

# Towards strategic language learning

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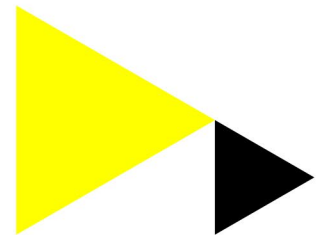
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# **TOWARDS STRATEGIC LANGUAGE LEARNING**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

The problematic nature of coordinating mother tongue and second language education was diagnosed a considerable time ago (cf. Tordoir & Damhuis 1982, Lodder 1983, Hawkins 1987, Ringbom 1987). The main objective of these studies was to investigate whether the curricula of both mother tongue and foreign language learning can be organized in such a way that the mother tongue education can *facilitate* foreign language education or vice versa. The mother tongue (in this text synonym for "native language", "standard language" or "L1") is of vital importance in the process of learning a foreign language; during the mother tongue lessons language skills are taught which also must be put into practice in foreign language performance.

So far most attention has been given to the role of traditional grammar as well as lexical, syntactical and pragmatical aspects in first and second language learning (cf. Schouten-Van Parreren & Hogendoorn 1983, Ringbom 1987). More recently attention has been shifted to language problem solving strategies and metacognition (cf. Baker & Brown 1984, Brown & Day 1983, Garner 1987, Fisher & Mandl 1984, Paris & Oka 1986, Paris et al. 1984).

Traditionally the emphasis in education is on pupil's achievements. They receive a judgement, expressed in grades, for their text comprehension, essay, vocabulary or parsing. Probably a pleasant routine for teachers as well as pupils, but the effectiveness is much often doubted. It is not very useful to know that performance is not well enough. Educationally more effective would be an analysis of the communicative performance which hypothesise about the causes of reading or writing failures or an analysis of the learning performance which helps the learner to understand the causes of the low performance

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*Introduction*

on for instance a vocabulary test. Probably the pupil lacks an adequate problem solving strategy for a specific language *processing problem* and/or a *language learning problem*.

The idea has been accepted that the learning of problem solving strategies can benefit both mother tongue and foreign language performance (cf. Larkin 1989, Paris & Oka 1986). In learning a foreign language students eventually appeal to learning strategies which have been acquired during mother tongue acquisition and education (cf. Stern 1990, 402-403). Therefore language education needs to become more exclusively focused on the *process* of language production and reception: it is not only necessary to look at *what* pupils are doing, but also at the way *how* they are doing and *how they are learning* it. It would be of great importance to make pupils reflect on their own communication and learning behaviour and make them aware of the effectiveness of strategies applied. When pupils know how to solve certain communication and learning problems they also must be able to apply the problem solving strategy in situations diverging from the situation in which the strategy has been taught. Transfer between modalities (intralingual) such as reading, writing, speaking and listening, and transfer from mother tongue to foreign language (interlingual) will then be possible.

At the Centre for Educational Research of the University of Amsterdam the research programme "Transfer between first and foreign language learning" is being carried out. Part of this research programme is the study "Correspondence between teaching models and subject matter in first and foreign language education". This study which is reported here has two main objectives. First to investigate teaching models and subject matter which may facilitate transfer of language skills between mother tongue and foreign language learning. Second to analyze Dutch school-kits for mother tongue and foreign language learning in order to discover to which extent interlingual transfer can be realized.

The study is exclusively focused on mother tongue education and foreign language education. It is stressed here that foreign language *learning* differs from foreign language *acquisition* (cf. Krashen 1978).

Foreign language acquisition takes place in a *natural* sociolinguistic environment (the foreign language is not only the content of instruction but also the medium). Foreign language learning takes place in a *artificial* sociolinguistic environment, mostly the classroom, and is the complement of teaching. In case of foreign language learning pupils learn a second language which is little used in the surrounding society (such as learning English in the Netherlands, or learning Dutch in the United States). Within the educational practice second language learning as a school subject is treated as an equivalent of other subjects such as mathematics or history (cf. Chaudron 1988).

Furthermore it must be emphasized that the line of approach of the study is not bilingual education. Bilingual education refers to the acquisition of two or more languages either as native languages or before the native language has become internalized in such a strong way that there is interference with the acquisition of a second language (cf. Hammerly 1991).

