciation change, but only two of twenty-two offer an explanation, even though most explain the distribution of these vowels in separate pronunciation sections. Since this class of verbs contains several of high frequency in a communication setting (*acheter, s'appeler, espérer, préférer*), it is an important one to teach. Surely, an incorrect vowel substitution such as \*/nu re pə tō/ or \* ʒə ma pəl/ is as serious a mistake as \*/il vø/ but since the changes are represented only as accent marks in writing, they do not draw the authors' interest. These verbs deserve much more attention than they currently receive.

The verbs *prendre* and *venir* underline still another inconsistency. My analysis sought mention of phonetic changes and a possible explanation of denasalization, because the contrast *ils viennent/il vient* is difficult for anglophones and affects comprehensibility. Only five books indicate pronunciation changes for both verbs, while three others describe one verb but not the other. Fourteen do not mention pronunciation. With *pouvoir* and *vouloir*, examples of mid-vowel raising in French, only three books give the student indications of correct pronunciation while another shows the three written stems. Two others remind teachers in marginal notes to model the correct pronunciation. Sixteen give no indication of pronunciation at all. On the other hand, eighteen of the twenty-two teach the two verbs together; perhaps we can assume that this approach is due to phonetic similarities.

An obvious assumption on the phonological and morphological levels is that the teacher will always model the correct pronunciation. The notion that certain elements lacking in a textbook will be filled in by the teacher must be rejected. Materials writers cannot determine what teachers will or will not do. Also, the same argument could be applied to every lacuna in a textbook, making any evaluation impossible. Furthermore, fourteen of the twenty-two books in this study have rules in English, which encourages students to prepare before class, before hearing the instructor's model.

## SYNTAX

The last aspects of this analysis involve syntax and usage (or situations where the native speaker has a choice between two or more forms). Obviously, the non-native speaker should choose the more frequent form assuming that the register is appropriate. Textbooks do consider this goal appropriate. In one we read that the book presents "elements most frequently used by native speakers in daily life" and in another "a practical, functional knowledge of French as it is spoken today by native speakers in real-life situations." If the more frequent form is also easier for the learner to acquire, then textbook writers have an added incentive to develop that form pedagogically.

The first item of concern here is question formation. In a study of elementary French students at Indiana University, Albert Valdman found that inversion was quite difficult for students and delayed the acquisition process. His discovery led him to use intonation as the main form of questioning in pedagogical materials, even to the use of the controversial form with interrogative adverbs.<sup>12</sup> While questions such as *Comment tu t'appelles?* may be considered substandard by purists and educated native speakers, most interrogatives, such as *Vous allez bien?* are not. A surprising result of the study is that fifteen books make no distinction whatsoever in the usage of intonation, *est-ce que*, and inversion. This lapse is not an attempt to save space, because the books discuss structure. One text has a ten-line chart for all the possible word orders with inversion, but no mention of style or frequency. Another states that "the simplest way" is with *est-ce que*, which is not true. A third lists intonation as a fifth possibility, while another that stresses the primacy of the spoken language equates inversion and *est-ce que* and mentions intonation in a one-line footnote. One implies that *ai-je* is the preferred form; another states that *puis-je* is commonly used. To summarize: the authors present bizarre and inaccurate information, but only seven of twenty-two state simply that inversion is more formal than intonation.

Presentation of the future tenses also neglects information on usage. The compound future formed by a conjugated form of *aller* and an infinitive and usually called the *futur proche*, is

used, in principle, for the immediate future while the simple tense is for more distant events. Recent research has shown that the *futur proche* also implies more certainty.<sup>13</sup> In reality, futurity is so subjective that the *futur proche* serves most purposes in conversation, and the distinction between the two becomes almost one of style. Only three of the twenty-two textbooks explain to students that the *futur proche* is a conversational style. Only one states that it is almost always acceptable, but this is understandable because an author cannot introduce a new tense such as the simple future complete with a list of irregular stems and then state that you do not have to use it. Eight books indicate the difference between immediate and general future. Eleven indicate no difference at all. The strange observations noted with interrogatives continue: one book states that the future is used less often than "other" tenses. Surely, the decision to talk about the future, the present, or the past is not a grammatical one. Another book gives equivalent sentences using the present, *futur proche*, and *futur simple* to express the same ideas. A third refers to the *futur simple* as the "regular future" with no explanation, and then lists all the irregular forms. Still another calls it the "true" future; we can only wonder what students will think of the *futur proche*.

