

# Research on Foreign Language Teaching in North America: The University of Toronto and Michigan State University<sup>1</sup>

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## 要約

本報告書は、現在、英語教育と第二言語習得の分野で最も高度な研究が行われているトロント大学のオンタリオ教育研究所とミシガン州立大学を対象にした調査研究である。筆者らは、両機関のスタッフに対して面接調査およびアンケート調査を行った。調査内容は、(1)研究分野のバランス・分布、共同プロジェクトの構成、個人研究の内容・評価、研究の一般的アプローチ・特色、関連諸科学との学際性などの研究条件、(2)大学院レベルの教育内容および教育条件を中心に、多岐にわたっている。また、施設・設備の見学、自己点検にかかわる資料等の収集、および大学院生等への面接調査を実施しており、これらの結果に基づいて、広島大学外国教育研究センターのめざすべき目標と担うべき機能について考察を加えた。

Both the Modern Language Centre at the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE/UT), and the English Language Center at Michigan State University, are acknowledged as being among the best centers for applied linguistics research and education in the world. The Modern Language Centre has published important findings in the areas of second language acquisition, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and language curricula. Meanwhile, the English Language Center has contributed to improvements in foreign language teaching practices, in addition to providing successful English programs for non-native speakers.

In order to improve the quality of Hiroshima University's new Institute for Foreign Language Research and Education, the writers went on a two-week fact-finding mission to the University of Toronto and Michigan State University in September, 1997. The researchers conducted many hours of interviews with faculty members, videotaped lessons, talked to graduate students and ESL students, and tried to ascertain what aspects of those programs should be adopted by Hiroshima University. The results are reported here.

## The University of Toronto's Modern Language Centre

Founded in 1968, the Modern Language Centre (MLC) has a clear mission: Carry out research in the field of second and minority language education, implement a complementary graduate studies program, and support all levels of Ontario instructors and learners in this field (Stern, 1968). Special emphasis is put on research dealing with English and French instruction in Canada. Faculty members are active in the areas of language learning, curriculum design, methodology, student and program evaluation, teacher development, language education policies, bilingualism, multilingualism, cultural diversity, and literacy.

The MLC operates under the umbrella of OISE, which was established in 1965. OISE and the University of Toronto were separate, yet affiliated, institutions until 1996, when OISE merged with the university's Faculty of Education to form a new faculty within the university, now called OISE/UT. There are five departments within OISE/UT: (i) Adult Education, Community Development and Counseling Psychology, (ii) Human Development and Applied Psychology, (iii) Sociology and Equity Studies in Education, (iv) Theory and Policy Studies in Education, and (v) Curriculum, Teaching and Learning. Salaries of MLC faculty are administered through the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning.

There are ten full-time faculty members in the MLC. They all possess Ph.D.s. Alister Cumming is the head of the centre; he is also the editor of *Language Learning*, one of the most prestigious journals in the field of applied linguistics.

Usually two or three professors and a few graduate students work together on research projects. Each research project typically results in the publication of several academic papers. Work which centre members have been involved with during the past two years include: (i) *The Canadian Modern Language Review*-- a journal, (ii) *Extending Learning Through Talk*-- an investigation of the relationship between discourse in the classroom and the effect on learning, (iii) *Follow-up Study of Graduates from LINC*-- a project which has documented the influence of English as a Second Language (ESL) training on adult immigrants' living and occupational situations since completion of an ESL program, (iv) *Learning Outcomes in Ojibwe at Grades 3, 6 and 9*-- a study accessing language achievement among Ojibwe children, (v) *MLC Distribution and Scoring Services*-- a series of tests specifically related to primary and secondary school French immersion classes, (vi) *National Heritage Language Resource Unit*-- a language resource center, (vii) *The Output Hypothesis*-- an investigation of the relationship between speaking, writing, and language acquisition, (viii) *Teachers' Utilization of Language Standards in English Language Arts, ESL Core French and Extended French*-- interviews of 8th-grade language teachers to see how they use published materials in classes.