Likewise immersion programs are behind the scope of this study too. Immersion programs are aimed at language acquisition by means of more or less natural or unsystematic exposure to the target language and they lack *systematic language instruction* (cf. Krashen 1984).

A first step in our research concerned the state of affairs on former research to transfer between mother tongue and foreign language education. In order to build up a compilation of most important research reporting didactical and empirical experiments on cross-linguistic transfer between mother tongue and foreign language learning a literature search has been carried out. An analysis of relevant literature has been executed to obtain a synopsis of relevant teaching variables which play an important role in the language transfer process. On account of theoretical insights located in compiled literature a model for language learning is being developed heuristically determining possibilities for intra- and interlinguistic transfer, which forms the starting point for the analysis of some widely used Dutch textbooks for mother tongue and foreign language education.

In the following section the model for language processing and

learning (both mother tongue and second language) is being presented and explained in relation to other models (e.g. Canale & Swain 1980, Bialystok 1978 and 1991, Cummins 1980). The model consists of three major components: a) a declarative component that contains propositional knowledge on linguistic elements, language structure and language usage, b) a procedural component that contains rules and procedures for the application of knowledge, and c) a monitoring component that governs and controls the execution of processes and that enables metacognitive control.

The third section discusses second language learning in the classroom. How second language learning can benefit from mother tongue is expounded on basis of the model for language learning and didactical insights upon the learning process. It is argued that the learning process must be based upon cumulative learning (cf. Bloom et al. 1956) in which emphasis is laid upon evolving strategic competence and metacognition (cf. Baker & Brown 1984, Paris & Oka 1986).

The fourth section reports on the textbook analysis. The most widely used Dutch textbooks for mother tongue (Dutch) and foreign language (in the study reported English and French) education, besides some very recently published textbooks, for the upper forms of primary and the lower forms of secondary school have been analysed. Results of a comparative content analysis are presented and discussed. A representative sample of instruction passages and exercises have been classified according to a multi-dimensional classification scheme containing categories such as modality (speaking, writing, reading and listening), strategy use and cross-referential links to other items or subject matter.

The results of the textbook analysis are being reported in section five. Results point to the direction that little transfer of cognitive and linguistic strategies could be expected to take place between mother tongue and foreign language learning and that modern textbooks show more, although few, opportunities for transfer than older ones. Section six contains an compilation of exercises displaying one or more characteristics of strategic language education. For each main characteristic some exercises have been selected from the textbooks as a specimen.



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In the final section implications for the educational practice are discussed. We will suggest that more effective language education should use opportunities for transfer, especially in the case of complex cognitive language tasks (e.g. reading more difficult texts) and learning tasks (learning how to learn). Some examples of language exercises are discussed in view of the relevant characteristics of language education facilitating transfer between mother tongue and foreign language. Finally a heuristic for constructing such language exercises is presented and discussed.

## 2 A MODEL FOR LANGUAGE PROCESSING AND LEARNING

In this section we will explain a model for first and second language processing and learning. The proposed model (see figure 1) can be characterized as a model for problem solving activities for the planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation of language processing tasks or language learning tasks in mother tongue or foreign language. The model assumes a strong resemblance between L1 and L2 tasks (Cummins 1980; Bialystok 1991), contains some features of Bialystok's (1978, 1991) model of second language learning and resembles the structure of the general problem solving model which Hayes and Flower (1981) applied for written composition.

The model consists of three components: the input (task), the long term memory, the working memory (in which problem solving activities are actually executed and controlled) and the (external) output.

### *Input*

As was suggested before we distinguish between two types of tasks (cf. Elshout 1992) which can be part of the input of the model: a *language processing task* (LPT) or a *language learning task* (LLT). The distinction parallels Bialystok's distinction between functional and formal practising (Bialystok 1978). Therefore written composition assignment or listening comprehension tasks in L1 as well as L2 can be labelled as language processing tasks. Language processing tasks must be defined within a functional context and can be typified as 'whole language tasks'. In a LPT the main goal of the activity is to *communicate*, whereas the main goal of a LLT is to *learn*. Examples of language learning tasks are

manyfold: learning vocabulary, learning the difference between the passive and the active forms, learning how to solve reading problems (e.g. to compensate a shortage of vocabulary), learning how to write paragraphs according to a particular pattern et cetera. The main criterium for distinguishing language and language learning tasks is the educational goal. A rewriting task must be analyzed as a learning task if the explicitly formulated educational goal is *learning* how to diagnose and rewrite a text. The same task must be analyzed as a language task if no explicit educational goal accompanies the task: in this case function of the task is not to learn how to rewrite but rewrite in order to fulfil a communicative goal more adequate.