The formation of interrogative sentences and the expression of future events are interesting problems to study. Two or more forms exist for each, yet in both cases the simpler form for non-natives is also the one most frequently used by native speakers.<sup>14</sup> This is a sort of pedagogical nirvana almost completely ignored by textbook authors. They have a tendency to teach items simply because the items exist and not because of any usefulness or frequency.<sup>15</sup> As mentioned above, the adjective *marron* appears frequently in initial presentations of adjectives, probably because of its unusual form. In an earlier study, I found the same tendency in textbooks with regard to relative pronouns (e.g., *lequel*). Writers present as many forms as possible without considering whether students can learn them or native speakers use them.<sup>16</sup>

The last aspect of syntax I wish to analyze here is dislocation. This is the tendency in French to represent an idea twice in the same sentence, once as a noun and once as a pronoun. For example, *Du gâteau, j'aime ça, moi.*

*Cake* is represented by *gâteau* and *ça* and the speaker by *j'* and *moi*. According to Calvé, the essence of communication is to present new ideas, and this syntactic manipulation exists to put privileged information at the points in the sentence that draw attention.<sup>17</sup> As long ago as 1921, Bally pointed out that dislocation is one of the most striking characteristics of spoken French. His belief that the listener must make an effort to reestablish the logical order of the sentence could be applied to non-native speakers.<sup>18</sup> The phenomenon is so pervasive in French that students would have to possess at least a passive knowledge to function proficiently.

All textbooks teach object and tonic pronouns (the main ingredients in dislocation). None mentions, however, that it is possible to have an object pronoun and noun for the same referent in a sentence, although four list this structure when presenting tonic pronouns. Textbooks rely heavily on transformation exercises (converting nouns to pronouns), thereby increasing the likelihood that students will consider them mutually exclusive and not understand forms such as *Je ne l'aime pas, ce café*. When presenting tonic pronouns, all twenty-two books list emphasis as one use, but eighteen limit that possibility to the subject of the sentence. Eleven of the eighteen list tonic pronouns for stress only at the beginning of the sentence. Thus, sentences such as: 1) *Lui, je ne l'ai pas vu*; 2) *Je ne le connais pas, moi*, basic to the language, are not covered.

One may conclude that Valdman and Warriner-Burke were correct when they stated that dislocation, an important feature of spoken French, is ignored in French textbooks.<sup>19</sup> Only four in this group present tonic pronouns before page 100, yet the structure is essential to comprehension-based instruction and teaching in the target language if students are to answer questions authentically.

#### CONCLUSIONS

To summarize, only three of the twenty-two books explain the oral forms of the language consistently and use them to structure their presentations. Ten other books mention oral forms inconsistently. The other nine use only the written language in their explanations. For many

years linguists have been calling for more attention to oral forms. At first, they were simply reflecting the influence of structural linguistics, but many others since then have called for more realistic descriptions of language.<sup>20</sup> If we follow Peacock's advice that grammatical statements must be relevant to specific goals of instruction, then any serious move toward oral proficiency in French will require important changes in textbooks.<sup>21</sup>

It would be interesting to know why French textbooks have not changed despite a generation of emphasis on the speaking skill. Of course, written language is the traditional form for pedagogical grammars. Writers and especially publishers are hesitant to try anything new.

In the past, linguists went too far in their claims and in the materials they prepared. Some books in French from the 1960s would require coursework in applied linguistics to teach effectively. Few textbooks written primarily by linguists have been financially successful. Also rather obvious is the fact that books are written, and it is easier to represent the written language than the oral. Students are used to learning the written language in their native tongue. Ask English speakers how to make nouns plural, and they will answer: "add an *s* or *es*," but never "add /s/, /z/, or /əz/." In French written forms are often superficially simpler; numbers and pronominal adjectives are a good example of this tendency. More economical graphic presentations are pleasing to publishers, who save space and therefore money. Also, it is easier to study written forms so that students can prepare lessons outside of class. Furthermore, academic purism prevents many writers from describing the spoken language as it exists. Written language has always enjoyed more prestige.

