0190-1

In Search of Input: The Case Study of a Learner of Polish as a Foreign and Second Language

Joyce Neu
The Pennsylvania State University

ABSTRACT *This paper addresses the role of input and interaction and attitudes and motivation on second and foreign language acquisition. Through the case study of an American English learner of Polish, the paper examines classroom instruction in the United States and the "natural" learning situation of living in the target language country. Long (26) has suggested that most research in second language acquisition addresses the direct impact of a variable on SLA, and has called for more research to investigate variables that have an indirect effect on SLA. This paper suggests that input and interaction are triggers for positive attitudes and motivation and thus are indirect, rather than direct, contributors to second and/or foreign language acquisition. Finally, the author explores the implications of input and interaction as triggers for SLA on language programs and language classrooms.* [1]

Many factors contribute to second language acquisition and much attention has been given to determining the relative importance of each of these. Most of the studies to date have been of an A → B nature where A is a variable and B is SLA. This article will follow Long's (25) suggestion that there are not always direct correlations between A and B and that there may be an intervening indirect variable. Long posits a three-stage, indirect approach to studying SLA, where a variable A promotes a variable B which, in turn, promotes SLA, C. Thus, A → C. This model for the study of language acquisition is attractive because, as Long demonstrates, while it may be difficult to provide evidence to support the role of certain features as direct causal variables in SLA, it allows us to investigate their influence on SLA by looking at other variables that determine the presence or absence of these causal variables.

In this paper, I will offer a case study approach to suggest that these hidden variables may also cause SLA to diminish. The case study is a qualitative approach that provides a rich and detailed exploration into the language learning process that most quantitative approaches lack. Although it cannot be used to predict or explain phenomena, the case study can be used as an initial means of discovery. This study is intended as an initial inquiry into the relationship between input and interaction on the one hand, and attitudes and motivation on the other.

While some level of positive attitude and motivation must exist for learners to put themselves in a language learning situation, I believe that input and interaction are hidden triggers for positive attitude and motivation. Given this positive attitude and motivation without adequate and appropriate (A^2) input and interaction (I^2), positive attitude and motivation may diminish and SLA will not occur. I am not suggesting that adequate and appropriate input and interaction (A^2I^2) are necessary and sufficient causes of SLA, but rather that they are necessary components for maintaining a positive attitude and high motivation. While recent research has shown the importance not only of

Joyce Neu (Ph.D., University of Southern California) is Assistant Professor in the Center for ESL in the Speech Communication Department, Penn State University, University Park, PA.

0190-2

input, but also of interaction—including output and negotiation for meaning—on SLA, we need to look at the indirect effects they may have on other factors, such as attitude and motivation. As previous studies have shown, attitude, motivation, input, and interaction are all necessary for second language acquisition. More than that, however, I am suggesting that input and interaction play an important role in determining both the extent of positive attitude and motivation and how long they will last. As Massey (27) has noted, there is a complex relationship between these variables that merits further investigation. Lacking input and interaction, positive attitude and motivation may diminish or extinguish, and thus may fail to produce SLA. Sustaining a positive attitude and increasing or maintaining motivation leads to SLA, which in turn encourages learners to pursue adequate and appropriate input and interaction (A^2I^2), thus demonstrating that language learning is like a machine, fueled by attitude and motivation and the availability of A^2I^2.

This article will follow the tradition of case studies of language learners in investigating the role of input, interaction, attitude, and motivation in second language acquisition as experienced by a learner of Polish (this author). While there are many other factors that play a role in SLA (e.g., aptitude, prior exposure to language, etc.), it is not within the scope of this paper to examine them all. First, I will discuss studies that relate to input, interaction, and attitude and motivation, and then present the case of this author in learning Polish as both a foreign and second language. Finally, I will discuss the possible consequences of lack of A^2I^2 on positive attitude and motivation and second language acquisition.

Studies on Input, Interaction, and Motivation

Krashen (23) has suggested that, for language learning to take place, input must be just above the learner's current proficiency level, that is, i + 1. More recently, researchers have suggested variations on this theory. Liceras (24) claims that input is not necessarily intake—what is understood may not become part of the learner's repertoire. Beebe (3, 4) discusses learners' input preferences and says that learners attend to some language varieties and not to others. Cathcart-Strong (7), Gass and Varonis (17), Long (25, 26), Pica, Young and Doughty (31), Porter (32) and Strong (42) demonstrate that, while input is a necessary condition for language learning, only with the addition of negotiation of meaning by learners is it a sufficient one. In looking at children, Strong found that SLA was dependent on both talkativeness and responsiveness—i.e., what he called the "active use" of language (42). We arrive, therefore, at an interactive view of language learning—one that requires adequate quantity and quality of input while also permitting learners to interact with speakers of the target language to accomplish their goals. These "other speakers" do not have to be either native speakers or trained teachers of a language; research has shown that, while interaction with a native speaker may be preferable, it is not necessary for learning to take place (11;30;32). Interaction, whether in the ideal situation with a native speaker of the target language, or with another learner of the target language, is the essential component.

Other essential components of successful language learning are attitude and motivation. Studies investigating the importance of attitude and motivation in second and foreign language learning abound, but do not all agree on the directness of the link between attitude, motivation, and SLA. On the one hand, there are studies that show a direct relationship between positive attitude and second/foreign language achievement (e.g., Bogaards, 6). On the other hand, the majority of studies finds the relationship more complex. One example of this group is Savignon's study (35) that illustrated that achievement in foreign language learning may be due to contact with native speakers, and that this contact may be due to the learner's positive attitude. Similarly, Gardner and Smythe (cited in Massey, 27) report that for Canadian students of French as a second language, the best predictor of perseverance in language learning for students in grades 10 and 11 was attitude toward learning French. "Perseverance" was defined as the intention to continue or abandon taking French courses. Thus, attitude mediates perseverance

P-0190
0190-3

and SLA. In Chihara and Oller's study (9) exploring the relationship between attitudes and proficiency in English as a foreign language by Japanese adults, they hypothesize that, while a relationship exists between these two, it may not be directly observable. They refer to Gardner (13), who has suggested that attitudes may be directly linked to motivation which, in turn, is directly related to language learning.