Of course executing a LPT can serve as a LLT as well: one of the characteristics of good language learners is their active learning behaviour during task execution. Good language learners create themselves learning opportunities. Using strategies like planning, monitoring, checking and evaluating, they try to regulate not only their LPT, but they re-represent a language processing task into a language learning task.

#### *Long term memory*

Cognitive and metacognitive knowledge that is relevant for the execution of the above mentioned tasks (LPT or LLT) is part of the long term memory. Knowledge within the long term memory varies from declarative to procedural (Anderson 1983). In his ACT\* theory Anderson breaks down the acquisition of cognitive skill in two major stages: a declarative stage, where a declarative representation of the skill interpreted by provisional general productions, and a procedural stage, where the skill is directly embodied in domain specific productions. This transition from the declarative to procedural stage is achieved by the process of knowledge compilation. This process consists of two mechanisms: the composition and proceduralization mechanism. The composition mechanism collapses provisional general productions into highly specific productions and the proceduralization mechanism deposits domain knowledge from the long term memory directly into

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productions. Because of these different stages of knowledge within the long term memory, we do not speak of domain specific knowledge but of domain specific *competence*. Within the model are five competences distinguished: linguistic, pragmatic, textual, socio-cultural and strategic knowledge (cf. Bachman 1990, Canale & Swain 1980, Sijstra 1992).

Figure 1: Model for language processing and learning

The *linguistic competence* contains implicit and explicit knowledge of grammar, lexicon, articulation, accentuation, interpunction and spelling. The student's competence shows in his decisions concerning the correctness of a sentence, the choice of words and the emphasis in a sentence. This type of competence plays a role in formulating and coding (writing and speaking) and decoding (reading and listening). The linguistic competence of a language user is also shown in skills providing the production of sounds and signs (e.g. tempo, intonation, articulation, phasing and correct pronunciation).

*Textual competence* indicates implicit and explicit knowledge, which enables a language user to develop or understand a text. It implies starting, maintaining and ending a conversation; it also implies writing coherent texts and using textual knowledge to anticipate the continuation of the reading or listening process. Textual competence appeals to knowledge of rules for interaction in conversation, opportunities to get up to speak, organizational principles concerning a text, et cetera. In reading and listening textual competence plays a role when meanings are being converged by the language user. Readers suppose a certain coherence in the text instead of a collection of loose words. That is why from two successive sentences they will deduce a connection in meaning. They will try to relate both meanings to each other and ignore all other meanings the sentences themselves might have. Thus the reading takes less time than the actual decoding of every single word would take. Knowledge of the structure of a text (for example the pattern of advantages-disadvantages), and language acts offers the language user the opportunity to anticipate possible contents. Someone who makes a request will probably also give a reason for not doing it himself. In the literature about reading skills this kind knowledge is often referred to as formal schemata (Carrell 1984).

The notion *pragmatic competence* implies implicit and explicit knowledge of the situational definition of language, i.e. knowledge of rules for linguistic usage and factors defining language performance: knowledge about maxims for communication (Grice 1981) or maxims

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for politeness (Leech 1983), knowledge of speech acts and knowledge of parameters of situations (formal/informal). Pragmatic knowledge is about the appropriate choice of language usage, the appropriate choice of speech acts to be used and the appropriate choice of possible linguistic means to express a speech act. Pragmatic knowledge shows in decisions about whether something (e.g. a speech act, a strategy) is more or less appropriate or does not apply at all. Knowledge of the relation to the communicating partners and the socio-cultural definition of how and to what extent this relation can be expressed is required. In writing and speaking pragmatic knowledge plays a role in analyzing the communicative situation, the interaction and the definition of the context. The analysis of the communicative situation strongly governs and controls the communication process. Whether or not a student gets a clear picture of the task in front of him and uses it well while writing, speaking, listening and reading makes a decisive difference in using a language well or less well.