Despite these traditions we need to remedy several problems. First, many introductory French college textbooks base their presentations on the written forms of the language; they fail to provide information on the oral forms, yet seek to develop oral proficiency. This practice is contradictory and probably counterproductive.

Second, many of the books included in my study are inconsistent. Most teach in pronunciation sections all the phonetic information

necessary to understand the morphology, but do not repeat or refer to this information at appropriate times. This leads students and many pedagogues to believe that pronunciation and speaking are separate skills, and on a deeper level, that phonology and morphology are mutually exclusive. A much more effective approach is that of one author who uses the numbers *one* through *ten* to introduce the concepts *liaison*, elision, and silent and pronounced final consonants. Presentations of syntax seem to reflect what purists think the French ought to say, but they do not represent how educated native speakers really talk.

Third, many books include language forms simply because they exist, and these are always written forms. Since a major complaint in the United States is that textbooks present too much material, these forms should be high on the list of possibilities for elimination.

Fourth, textbooks fail to consider oral complexity in the ordering of presentations. The examples from this study are teaching pronominal and postnominal adjectives together (very early in the course) and teaching stem-changing verbs in footnotes. This oversimplification is detrimental to the goal of oral proficiency.

Fifth, textbooks do not take current usage into account. Moody describes the grammatical system of the typical textbook as fifty years old.<sup>22</sup> Others have commented on the "textbookish" speech of our students.<sup>23</sup> This result is certainly not new; the frustration felt by Mark Twain, quoted at the beginning of this article, shows that for a long time we have been teaching languages that exist only or primarily in written form. Bonin found that advanced students could not understand spoken colloquial French.<sup>24</sup> Students using the language described in today's textbooks cannot be expected to produce comprehensible speech. The problem is definitely not limited to French. Ruiz stated that elementary Spanish textbooks do not reflect the majority of the discoveries of linguistics and language acquisition research of recent years and do not accurately describe authentic speech.<sup>25</sup> Studying German textbooks published between 1967 and 1972, Clausen discovered that authors do not replicate spoken German accurately.<sup>26</sup>

Authors of French textbooks have made one important step in the direction of materials



preparation in recent years. Several books on the market systematically include open-ended activities where students can supply original sentences and communicate with each other. It is clear from this analysis that considerable

attention will also have to be paid to the description and ordering of the language that the students are learning if we are to meet our goal of developing oral proficiency.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Cited in *Mark Twain. Wit and Wisecracks*, ed. Doris Benardete (New York: Peter Pauper Press, 1961). This article is a revised and expanded version of a paper read at the Seventh World congress of Applied Linguistics, Brussels, August, 1984. I do not make specific references below to any textbook because I do not attempt to pit one against another to find the "best" book, but merely to describe the general status of pedagogical materials in French.

<sup>2</sup>*Teaching for Proficiency, the Organizing Principle*, ed. Theodore V. Higgs (Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co., 1984); *Foreign Language Proficiency in the Classroom and Beyond*, ed. Charles J. James (Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co., 1985); *Defining and Developing Proficiency: Guidelines, Implementations and Concepts*, ed. Michael Canale (Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co., 1986). Articles can be found in *The Challenge for Excellence in Foreign Language Education*, ed. Gilbert A. Jarvis (Middlebury, VT: Northeast Conference, 1984); *Meeting the Call for Excellence in the Foreign Language Classroom*, ed. Patricia B. Westphal (Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Co., 1985); *French Review*, 56 (May 1983), 58 (December 1984; February, 1985); and *The Modern Language Journal*, 67 (Summer 1983), 69 (Summer, 1985), and 70 (Winter, 1986).

<sup>3</sup>Judith E. Liskin-Gasparro, "The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines: A Historical Perspective," in Higgs (note 2 above), p. 12.

<sup>4</sup>Sally Sieloff Magnan, "From Achievement toward Proficiency through Multi-Sequence Evaluation," in James (note 2 above), p. 117.

<sup>5</sup>On this issue, see Sandra J. Savignon, "The Evaluation of Communicative Competence: The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines," *Modern Language Journal*, 69 (1985), pp. 129-30.