Attitude derives from both internal and external sources[2]. Internal sources include the desire to learn a language, beliefs about the target language and native speakers of the target language, values held about the target language community by significant others (See Smith and Massey, 39, on parents' influence on childrens' attitudes about Acadian and standard French), and so on. Another factor in attitude formation that may be considered internal is one over which we have little control—gender. Bogaards (6) reports finding that the gender of the student plays an important role in attitude at the beginning of the school year: Girls start learning a second language with a more positive attitude than boys. Svanes' (44) findings with regard to gender differences in motivation differ from Bogaards'. Svanes' subjects were adult learners of Norwegian as a second language who came from twenty-seven countries in Europe, North America, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. He found no significant differences in integrative motivation between the sexes in any of the groups, but did find differences in instrumental motivation in the Asian group. The difference in findings between Bogaards' and Svanes' studies may be explained by the differences in their subject populations: Bogaards' subjects were 12-year old native Dutch speakers from the Netherlands while Svanes' subjects were adults from many different language backgrounds. Both studies, however, agree that gender plays a role in motivation to learn a second/foreign language.

Another internal variable is language anxiety. Scovel (38), in a recent review of the literature, points out that the results of studies on language anxiety have had mixed findings and are inconclusive with regard to the role of anxiety in SLA. Echoing Chastain (cited in Scovel, 38), Scovel suggests that some anxiety may be helpful, while too much may be debilitating. Young (46) conducted a study to determine whether performance in an oral interview was affected by anxiety. Her findings indicate that in the context of her study, where test results would have no negative consequences for the subjects, anxiety was not a factor in performance. This is, however, an unusual situation, since test scores generally do affect students' grades, evaluations, or placement within a program. Young therefore suggests that this study be replicated in a situation where test scores do hold consequences for the subjects.

In another study, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (20) outline three types of performance anxiety—communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation—and propose that these are linked to language learning anxiety, but that the latter is more complex: "Probably no other field of study implicates self-concept and self-expression to the degree that language study does" (p. 31). These authors suggest that teachers have two options for dealing with anxious students: They can either help them to handle the stress or they can make the learning environment less stressful.

Foreign language teachers may not be aware of the stress their students are experiencing. Price (33) interviewed highly anxious students and notes that some teachers contributed to students' anxiety by criticizing students' pronunciation, or, in one example, a teacher who walked around the room "with a big yardstick and flung it on the desk of anyone who wasn't listening,yelling, 'Pay attention!' " (p. 106). Language learning anxiety is an internal source of attitude formation in that learners, with great difficulty no doubt, may still find it possible to overcome their feelings of anxiety. External sources are less amenable to changes by the learner.

External sources of attitude include experiences with native speakers of the target language and living conditions in the target language community. While internal sources of attitude toward language learning may be changed by learners themselves, the external sources are situational and largely beyond the control of the learner (e.g., poor teaching, uncooperative native speakers, etc.). Ely (12) investigated the

0190-4

relationship between students' levels of classroom discomfort, risk-taking, participation, and motivation. He found a strong relationship between risk-taking and classroom participation and says that "before some students can be expected to take linguistic risks, they must be made to feel more psychologically comfortable and safe in their learning environment" (p. 23).

A study by Smith and Massey (39) supports this variability of language learners' attitude: "Student motivation to learn could be altered substantially by events which occurred over a relatively short period of time" (p. 330). Thus, external sources appear to be powerful influences on attitude formation and relatively difficult, if not sometimes impossible, for the learner to change.

Although research in language acquisition has generally found that length of exposure to the target language—that is, living in the target language community—is an important predictor of language acquisition, research in intercultural communication has demonstrated that mere exposure to another culture does not assure either understanding or liking (19). Thus, it would follow that even if the language learner is living in the target language culture, has internal sources for a strong positive attitude toward the target language (e.g., family ancestors from target language community), negative external sources (e.g., frequent unfriendly encounters with native speakers of the target language community) might conceivably override the positive internal attitude. That is, we may suppose that the internal and external sources for positive attitudes toward a language may counteract each other.

Attitudes toward a target language and target language community affect motivation. Gardner and Lambert's classic work (15) on motivation classifies two types of motivation—instrumental and integrative. Instrumental motivation is often described as task-oriented—e.g., learning a language to be able to read medical journals in that language, to be able to perform a job, etc. Integrative motivation consists of a desire to learn the values and attitudes of speakers of the target language, and to meet and affiliate with these speakers. Without either kind of motivation, the research suggests that language acquisition will not occur (4;15;41). Gardner and Lambert (15) posit that either instrumental or integrative motivation must be present for language learning to be successful.

While the productiveness of the distinction between instrumental and integrative motivation for predicting L2 acquisition has recently come into question, the distinction has received empirical support. Thus, in a study of foreign adults learning Norwegian as a second language, Svanes (44) discovered that the underlying relationships between the variables could be captured by two factors—one that included instrumental motives and the other that included integrative motives. But the results of Svanes' study reveal that, contrary to Gardner and Lambert's supposition that integrative motivation is more facilitative of SLA, Svanes reports that:

> There is no positive correlation between integrative motivation and grades in any of the groups....Thus, integrative motivation, as assessed in this present study, cannot explain the variance in second-language proficiency either within the groups or between the groups (44, p.357).

He concurs with Oller's findings (cited in Svanes, 44) that instrumental motivation may lead to increased second language proficiency, but notes that "although motivation is an important factor in the acquisition of a second language, type of motivation is of less importance in groups of adult university students, who are all well motivated" (p. 357). Similarly, Strong (43) examined Spanish-speaking children's acquisition of English as a second language and found that there was no evidence to support the view that "an integrative orientation towards members of the target language group enhances acquisition of that language" (p. 10).