To cite a particular achievement in more detail, the Development of Bilingual Proficiency Research Project was one of the most comprehensive examinations ever conducted of the development of second language proficiency at school (Harley et al., 1990). The five-year-long project involved the entire MLC faculty and hundreds of Canadian secondary and primary school students, and examined instructional conditions and practices that affect the process of language learning. Some of the most important findings: established how long it takes to master a second language, and how primary language literacy affects second language literacy achievement; confirmed the necessity of providing corrective feedback in second language instruction; and, argued for the necessity of "analytically-oriented" instruction focused on grammatical features of the target language.

The MLC staff has attempted to put these theoretical findings into practice. Teacher education modules, videotapes, and guides have been developed. Curriculum units and materials for students at various levels have been designed. In-service teacher and parent workshops have been organized in an attempt to increase the effectiveness of instructional

programs. Staff have created instruments which attempt to evaluate language education programs.

From 1987 to 1994 OISE staff associated with the centre received annual research grants averaging Canadian \$668,286 (=¥61,145,200) per year. Assuming that there were 12 faculty members receiving grants, this works out to be about Canadian \$55,690 (=¥5,012,100) per researcher per year. During this period, about 42% of the money came from provincial and federal government agencies, 28% came from internal competition for OISE funds, 17% came from scholarly granting councils, and the remaining 13% came from other sources such as local school boards and community service agencies.

Much of the grant money is used to pay for part-time professional research staff or graduate student assistants. Professional researchers work on several projects at the same time, doing tasks according to their qualifications. They collect and analyze data, write reports, and give workshops on the results of projects. In late 1997 there were four of these researchers working in the MLC, with two of them also working part-time in other units at OISE/UT. In the past, there have been up to 20 of these staff when large projects have operated through the MLC.

The graduate program at OISE/UT has about 60 full-time students and 80 part-time students studying second language education. About one out of three of them is doing doctoral work. In the fall of 1998, a graduate program in Second Language Education will have independent status as a unique field of study within OISE/UT; but it continues to operate within OISE/UT's Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning. The change allows students to focus their studies more specifically on applied linguistics and language education, instead of curriculum studies.

Most MLC faculty members teach three semester-long graduate courses per year in the program. About half of the faculty members also teach one or two courses in other graduate programs. A few courses are team-taught (i.e., have two instructors). Usually one or two faculty members are on leave or sabbatical at any one time. Most courses meet once per week, with 36 hours of class time each semester.

To support the centre, the OISE/UT library has Canada's most extensive collection of second and minority language pedagogical resources. Workshops are held once or twice a month to explain library services. It has been calculated that about 150 people use MLC library materials each week, and that just under half of all those people are language teachers, teachers-in-training, or school administrators; most work at schools, colleges, or universities in Ontario. The remaining users of MLC library materials are graduate students or language researchers.

The MLC has two full-time clerical workers: a text processing/computer specialist and a secretary. There is a part-time administrative officer.

For people from overseas preparing to enter the University of Toronto, there is an ESL program which is separate from the MLC, and the authors observed one of its classes. Students are in ESL classes four hours a day, five days a week. A unique aspect of this

program is that for three days a week students concentrate on speaking and listening skills, working with one particular teacher during those days. On the other two days, they concentrate on reading and writing, again, with only one particular teacher during those two days.

### Michigan State University's English Language Center

The major goal of the English Language Center (ELC) at Michigan State University is to provide English language instruction to non-native English speakers enrolled at the university, to such individuals wishing to enter the university, and to any other individuals wishing to improve their English skills. The center was founded in 1961, but it was drastically reorganized when Susan Gass became its director in 1990.

There are two main programs:

1) *The Intensive English Program*-- This is usually for students who are seeking admission to the university, and who have TOEFL scores well under 550. Students are in class 20 hours a week. They take three daily language skill classes (reading, writing, and listening) and also can elect to take one content course from a list which includes American culture, the environment, dialects, health, U.S. government, the media, geography, and drama. While there are no courses entitled "speaking," most courses entail a lot of small group work and student-teacher verbal exchanges, so students get a lot of practice conversing. Students take a placement test which was designed by the ELC, and are grouped according to language ability. All instructors who teach a particular skill (e.g., writing) at a particular ability level use the same textbook so that they can coordinate lesson plans and share ideas; all instructors participate in deciding on textbooks. Each semester there are 90-100 students in the program, the majority of students coming from East Asia-- especially from South Korea. Tuition is about U.S. \$4,800 (=¥624,000) per semester.