<sup>6</sup>Hildebrando Ruiz has studied Spanish textbooks: "The Impregnability of Textbooks in American Foreign Language Education," *Initiatives in Communicative Language Teaching*, ed. Margie Berns & Sandra Savignon (New York: Addison-Wesley, forthcoming).

<sup>7</sup>Higgs, for one, believes that grammar is essential at the 2+ proficiency level and that a structural syllabus is "indispensable" (Higgs, note 2 above, p. 7).

<sup>8</sup>The twenty-two books analyzed are the following: Dominique Bennett, Jerry Bennett, Elizabeth Joiner & Stanley Shinall, *Horizons: Nouvelle Langue, Nouvelle Culture* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, 1984); Arthur Bieler, Oscar A. Haac, Monique Léon & Pierre Léon, *Perspectives de France*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1982); Jeannette D. Bragger & Donald B. Rice, *Allons-Y: Le*

*Français par étapes* (Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1984); Thomas H. Brown, *French: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing*, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984); Dana Carton & Anthony Caprio, *En Français: Practical Conversational French*, 2nd ed. (New York: Van Nostrand, 1981); Raymond F. Comeau & Normand J. Lamoureux, *Echanges: Première année de français* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, 1982); Simone Dietiker & Gérard Burgère, *Franc-Parler*, 3rd ed. (Lexington, MA: Heath, 1985); M. Peter Hagiwara & Françoise de Rocher, *Thème et Variations: An Introduction to French Language and Culture*, 3rd ed. (New York: Wiley, 1985); Julian Harris & André Lévêque, *Basic Conversational French*, 7th ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, 1982); Gilbert A. Jarvis, Thérèse M. Bonin, Donald E. Corbin & Diane W. Birckbichler, *Invitation: French for Communication and Cultural Awareness*, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, 1984); Gérard Jian, Ralph Hester, with Gail Wade, *Découverte et Création: Les Bases du Français Moderne* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981); Yvone Lenard, *Parole et Pensée: Introduction au français d'aujourd'hui*, 4th ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1982); Rudolph J. Mondelli, Pierre François & Robert M. Terry, *Accent: Conversational French One*, 4th ed. (Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1984); Judith A. Muyskens, Alice C. Omaggio, Claudine Chalmers, Claudette Imberton & Philippe Alméras, *Rendez-vous: An Invitation to French* (New York: Random House, 1982); Jacqueline Ollivier, Michelle Morran & Catherine Howard, *Appel: Initiation au Français* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1983); Oreste F. Pucciani & Jacqueline Hamel, *Langue et langue: le français par le français*, 4th ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, 1983); John A. Rassias & Jacqueline de la Chapelle-Skubly, *Le Français: Départ-Arrivée*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1984); Myrna B. Rochester & Claudine Convert-Chalmers, *Entrée en Scène* (New York: Random House, 1985); Karl C. Sandberg & Georges Zask, *Le Français à Propos* (New York: Wiley, 1983); Anne Slack, Marise Thompson & Marlies Mueller, *A Propos! Communication et Culture: un début* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983); Ross Steele & Judith Frommer, *Face à Face: An Interactive Course in French. Communication—Contextualization—Interaction* (Boston: Heath, 1985); Jean-Paul Valette & Rebecca M. Valette, *Contacts: Langue et Culture Françaises*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1985). In an effort to enhance objectivity, I did not include my own textbook in the analysis: Joel Walz & Jean-Pierre Piriou, *Rapports: Language, Culture, Communication* (Lexington, MA: Heath, 1985).

<sup>9</sup>This analysis of pronunciation sections includes only twenty books because two have their presentations in laboratory manuals that were not yet available.

<sup>10</sup>The fact that masculine, prenominal adjectives sound like the feminine form was pointed out long ago; see, for example, Pierre Delattre, "La liaison en français, tendances et classification," *French Review*, 21 (1947), p. 150.

<sup>11</sup>See, for example, Marvin Moody, "Methodology, Smethodology, What Does It Get Us?" *French Review*, 48 (1975), p. 744; Helen P. Warriner, "High School Foreign Language Texts: Too Much Between the Covers to Cover," *Foreign Language Annals*, 11 (1978), pp. 551-57; Albert Valdman & Helen Warriner-Burke, "Major Surgery Due: Redesigning the Syllabus and Texts," *Foreign Language Annals*, 13 (1980), pp. 261-70.