In spite of problems with the integrative/instrumental distinction in motivation types, there is not much equivocation on the importance of motivation in SLA. But until recently, there was little investigation into what occurs when moti-

0190-5

vation is not present. Gardner's (13) review of research on language retention highlights the importance of the role of such social factors as attitude, motivation, and ethnicity. He cites Edwards' finding that one of the criteria of long-term language retention is the opportunity to use the information required (i.e., interaction). Gardner et al. (14), in a study of English-speaking Canadian high school learners of French, found that motivation played a significant role in how much students used French outside of class (over summer break), and that this use of French was responsible for differences in proficiency levels between individuals in the fall.

In the following case study, I will show how adequate and appropriate input and interaction may be directly tied to motivation and how, in the absence of such adequate and appropriate input and interaction (A^2I^2), positive attitude and motivation may diminish or extinguish.

Case Study

The subject of the case study is the author, a linguist who received a Fulbright lectureship in 1987 to teach linguistics in Poznan, Poland, during the fall semester. At that time, I had no knowledge of Polish or of any other Slavic language. Prior to leaving for Poland in the fall, I attended an intensive summer Polish language program in the United States.

Summer Language Program: Polish as a Foreign Language

Through a grant from the Council for the International Exchange of Scholars (CIES), I was enrolled in a summer program of intensive Polish language study. The program consisted of classes four hours a day, five days a week, for eight weeks. Thus, there were 160 hours of Polish language instruction. This program was equivalent, during the regular academic year, to three quarters of Polish.

The four hours a day of classes were divided into two segments: the first two hours were spent with a native American English speaker who taught Polish grammar and pronunciation to a class of 12 students, using English as the medium of instruction. In the second two hour-segment, the class was divided into two and each group was led by an untrained but native Polish instructor. These classes consisted of practicing the grammar and pronunciation lessons taught in the first two hours of class. In this class, only Polish was spoken. However, since there had been no placement instrument used at the outset of the program, students in the course varied in their Polish language proficiency—from a native Czech speaker, to Ph.D. students in Russian, to those of us who had never heard a word of Polish before.

During the first two hours of class, the grammar lectures, there was no input in Polish beyond isolated words and phrases that students were called upon to provide in response to questions, usually in English, by the teacher. In the second two hours of class, the emphasis was on student production of grammar drills drawn from the grammar lesson of that day. Occasionally, the instructor would elicit more natural, meaningful communication that would include the vocabulary and grammar from the day's lesson. During these two hours of class, students could ask questions about Polish language use and culture. After class, students were expected to practice pronunciation and grammar by listening to audiocassette tapes of vocabulary lists, dialogues, and mechanical drills that accompanied the course text, and by completing homework assignments that consisted of translating sentences from English into Polish.

Of the 160 hours of Polish instruction over the eight-week period, half used Polish as the medium of instruction and less than a quarter of the time was spent in interaction between students. The main emphasis in the course was on learning grammar, not on the use of that grammar in context, and not on actual communication. Forty hours of input and interaction in the target language over an eight-week period is minimal, representing 25% of class time. Many students in the class experienced frustration, and some of this was due to placing students with different goals in the same classroom.

Six of the twelve students in the course were using Polish to satisfy a language requirement for a Ph.D. or as a necessary tool for Ph.D.-level research. In casual conversations, these students

expressed satisfaction with the grammar focus of the course and explained that they had little interest in learning how to speak Polish. None of these students had plans to use Polish as a means of communication. Five of the students (including the author) were potential Fulbrighters. Our goal was to use the language for communication, not as a tool for research or as a means to satisfy an academic requirement.

Attitude and Motivation to Learn Polish as a Foreign Language

Due to many factors, not the least of which was my background as a linguist and language teacher, I looked forward to learning Polish in the United States before going to Poland. I knew that I would not be able to transfer knowledge from any of the languages I had previously studied (i.e., French, Italian, Spanish, and Wolof as a Peace Corps volunteer in Senegal) to Polish, since they were from different language families. I had no knowledge of Polish or Slavic languages whatsoever. I was unfamiliar with the alphabet, the pronunciation, the grammatical system, and the sociocultural rules of the language. I began the course with enthusiasm—in the past, I had experienced some measure of success in learning languages and I looked forward to learning a completely new language. I believed that the eight-week course would enable me to speak with Poles and would thus make my life in Poland a richer and more rewarding one. While I did not expect to become fluent in Polish in this short time, I did expect to gain basic conversational skills. At the outset, I was highly motivated for a couple of reasons: As the only language professional in the class, there was a certain amount of pride involved in performing well (See Ely, 12, on concern for grades as a factor in motivation; and Horwitz et al. 20, on types of anxiety). There was also the very real concern about how I would get around in Poland if I didn't speak Polish. I knew I would not be living in Warsaw, and would not be able to count on anyone speaking English outside the university. In sum, my motivation was both internal and external—I enjoy being in a learning situation; I particularly enjoy learning languages; and I was looking forward to this language program since I had been led to believe it would be excellent. During the first week of the program, however, the structure of the course became clear—that is, I realized that students were not going to be given the opportunity to practice the language in realistic, communicative situations. Instead, the focus was to be solely on memorization of lexical items, reproduction of grammatical structures, and translation of both of these from written English to written Polish. Written tests each week consisted of dictation, translation, and the manipulation of grammatical structures (e.g., changing declarative sentences to interrogatives, affirmative statements to negatives, etc.).

My expectations of the program had been that teachers and students would interact in Polish, that students would learn the language in context, and that the rules of politeness and use would be integrated into the lessons; that is, I had expected a course that would focus at least as much on the acquisition of sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence as it did on the acquisition of grammatical competence. I had not anticipated lectures in English on Polish pronunciation or on Polish syntax, nor had I anticipated having to memorize lists of vocabulary. By the fifth week of the course, I had stopped taking the weekly tests. I did not attend the eighth week at all and did not take the final exam. I was not alone in losing my sense of motivation. Of the twelve students who began the course, about half completed it.

Acquisition of Polish Grammar

In spite of this decrease in motivation, many of us learned a good deal of Polish grammar. By the end of the eight-week summer intensive program, I had learned all of the verb tenses, six out of seven of the case endings, and gender and plural markings for most of the cases. I controlled[3] the following verb forms (see Table 1) most of the time in written and oral exercises.