The term *socio-cultural competence* refers to knowledge of the socially constructed world and social interaction. Rules for adequate interaction vary per culture and subculture. Language users experience that the things they say at home cannot always be said elsewhere. They know that colloquial speech is not very appropriate in an official letter. If they speak a dialect they know they are not going to use it in every situation. And in writing they will probably never use it. This kind of knowledge is a necessary condition for pragmatic competence.

*Strategic competence* plays a role in planning a specific problem solving strategy, interpreting language in a communicative context and in planning, executing and monitoring language processing and learning activities. Globally a strategy is a *mental plan of actions, to reach a communicative goal and/or a learning goal*. Stern (1990) called some of the strategies we aimed here communication strategies. But he restricts those strategies exclusively to compensatory strategies: 'i.e., techniques of coping with difficulties in communicating in an imperfectly known second language.' (op. cit. 411). But when we speak of language or communication strategies, we use a broader interpretation.

Featuring in strategic competence is the cognitive strategy 'anticipating'; anticipating the course of the conversation, anticipating what the writer will tell in the rest of the text and anticipating the reader's reaction. The results of this process of interpretation leads to decisions while language processing. The language user realises for example that he does not know the spelling of a particular word and he therefore chooses another. Or the language user cannot recollect a certain word and decides to think of a description. The language user has the use of a great number of strategies to compensate for things that he does not know or to avoid problems in order to temporarily smooth over any deficiency in the afore mentioned competences.

Strategic competence plays a role in directing processes of writing, speaking, reading and listening. Language users will read more *top down* or *bottom up* depending on the type of text, the context of the text and the knowledge of the topic of the text. In a top down process the reader already has expectations about the content of the text and while reading he will check these expectations. In a bottom up process the perception of a text (e.g. a contract) will take place online: gradually a reader builds up a representation of the text. According to the circumstances the reader must decide how to read a text (which reading strategy is required). This reading process can be adapted or changed while reading a text. During the reading process the reader continuously has to evaluate his comprehension of the text in such a way that he will re-read the text if this is essential for text comprehension.

Language users can become aware of the kind of decisions that have

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to be made during the reading process. This means that language users can orchestrate all relevant cognitive knowledge in order to execute a language processing or language learning task fluently. In doing so readers (c.q. writers) must realize that it is sometimes impossible to solve a task without help (e.g. they may have to consult a dictionary or an encyclopedia to fully understand the task). Knowledge of the use of substrategies for problem solving activities in relation to text comprehension is also part of someone's strategic knowledge.

Cohen (1991) discusses some learning and communication strategies for input managing, speaking, vocabulary learning, reading and writing. His analysis points out that *consciousness raising* is perhaps the crucial factor (Cohen 1991, 118). This conscious raising activity, done by the learner herself and/or stimulated by the teacher and the method, should be on differences more than on similarities: "Since there may not be a single best way to learn given language material, awareness on the part of learners as to what does and does not work for them may be the most important thing (Cohen 1991, 118).

Explicit reference to learning strategies exploited during first language learning should be part of the second language teaching, particularly to learners with less proficiency in the second language, who seem to forget the successful strategies they employ in their first language when they are faced with second language tasks (Cohen 1991, 109; Haastrup 1991, 131). In second language teaching, strategic knowledge should be developed by encouraging learner's creativity and problem-solving skills (Haastrup 1991, 121). Haastrup demonstrated in her research that it is characteristic of low-proficiency learners that they make either too little or too much use of context while inferencing during reading (Haastrup 1991, 124). She found a positive correlation between lexical inferencing success (ability to guess the unknown word) and L1 reading comprehension. "This correlation is much stronger for the high proficiency than for the low-proficiency learners" (Haastrup 1991, 130). She hypothesizes that good readers use for lexical inferencing a parallel process to reading, namely a interactive top-level ruled procedures, while poor readers and inferencers use bottom-up procedures.