<sup>12</sup>Albert Valdman, "L'interrogation en français et en anglais: considérations comparatives et pédagogiques," *Le Français dans le Monde*, 81 (1971), pp. 35-39.

<sup>13</sup>Claire Blanche-Benveniste, "Connaissance 'naturelle' et connaissance 'secondaire' de la grammaire." Unpublished paper presented at the American Association of Teachers of French Annual Meeting, Chicago, November 1984.

<sup>14</sup>Terry found in a large corpus of popular literature that intonation accounted for 85.5% of yes-no questions. Robert M. Terry, "The Frequency of Use of the Interrogative Formula *est-ce que*," *French Review*, 40 (1967), pp. 814-16.

<sup>15</sup>Albert Valdman, "Grammar and the American Foreign Language Teacher," *Student Motivation and the Foreign Language Teacher. A Guide for Building the Modern Curriculum*, ed. Frank M. Grittnner (Skokie, IL: National Textbook Co., 1974), p. 74.

<sup>16</sup>Joel Walz, "The Relative Pronouns in French, I: Empirical Research," *French Review*, 54 (1981), pp. 643-54.

<sup>17</sup>The example is also from Calvé: Pierre Calvé, "Un trait du français parlé authentique: La dislocation," *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 39 (1983), pp. 779-93; see also the same in English translation, "Dislocation in Spoken French," *Modern Language Journal*, 69 (1985), pp. 230-37.

<sup>18</sup>Charles Bally, *Traité de stylistique française*, 2nd ed. (Heidelberg: Winter, 1921), pp. 311-13.

<sup>19</sup>Valdman & Warriner-Burke (note 11 above), pp. 263-64.

<sup>20</sup>For example, William G. Moulton, "Linguistics and Language Teaching in the U.S. 1940-1960," *IRAL*, 1 (1963), pp. 21-41; those calling for more realism include, for example, Robert M. Terry, "*Faut-il or Est-ce qu'il faut: Inversion vs. est-ce que*," *French Review*, 43 (1970), pp. 480-81; Gerhard Clausing, "Replicated Spoken German in Beginning Textbooks—An Appraisal and Proposal," *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, 7 (1974), p. 74; Gilbert Taggart, "So You Want to Write a Textbook? Options and Problems," *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 34 (1978), p. 726; Valdman & Warriner-Burke (note 11 above), p. 263.

<sup>21</sup>Dennis E. Peacock, "Toward Rules for Rules in Foreign Language Textbooks," *Foreign Language Annals*, 12 (1979), pp. 365-67.

<sup>22</sup>Moody (note 11 above), p. 744.

<sup>23</sup>Taggart (note 20 above); Valdman & Warriner-Burke (note 11 above), p. 263; and Norman A. Poulin, "Teaching Language Varieties for Communication," *French Review*, 58 (1985), p. 650.

<sup>24</sup>Thérèse M. Bonin, "The Role of Colloquial French in Communication and Implications for Language Instruction," *Modern Language Journal*, 62 (1978), pp. 90-102. In Bonin's study, vocabulary was the major comprehension problem.

<sup>25</sup>Ruiz (note 6 above).

<sup>26</sup>Clausing (note 20 above).

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## Correction

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THE WINTER 1985 ISSUE OF *THE MODERN LANGUAGE Journal* contained an error in the title of Claire Kramsch's article. The correct title should be: "Literary Texts in the Language

Classroom: A Discourse Perspective." We regret this oversight and hope that it has not inconvenienced our readers. DPB.

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## Video Exchange Network Formed

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AN INTERNATIONAL VIDEO EXCHANGE NETWORK — *Reseau Video Correspondence* — has been started by the French organization BELC. The project aims to create an international exchange network where groups or individuals interested in producing video programs could exchange their products and thus "correspond" with other

groups or individuals within it. The programs can deal with any subject the producers consider important and be aimed at any group of recipients. Information can be obtained from: BELC, 9 rue d'Action linguistique, Aleksanterinkatu 19 A, SF-00100 Helsinki 10, Finland.