Table 1 indicates that, while I experienced little difficulty in tense or gender marking, I was not able to use aspect correctly. Aspect was among the last things taught in the eight-week course, and I neither mastered the forms nor did I use them correctly.

0190-7

TABLE 1:

Mastery of verb system in Polish
(+ indicates mastery)

Tense:	Present	Past	Future	Conditional
feminine	+	+	+	+
masculine	+	+	+	+
perfective	–	–	–	–
imperfective	–	–	–	–

TABLE 2:

Mastery of the Polish case system
(+ indicates mastery)

Cases:	Nomin.	Genit.	Instr.	Dative	Accus.	Locat.
Singular	+	–	+	–	+	–
Plural	+	–	+	–	–	–
Feminine	+	–	+	–	–	–
Masculine	+	–	+	–	–	

In Table 2 and in the examples below, noun case mastery is shown.

After eight weeks of Polish, I could use the nominative and the instrumental cases with some degree of success. While I often produced correct sentences using other cases, this production occurred only with the aid of the text, and even then, the sentences were not always correct. Examples 1-3 demonstrate some of the sentences I was producing in writing by the end of the course. These sentences were written for a homework assignment in which certain vocabulary items were given and we were required to use these in sentences.

```
1)  Required words:  "ingenious economist"
    "Is she the ingenious economist who's at the university?"

       Czy ona była      genialniejszą ekonomistką kiedy
               V pres.   adj.-ny       N
               +fem.     +fem.         +fem.
                         +instrum.     +instrum.

       Q   SHE IS        INGENIOUS     ECONOMIST  WHO

       była       na  uniwersytecie?
       V pres.        N
       +fem.          +locat.

       IS         AT  UNIVERSITY?
```

0190-8

2) Required words: "entire enterprise"
"The entire enterprise creates the advertisement for first rate vodka."

```
Całe przedsiebiorstwo stworzy ogłoszenie dla wódki wyborowej.
      N               V pres.  N             N       Adj.
      +masc.          +masc.   +neut.        +fem.   +fem.
      +nom.                    +nom.         +gen.   +gen.
```

ENTIRE ENTERPRISE CREATES ADVERTISEMENT FOR VODKA FIRST RATE.

3) Required words: "free time"
"Unfortunately, tomorrow you won't have (any) free time."

```
*Niestety, jutro ty nie bedziesz  wolny  czas.
                        V fut.    Adj.   N
                                  +nom.  +nom.
```

UNFORTUNATELY, TOMORROW YOU (NEG) WILL FREE TIME.

This sentence should be:

```
=>Niestety, jutro ty nie bedziesz miał  wolnego czasu.
                         V fut.         Adj.    N
                                        +masc.  +masc.
                                        +acc.   +acc.
```

UNFORTUNATELY, TOMORROW YOU (NEG) WILL HAVE FREE TIME.

These three examples reveal control over the nominative, instrumental, locative, and genitive cases, and errors in the accusative in the written language.

While this course was designed so that students would reach the advanced intermediate level, as one of the true beginners in the class, I do not believe I attained more than an advanced beginning level. My desire to learn Polish decreased in response to what I perceived as inappropriate teaching methods and materials. Further, the teacher's insistence on the production of grammatical utterances at the expense of appropriateness, and her refusal to allow any interaction in Polish in the classroom made the experience of language learning an unpleasant one. While I had been highly motivated at the outset of the course, I ended it far less so (See 12; 36). Approximately one month after the completion of the intensive course in Polish, I went to Poland.

Living in Poland: Polish as a Second Language

Upon arrival in Poland, my knowledge of the verb tenses was most useful, but I was unable to control the case markings at all. I recognized them in listening, but could not recall the correct endings and when they were to be used. In spite of the memorization of hundreds of lexical items, my vocabulary was minimal, consisting largely of items useless for meeting everyday needs (e.g., "peacock," "elephant," "industrial"" and "agricultural"). I did not have any elementary greeting routines, so stringing together a greeting was taxing—I knew most of the components, but didn't know whether there was any special order in which they should be said, and whether who greeted whom made a difference (in terms of status relationships, for example).

Upon my arrival in Poznan (two weeks after initial arrival in Poland), I inquired about Polish language classes. There were only beginning classes offered. I then sought a private tutor who would accompany me on my expeditions into shops, train stations, taxis, and so forth, so that I could learn how to accomplish routine chores. After six weeks, I had not found a tutor. At this point, two months had elapsed and I was halfway through my stay in Poland. I realized that finding a tutor or an appropriate classroom setting was unlikely.

0190-9

My acquisition of Polish progressed on the basis of my everyday encounters with Poles. But in these two months, my Polish had improved little, if at all, except for the addition of some useful vocabulary items. What occurred during my time in Poland was a loss of control of the case system, the inability to use correct plural and singular markings, and a complete lack of use of perfective/imperfective aspect distinctions between verbs. Additionally, because I had no sense of what was or was not appropriate in Polish, many of my utterances were inappropriate[4]. Examples of my lack of mastery with the case system, plural/singular distinctions, and perfective/imperfective verbs in oral performance include examples 4-6, representative of utterances and structures I used frequently:

```
4)   target sentence:  "I'd like one first class train ticket from Warsaw
     to Poznan."

     *Chciałabym jeden bilety  pierwzsej klasy do pociąg na Warszawa do
                       +plur.                                +nom.
     Poznaniu.
     +loc.

     =>Chciałabym jeden bilet  pierwszej klasy na pociąg z Warszawy do
                        +sing.                               +gen.
     Poznania.
     +gen.

5)   target sentence:  "Monday I had two classes and I was very busy."

     *Poniadzałek miałam dwie zajęcia a byłam bardzo zajęta.
     +nom.                    +fem.

     =>W poniadzałek miałam dwa zajęcia i byłam bardzo zajęta.
         +acc.                   +neut.

6)   target sentence:  "I hope that I will go to Gdansk."

     *Mam nadzieję że będę jechać     do    Gdańsk.
                      +imperfect.           +nom.

     =>Mam nadzieję że  pojadę      do    Gdańska.
                        +perfect.         +gen.
```