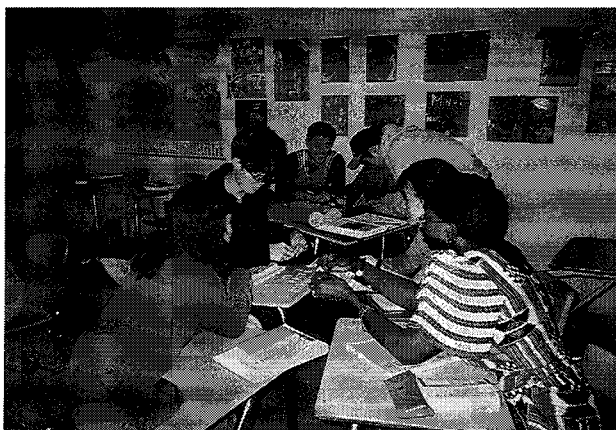
2) *The English for Academic Purposes Program*-- This is usually for students who are already enrolled in regular university classes but still need to improve their English skills; their TOEFL scores are often between 530 and 550. Students can select from among skill classes (listening, reading, or writing) and content courses. In the content courses, a full-time ESL instructor sometimes helps the regular instructor and students with various ESL needs. This year there are about 95 students in the program.

In addition, there are numerous special summer programs, typically two to five weeks long, and involving about 250-300 students. They are often designed according to the wishes of foreign institutions which are sending the students to the center. Japanese institutions which have sent significant numbers of students to ELC include Aichi Gakuen, Mie University, Bunkyo University, Souka University, and Shiga University. Students receive credits in Japan for successfully completing the programs.

ELC operates with three professors, nine full-time lecturers, two CALL specialists, three secretaries, and 17 teaching assistants (TAs). The TAs, who are also graduate students in the English Department, teach most of the classes. Lecturers teach a few classes, but more

importantly they specialize in and oversee particular areas of the program, such as content courses, testing, student advising, curriculum, summer programs, and ESL materials development. The yearly operating budget is about U.S. \$800,000 (=¥104,000,000).

ELC seems to be successful because staff members are highly qualified, and because they hold frequent meetings to discuss what is happening inside classrooms. CALL specialists hold weekly seminars in which they introduce special software, hardware, uses of the Internet, and other CALL capabilities. Instructors are constantly sharing pedagogical ideas, and occasionally observe each other's classes. Each course has specified objectives which must be met, and there are recommended ways (tasks) which are designed to help students reach those objectives. Students say that they are pleased to hear that teachers are working together, coordinating lesson plans, and discussing the linguistic and social characteristics or problems of particular students whom those teachers may share.



An ESL class at Michigan State University

Besides the main university library, an ELC resource room plays a key role in assisting instructors. This room has four on-line computers. Teaching materials are numerous and include ESL texts, professional journals, cassettes, videos, current news magazines, maps, games, and old magazines for cutting. These materials are classified according to skills such as "speaking" or "listening," and are easily accessed.

There are two computer-assisted language learning (CALL) rooms which ESL students can use. One room is used for classes. It has 28 networked stations, containing five-year-old Macintosh 660 AV computers. Each computer has the ability to display graphics and motion video, so, for example, instructors can use simulation (i.e., present situations in a foreign culture), or vividly display audio cues such as speech intonation. This room is used for parts of many courses, not for whole courses, so teachers must make reservations to use the room. The other room, an independent study room, has 20 brand-new IBM and Macintosh computers, plus 22 audio-visual booths.

The Intensive English Program's placement test is constantly being revised and fine-tuned in accordance with standard test-design procedures. The exam takes two hours to

administer and has three parts. The first part is a writing test which involves writing a composition and answering questions about grammar. Multiple raters use an analytic scale to evaluate each composition. The second part of the placement test is a listening section, involving lecture note-taking, short listening passages and conversations. The final section is a multiple-choice reading exam, involving an extended reading, short readings, and questions about vocabulary. At the end of each semester, in order to measure progress, students in this program retake a separate version of the placement test.