Because I was never certain that my utterances were grammatical, I picked up certain phrases that seemed to work well, and used them repeatedly. Rather than creating new structures, and taking risks with the language, I relied on those that had worked well in the past, much like "Wes," the Japanese artist who was the subject of a case study by Schmidt (36). To a certain extent, this use of routines, which served me well in real situations, also stymied my acquisition of Polish. While attempting to express politeness through the use of "prosze" (please) and "przepraszam" (excuse me) as both attention-getters and politeness markers, I was unaware that there were co-occurrence restrictions governing their correct use. Thus, expressions that became "fixed" in my repertoire were frequently ungrammatical; for example:

```
7)   "{Excuse me}, ma'am, where can I buy milk?"
      {Please   }

     *Proszę, pani,   gdzie mogę kupić mleko?
      +sing.  +nom.
      +pres.

     =>Przepraszam panią, gdzie mogę kupić mleko?
       +sing.      +acc.
       +pres.
```

0190-10

8) "{Excuse me / Please}, I'd like some baked chicken."

*Przepraszam, chciałabym kurę pieczoną.
+sing. +sing.
+pres. +pres.

=>Proszę, mi podać kurę pieczoną.
+sing. +dat. +infin.
+pres.

9) "{Excuse me / Please}, I'd like a cup of borscht with a dumpling."

*Proszę, chciałabym barszczyk z pasztecikiem.
+sing. +sing.
+pres. +pres.

=>Proszę o barszczyk z pasztecikiem.
+sing.
+pres.

The reliance on routines may have stemmed from my observation that living in Poland presented me with situations I had not encountered in other countries. Poles did not talk to each other in the ubiquitous lines, did not exchange any kind of pleasantries as they did their shopping. Clerks in stores, banks, post offices, and so forth "greeted" the next person in line with one word, *Slucham*—"I'm listening," and people were generally very quick to ask for what they wanted. This was a necessity, since there was always a long line of people waiting for their turn[5].

Therefore, neither the people in line nor the salesperson appreciated a language learner struggling to make herself understood. I relied on routines, reciting to myself over and over what I would say as I stood in line waiting my turn. The intense feelings of anxiety I experienced with the performance of each routine did not encourage risk-taking in Polish. Even when I was not trying to be adventurous, but merely trying to get what I wanted at the grocery store, I had difficulty. In one case, I asked for 200 grams of yellow cheese in what I thought was at least comprehensible Polish *(Prosze, chcialabym dwiescie gram żółty ser).* The counter woman did not understand me, and while we were trying to negotiate meaning, a man in line behind me started yelling impatiently. The source of the misunderstanding, I was later told, was that Poles don't ask for "grams" of an item, but for decagrams *(Proszę o dwadziescia deka żółtego sera)*—thus my "200 grams" was confusing as the woman probably understood 200 decagrams (2 kilos or about 5 lbs.) and wanted to be sure that she had understood correctly. Compounding the language problem was that I looked like a Pole, or at least, I did not seem to be identified as foreign by sight. This complicated matters as I believe that, rather than being treated as a foreigner having difficulty with the language, I was treated as a mental incompetent or as an uncooperative eccentric. Rarely was I successful in getting anyone to repeat an utterance or to slow down. Communication merely ceased when I revealed difficulties understanding the message.

It became apparent that day-to-day activities were not going to provide fertile ground for further acquisition. At work in the English Institute, everyone spoke English, and all meetings were conducted in English. Even the secretaries spoke English and, as with my Polish colleagues, answered me in English each time I began speaking in Polish.

In my apartment building, the only contact I had with any of my neighbors was with a nine-year old girl who came to visit me a couple of

0190-11

times. Our conversations were the most productive ones I had, with topics ranging from making soup, to picnicking, to crime in the United States. My interaction with this girl provided me with the only opportunity I had to be creative and take risks.

Thus I found myself in the target language environment unable to elicit adequate and appropriate input or to engage in interaction. Watching television was occasionally instructive (as it was when they showed "Hollywood Wives" and "Roots," both with Polish voice-overs and the English muted in the background), but usually the Polish TV programs were too far above my level of Polish. I would have a slightly better understanding of what was being reported in the televised news when I could get some background by listening to the BBC radio news first. But, in general, the language on Polish radio and television was too difficult to be of much help in learning the language.

Given the above circumstances, my motivation to learn Polish gradually diminished. Due to a lack of input, few satisfactory exchanges with native-speaking Poles, little access to the culture, and, importantly, the brevity of my stay in Poland, I gave up on the idea of becoming more proficient in Polish.

Implications for Classroom Language Learning

As has been amply documented in other research, motivation is, indeed, a critical factor in language learning. Without it, language learning will not occur. However, to maintain (or even to stimulate) motivation, learners require the chance to interact with target language speakers. But interacting as I did in stores and at tram stops where I understood barely 50% of the conversation is not sufficient. In discussing a similar case study of a Portuguese language learner, Schmidt and Frota (37) point out that learners need not only have appropriate and adequate input, but they will acquire the target form "...if and only if it is present in comprehended input and 'noticed'..." (p. 311). Hearing the target form is not sufficient, Schmidt and Frota claim, but learners must be aware that they are hearing it. This is what they have termed the "notice-the-gap" principle. They argue that correction is not the only way learners will notice the gap between their own incorrect use and the accepted correct use—abundant input can also help.

Whether or not the "notice-the-gap" principle is supported in future work on SLA, my understanding of so little of the interactions in which I was engaged certainly qualifies neither as an opportunity to notice the gap nor as adequate and appropriate input and interaction (A^2I^2).

Thus, to provide A^2I^2 in the classroom, teachers, program administrators, and materials developers can take constructive action. First, and most obviously, language teachers need to provide input in the target language, not in the students' first language. While many assume that this is now the case in all language classes, my experience in learning Polish at a major university in the United States leads me to the conclusion that this is not the case[6]. Second, as Doughty and Pica (11), Gass and Varonis (17), Pica and Doughty (30), and Porter (32) have suggested, learners need the opportunity to interact with each other in order to negotiate meaning in the target language in the classroom. While this may produce anxiety on the part of the learners (Horwitz et al., 20), teachers can help reduce stress and create a more tolerant classroom atmosphere. Achieving a balance between level of anxiety and amount of student participation will require a skilled teacher. Third, language cannot be taught in a vacuum. To understand how the language is spoken and used requires that students understand and learn sociocultural rules of appropriateness and discourse strategies. While acquiring a command of the grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation of the target language is important, knowing how to use these components appropriately is equally important (see Beebe and Takahashi, 5; Kasper, 22; Neu, 29). Fourth, within a classroom setting, students need to be exposed to a variety of contexts and to use the target language in these different communicative contexts. Teachers can encourage a relaxed classroom atmosphere that will encourage risk-taking and reduce anxiety levels. To help teachers do so, materials and methods need to be devised that promote the use of the target

0190-12

language in the classroom, and that provide possibilities for teacher-student and student-student interaction in a variety of more natural contexts. Fifth, it is essential to assess adult language learners' expectations and needs at the outset of an intensive language course to determine whether the course will fulfill those expectations and needs. Upon assessing student needs and expectations, the teacher can (a) inform the students that the course is an appropriate choice; (b) redesign the course to meet different needs and expectations; or (c) inform the students that the course is not an appropriate choice. Sixth, together with an initial needs assessment, there must be an initial language proficiency evaluation. Students whose proficiency levels vary from true beginners to intermediate speakers may not benefit by being in the same class. It is unfortunate that in some language programs enrollments are low, and so students, regardless of their needs and proficiency levels, are placed in the same class for purely economic reasons. If language teaching is to facilitate language learning in the classroom and beyond the classroom, then language programs must make difficult decisions: to not serve everyone; to hire more teachers; and to open more classes. Finally, materials developers in foreign languages (especially ones that are less frequently taught) must begin to take language acquisition theories and apply them to classroom teaching. Even if teachers want to incorporate as much input and interaction as they can in the classroom, materials developers and publishers must provide them with the tools to do so. The text used in the Polish course I took followed a grammar translation/direct method approach. From an informal survey of other Polish language textbooks, it appears that the one we used was one of the better ones. If publishers will not support the development of textbooks for the lesser-taught languages, then teachers will have to be given extensive training in the more effective teaching methods, and be exposed to good language textbooks in other languages to provide a framework for what and how they might teach in their target language.

A positive classroom language learning experience can empower students by giving them the security of knowing that they can handle the basics of the language in natural contexts with native speakers.

Implications for Language Learning in Country

Not only is adequate and appropriate input and interaction (A^2I^2) necessary but, as was discussed earlier, studies have shown that learners must have the chance to negotiate meaning in interactions with speakers of the target language. As a language learner, one has access to the culture and the people, and thus to A^2I^2 input and interaction, only to the extent that that culture and people are accepting of strangers (1;2;18). So while social interaction with strangers is a characteristic of many cultures, it is hardly universal. My experience in Poland led me to believe that Poles, for whatever reason, do not provide easy access to strangers—be they fellow countrypeople or foreigners.

The lack of universality in the public sociability of peoples in different cultures suggests that language learners and teachers need to find a different entry into these cultures. Thus, when staying for any length of time in a country where access to native speakers may be constrained due to cultural norms, it would be helpful to try to make contact with someone from that country before going there (e.g., if going to another country to teach, making contact with a local college or university to see if there are any target country nationals working there; if going to another country to work, contacting the local chamber of commerce and any international businesses for information). It is sometimes the case that knowing someone from the target country in your home country will help open doors once you get to the target country. In optimal circumstances, these contacts in the foreign country will be people who speak little, if any, of your first language and with whom you will have the chance to negotiate meaning in interactions (see 17). While having a contact in the target country is clearly an ideal situation, it is not always possible. Language teachers could facilitate their students' entry into the target culture and language with some simple linguistic routines and an explanation of the sociocultural contexts in which they would be appropriate

0190-13

(e.g., initiating a conversation in a supermarket line in the U.S. by commenting on the weather, the long wait in line, or even the grocery items in another's shopping cart if they seem to indicate a party or festive occasion). Basic routines may provide learners with the opportunity to receive input and engage in satisfactory interactions with host culture members.

Basic routines such as extending a compliment, an invitation, an apology, and so on, are critical for initiating and maintaining conversations. Speech act research has demonstrated that such routines reflect cultural values and norms and that when and how they get done differ cross-culturally. The rules for complimenting in English, for example, depend on one's gender and status. Furthermore, compliments are often extended in English as a means of initiating conversations. This is not the case in other cultures and languages. For non-native speakers to initiate a conversation or further a relationship requires a knowledge and ability to use such routines. These routines can be learned by observing native speakers in simple, repetitive tasks. For example, in-country, non-native learners can observe many similar interactions in such settings as open markets, post offices, banks and grocery stores. From systematic observation, non-natives may be able to formulate rules (i.e., hypothesis formation) of interaction in these settings (e.g., no greetings are extended in a grocery store, but extensive greetings take place in an open market setting). The non-native may then test out these rules in these settings and modify the routines depending on the native speakers' feedback. A less anxiety-producing manner of testing rules would be to ask a native speaker if what has been observed has been assessed correctly. Since not all native speakers are aware of their own rules of speaking, however, it is not always clear that non-natives will get the right information. In spite of this, I believe that it is instructive for non-natives to act as ethnographers, trying to discover the underlying rules of behavior in the country. It is perhaps most productive when non-natives can test their newly-formed rules on native-speaker acquaintances so that they can get either positive or negative feedback on their performance in a less threatening atmosphere.