Students in the English for Academic Purposes Program take criterion-referenced, program-wide tests at the end of each course. These tests were designed by program administrators with regards to course objectives. At the end of writing courses, students are evaluated on the best two of three in-class compositions. At the conclusion of listening courses, students take a listening test, involving lecture note-taking, short listening passages, and conversations. At the end of reading courses, there is a test involving an extended reading, short readings, vocabulary, and reading graphs.

The authors attended and videotaped parts of two classes in the intensive program, plus one class in the English for Academic Purposes Program, and one computer seminar for graduate students. All classes had fewer than 20 students. The classes, whether they were skill or content-oriented, could be characterized by large amounts of oral participation by the students, including pair and small-group work. Student-teacher relationships were relaxed and included frequent joking.

Applied linguistics research in the ELC usually involves one professor and several graduate students per project. Some projects recently undertaken include: (i) *Writing in a Foreign Language*-- the relation between writing research and instruction, (ii) *Oral Language Use (Input/Interaction) in Language Learning*-- the relation between psycholinguistic aspects of learning, negotiation (conversation), and pedagogy, (iii) *Native Language in the Foreign Language Classroom*-- the relation between the use of native language in class and the effects on learning, (iv) *Content-based Instruction Materials*-- seminars and workshops especially for high school language teachers, (v) *Computer-Assisted Language Learning*-- the development of software for studying Spanish and Chinese, (vi) *Task-based Communicative Grammar Activities*-- language learning material development and workshops, (vii) *Oral Proficiency Assessment Modules*-- multimedia technology and competence testing in German, Spanish, and French, (viii) *Video Training on "In-House" Test Development*-- the publishing of a video and a CD-ROM which shows teachers how to make language tests.

### Suggestions for Hiroshima University

Prior to going to North America, the authors prepared a 10-page, candid description of the English teaching situation for freshmen and sophomore students at Hiroshima University. This paper was given to faculty members in Toronto and Michigan. In return, those faculty members provided feedback which has been incorporated into the present document. On this basis, we can recommend that the new Institute for Foreign Language Research and

Education at Hiroshima University should take the following feasible actions.

1) *Follow the basic steps in program design: do a needs analysis, create a curriculum, make your tests.* First, survey students, teachers, and major employers concerning English language skills and requisites in the 21st century. After the relevant needs have been established, discuss curriculum, personnel, and textbooks. Undoubtedly, this will entail moving toward more communicative classrooms which not only rely less on teacher-centered lessons but also encourage oral discussions in all types of lessons. Finally, develop placement, achievement, and proficiency tests which complement the program's goals and curriculum.

2) *Promote cooperation between members of the Department of Foreign Languages (located in the Faculty of Integrated Arts and Sciences), language instructors in the Faculty of Education, and personnel in the new institute.* As is the policy at OISE/UT, Hiroshima University's new institute should act as a clearing house for pedagogical information, helping instructors improve the quality of foreign language teaching. The institute should provide opportunities for teachers to share ideas. As is the practice at Michigan State University, instructors who have students with similar goals and language abilities should get together and decide on "ideal textbooks." A room should be designated in which teaching materials can be stored and shared. Have trained language teachers work with instructors who direct content-based classes that are taught only through the medium of English; for example, this would entail promoting collaboration between EFL teachers, the visiting scholar, and the Fullbright scholar.

3) *Hire more graduate students to assist with research and teaching.* This is a low-cost reform that also has the value of helping graduate students develop their skills and prospects for future employment. Its time has clearly come.

4) *Improve computer-assisted language instruction at this university.* CALL personnel should hold weekly workshops in which faculty members are shown how to use computer/audio/visual materials in English lessons. Teachers should use hypercard to develop class materials so that these can be cross-referenced and linked. All interested students at the school should be shown how to make their own Internet/Web pages in English. Make it possible for students to communicate simultaneously with other students living abroad; investigate "distance-learning TV."

5) *Expand foreign exchange programs.* Send students to Michigan State's August/September English programs. Develop programs with ESL departments abroad, through which native English-speaking graduate students can get practical teaching and learning experiences while staying as six-month or one-year interns in the new Hiroshima University institute. As reciprocity, the Faculty of Education could send some of its advanced students in Japanese as a Foreign Language to those foreign universities.

6) *Last, but not least, bring more accountability into the classroom.* Investigate what teachers are doing. Measure student progress. Monitor and provide feedback on teacher performance.

## References

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