Conclusions and Implications for Second Language Acquisition

Because I am reporting here on only one language learner's experience—and that, my own—the contentions are deemed tentative and additional empirical research is needed to validate the contentions empirically. It is my hope that this case study will serve to stimulate both practical and theoretical studies in second language learning. On the practical side, I would hope that intensive language program administrators would explore the lack of effectiveness of teaching isolated bits and pieces of language and work toward integrating language and culture in a communicative setting. Much more theoretical and empirical work is needed in the examination of the interrelationship between attitudes, motivation, input and interaction, and second language acquisition to determine the nature of their true relationship.

Although the case study approach to language acquisition can reveal interesting avenues of research to pursue, as the sole method of investigation, it is unable to determine: (1) whether the L2 learner's experience was unique and idiosyncratic and thus does not accurately reflect the experiences of the majority of L2 learners in a given L2 environment; (2) whether the relationship posited between motivation and attitude, input, and SLA can be supported by objective observation and empirical studies; or (3) whether input and interaction work together equally to contribute to motivation, or whether they have a differential impact on it. In spite of these caveats, it is hoped that this case study will raise questions about the relationships of variables not only for SLA, but to each other, as originally suggested by Long (25).

Specifically, what is needed are empirical studies that explore the role of input and interaction on duration and degree of motivation. Taking subjects with different motivational levels, one could examine the influence of differing amounts of input and interaction to determine such things as whether highly motivated learners, given low levels of input and interaction, experience loss of motivation and whether

0190-14

poorly motivated learners, given more input and opportunities for interaction, experience increases in levels of motivation. And finally, studies need to address what kinds of interactions (e.g., classroom discussions, grocery store talk, gossiping with friends) in what contexts (e.g., considering the speech situation of the roles, status, familiarity, gender, etc. of the participants) provide the most fertile grounds for adequate and appropriate input and interaction.

The findings of such investigations would provide valuable information for classroom language learning and teaching. If a relationship does exist between these factors, then by increasing adequate and appropriate input and interaction of our students, we can also increase their motivation, which in turn, increases their chances for success in second language acquisition.

NOTES

[1] I would like to thank Patricia Dunkel, Robert Kaplan, Betty Wallace Robinett, as well as two anonymous reviewers for *Foreign Language Annals,* for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

[2] Robert Kaplan (personal communication) has suggested this distinction between motivation types.

[3] I am measuring "control" in terms of test score results during the eight-week program.

[4] I learned that many of my utterances were inappropriate only while writing this paper. Aleksandra Kraszewska, who provided the grammatical analysis of the Polish sentences in this article, pointed out that several of my samples just wouldn't be said by a native speaker, due to lack of appropriateness.

[5] While this was true in 1987, I found that on my return to Poland during the summer of 1990 there were fewer lines, and what lines there were were shorter. (See Wedel, 45, for an interesting analysis of the triple-tiered economy in Poland in the 80s.)

[6] Judging from two anonymous reviewers' comments on an earlier version of this paper, my experience in the Polish language classroom was far from exceptional.

REFERENCES

1. Barna, LaRay. "Stumbling Blocks in Intercultural Communication," 322-330 in Larry Samovar and Richard Porter, eds., *Intercultural Communication: A Reader.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1988.
2. Barnlund, Dean. "Verbal Self-Disclosure: Topics, Targets, Depth," 147-165 in Louise Luce and Elise Smith, eds., *Toward Internationalism.* Cambridge, MA: Newbury House, 1987.
3. Beebe, Leslie. "Input: Choosing the Right Stuff," 404-414 in Susan Gass and Carolyn Madden, eds., *Input in Second Language Acquisition.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1985.
4. ________. *Issues in Second Language Acquisition.* New York: Newbury House, 1988.
5. ________ and Tomoko Takahashi. "Do You Have a Bag?: Social Status and Patterned Variation in Second Language Acquisition," 103-125 in Susan Gass, Carolyn Madden, Dennis Preston, and Larry Selinker, eds., *Variation in Second Language Acquisition: Discourse and Pragmatics.* Clevedon (England): Multilingual Matters, 1989.
6. Bogaards, Paul. "Attitudes et Motivations: Quelques Factèurs dans l'Apprentissage d'une Langue Etrangère." *Français dans le Monde* 185 (1984): 38-44.
7. Cathcart-Strong, Ruth. "Input Generation by Young Second Language Learners." *TESOL Quarterly* 20 (1986):515-30.
8. Chiang, David. "Predictors of Relative Clause Production," 142-145 in Robin Scarcella and Stephen Krashen, eds., *Research in Second Language Acquisition.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1980.
9. Chihara, Tesuro and John Oller, Jr. "Attitudes and Attained Proficiency in EFL: A Sociolinguistic Study of Adult Japanese Speakers." *Language Learning* 28 (1978):55-68.
10. Day, Richard. "The Use of the Target Language in Context and Second Language Acquisition," 257-271 in Susan Gass and Carolyn Madden, eds., *Input in Second Language Acquisition.* Cambridge, MA: Newbury House, 1985.
11. Doughty, Catherine and Teresa Pica. "'Information Gap' Tasks: Do They Facilitate Second Language Acquisition?" *TESOL Quarterly* 20 (1986):305-25.
12. Ely, Christopher. "An Analysis of Discomfort, Risktaking, Sociability, and Motivation in the L2 Classroom." *Language Learning* 36 (1986):1-25.
13. Gardner, Robert. "Social Factors in Language Retention," 24-43 in William Lambert and Barbara Freed, eds., *The Loss of Language Skills.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1982.
14. ________, R. Lalonde, R. Moorcroft, and F. Evers. "Second Language Attrition: The Role of Motivation and Use." *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* (1987):29-47.
15. ________ and William Lambert. *Attitudes*

0190-15

and Motivation in Second Language Learning. Rowley, MA: Newbury House (1982).

16. Gass, Susan and Larry Selinker. *Language Transfer and Language Learning.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1983.
17. _________ and Evangeline Varonis. "Task Variation and Nonnative/Nonnative Negotiation of Meaning," 149-161 in Susan Gass and Carolyn Madden, eds., *Input in Second Language Acquisition.* Cambridge, MA: Newbury House, 1985.
18. Gudykunst, William and Mitchell Hammer. "Strangers and Hosts: An Uncertainty Reduction Based Theory of Intercultural Adaptation," 106-139 in Young Kim and William Gudykunst, eds., *Cross-Cultural Adaptation.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1988.
19. Hanvey, Robert. "Cross-Cultural Awareness," 13-23 in Louise Luce and Elise Smith, eds., *Toward Internationalism.* Cambridge, MA: Newbury House, 1987.
20. Horwitz, Elaine, Michael Horwitz, and Jo Ann Cope. "Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety," 27-36 in Elaine Horwitz and Dolly Young, eds., *Language Anxiety.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991.
21. Irujo, Suzanne. "Don't Put Your Leg in Your Mouth: Transfer in the Acquisition of Idioms in a Second Language." *TESOL Quarterly* 20 (1986):287-304.
22. Kasper, Gabriele. "Variation in Interlanguage Speech Act Realisation," 37-58 in Susan Gass, Carolyn Madden, Dennis Preston, and Larry Selinker, eds., *Variation in Second Language Acquisition: Discourse and Pragmatics.* Clevedon (England): Multilingual Matters, 1989.
23. Krashen, Stephen. *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition.* Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1982.
24. Liceras, Juana. "The Role of Intake in the Determination of Learners' Competence," 354-373 in Susan Gass and Carolyn Madden, eds., *Input in Second Language Acquisition.* Cambridge, MA: Newbury House, 1985.
25. Long, Michael. "Linguistic and Conversational Adjustments to Nonnative Speakers." *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 5 (1983):177-93.
26. _________. "Input and Second Language Acquisition Theory," 377-393 in Susan Gass and Carolyn Madden, eds., *Input in Second Language Acquisition.* Cambridge, MA: Newbury House, 1985.
27. Massey, D. Anthony. "Variations in Attitudes and Motivation of Adolescent Learners of French as a Second Language." *Canadian Modern Language Review* 42 (1986):607-618.
28. Mohan, Bernard and Winnie Au-Yeung Lo. "Academic Writing and Chinese Students: Transfer and Developmental Factors" *TESOL Quarterly* 19 (1985):515-34.
29. Neu, Joyce. "Assessing the Role of Nonverbal Communication in the Acquisition of Communicative Competence in L2," 121-138 in Robin Scarcella, Elaine Andersen, and Stephen Krashen, eds., *Developing Communicative Competence in a Second Language.* Cambridge, MA: Newbury House, 1990.
30. Pica, Teresa and Catherine Doughty. "Input and Interaction in the Communicative Language Classroom: A Comparison of Teacher-Fronted and Group Activities," 115-132 in Susan Gass and Carolyn Madden, eds., *Input in Second Language Acquisition.* Cambridge, MA: Newbury House, 1985.
31. _________, Richard Young, and Catherine Doughty. "The Impact of Interaction on Comprehension." *TESOL Quarterly* 21 (1987): 737-58.
32. Porter, Patricia. "How Learners Talk to Each Other: Input and Interaction in Task-Centered Discussions," 200-222 in Richard Day, ed., *Talking to Learn.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1986.
33. Price, Mary Lou. "The Subjective Experience of Foreign Language Anxiety: Interviews with Highly Anxious Students," 101-108 in Elaine Horwitz and Dolly Young, eds., *Language Anxiety.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991.
34. Rekart, Deborah and Ray Daniloff. "Phoneme Substitution in L2 Acquisition" unpublished manuscript.
35. Savignon, Sandra. *Communicative Competence: An Experiment in Foreign Language Teaching.* Philadelphia: Center for Curriculum Development, 1972.
36. Schmidt, Richard. "Interaction, Acculturation, and the Acquisition of Communicative Competence: A Case Study of an Adult," 137-174 in Nessa Wolfson and Elliot Judd, eds., *Sociolinguistics and Language Acquisition.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1983.
37. _________ and Sylvia Frota. "Developing Basic Conversational Ability in a Second Language: A Case Study of an Adult Learner of Portuguese," 237-326 in Richard Day, ed., *Talking to Learn.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1986.
38. Scovel, Thomas. "The Effect of Affect on Foreign Language Learning: A Review of the

0190-16

Anxiety Research," 15-23 in Elaine Horwitz and Dolly Young, eds., *Language Anxiety.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991.

39. Smith, Howard and D. Anthony Massey. "Student Attitudes toward French as a Second Language: Their Stability and Relationship to Classroom Behaviours." *Canadian Modern Language Review* 43 (1987):314-36.
40. Starets, Moshe. "Les Attitudes des Parents Acadiens a l'Egard du Français et de l'Anglais." *Canadian Modern Language Review* 42 (1986):792-805.
41. Stevick, Earl. *Memory, Meaning and Method.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House, 1976.
42. Strong, Michael. "Social Styles and the Second Language Acquisition of Spanish-speaking Kindergartners." *TESOL Quarterly* 17 (1983): 241-58.
43. ________. "Integrative Motivation: Cause or Result of Successful Second Language Acquisition?" *Language Learning* 34 (1984):1-14.
44. Svanes, Bjorg. "Motivation and Cultural Distance in Second-Language Acquisition." *Language Learning* 37 (1987):341-59.
45. Wedel, Janine. *The Private Poland.* New York: Facts on File Publications, 1986.
46. Young, Dolly. "The Relationship Between Anxiety and Foreign Language Oral Proficiency Ratings," 57-63 in Elaine Horwitz and Dolly Young, eds., *Language Anxiety.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991.

CONFERENCE ON THE TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
THE FRIENDLY CONFERENCE!

Michigan Foreign Language Association

Unity Through Diversity

April 9–12, 1992 • Hyatt Regency, Dearborn, MI

- More than 100 conference sessions
- More than 20 workshops
- Scores of exhibits
- Outstanding speakers
- Special events

Pre-Conference Registration $40
Workshops $15 & $30
Hotel Accommodations Single or Double $72

For further information contact:
Jody Thrush
CSC Executive Director
3550 Anderson St.
Madison, WI 53704
(608) 246-6573

Please mention *Foreign Language Annals* when writing to advertisers