To our opinion it is crucial to make the distinction between *language processing strategies* on the one hand and *language learning strategies* on the other hand (Selinker 1972, Faerch & Kasper 1983 a, b). We will demonstrate the difference in the domain of written composition (Rijlaarsdam 1993). The demonstration should clarify the difference between two possible questions: how do I write a letter versus how do I *learn* to write a letter. The question is: how did the good writers come to be so good? Not through formal education, because there the emphasis in writing is still too much on teaching and not enough on learning. Very little writing instruction is given in schools today, and very little of what is given is good. So how do good writers manage to teach themselves *how to be* good writers?

Writing makes demands on a number of cognitive activities of pupils (Figure 1, lower half). Ordinary daily writing instruction is based mainly on these activities. But, if one treats writing as a goal-oriented cognitive activity, embedded in a regulative apparatus, one will also pay attention in teaching to activating these regulative functions: better writing instruction teaches pupils how to manage the writing process. (Figure 1, upper half.) Pupils must learn to analyse their writing assignments, set rhetorical goals, develop a strategic plan and adjust their plans during the writing process so that the writing matches the plan. Goal-setting, monitoring and evaluating: those are the manager's tasks. In the teaching/learning process teachers must first offer pupils some help with this writing process management and then gradually get them to carry out more and more of this management themselves. From external management (by the teacher) to internal management (by the pupil).

Figure 2: Cognitive and metacognitive activities in writing processes and learning activities

goal setting  
evaluating/checking

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testing/evaluating/revising method

monitoring

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METACOGNITIVE  
ACTIVITIES

---

COGNITIVE  
ACTIVITIES

---

generating

structuring

formulating

coding

editing

However, it is a striking fact that these regulative activities are very similar to the activities that educationalists distinguish in their research into educational psychology: good learners manage their learning by task analysis, goal-setting, monitoring, seeking feedback and judgement and evaluation. De Jong (1992) has concluded that differences in learning results are connected with differences in the use of regulative activities. Regulative activities like process monitoring, directing and testing appear to be particularly important determinants of learning results. In the teaching of the writing process, then, these metacognitive activities must not only be activated and stimulated with regard to the writing process, but also with regard to the process of learning how to write: The best teaching of writing teaches pupils how to manage their learning-to-write process.

Pupils must not only receive instruction in writing, they must also learn how to teach themselves to write: they must learn how to tackle new tasks; they must learn how to learn. It is not just a matter of pupils performing writing assignments, it is also a matter of teaching them how to perform new assignments without help from the teacher. This means that it is not enough for the teacher to teach the pupils how to manage their communicating processes: he must also teach them how to manage their learning to communicate process. This means that the teacher must enable pupils to learn how to *learn autonomously*: pupils have to learn that they themselves, perhaps with help from their peers or the teacher, can take their own learning-to-write process in hand. Autonomous learning has to do with being able to prepare one's own learning, to take the necessary steps to learn, to regulate learning, to provide one's own feedback and judgement and to keep oneself concentrated and motivated (Biemans & Simons 1992, 322). The more the learning functions are fulfilled by the learner, the more self-regulated learning is (Simons 1991).

So at language processing strategies the aim is using language in a specific context, at language learning strategies the aim is to learn a language. Examples of learning strategies are: observing participants in discourse with the explicit aim to learn from other people's behaviour, visualizing meaning of words in order to memorize, and critically

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evaluating the effectiveness of applied language strategies (learning by reflection).

Stern (1975) identified ten language learning strategies: planning strategy (a personal learning style or positive learning strategy); active learning (an active approach to the learning task); empathic strategy (a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language and its speakers); formal strategy (technical know-how of how to tackle a language); experimental strategy (a methodical but flexible approach, developing the new language into an ordered system and constantly revising it); semantic strategy (constant searching for meaning); practice strategy (willingness to practise); communication strategy (willingness to use language in real communication); monitoring strategy (self-monitoring and critical sensitivity to language use); internalization strategy (developing second language more and more as a separate reference system and learning to think in it. In his overall review, Stern (1990: 411) comprises these strategies into four classes:

1. Active planning strategy. The language learner selects goals and subgoals, recognizes stages and developmental sequences, actively participates in the learning process.
2. 'Academic' (explicit) learning strategy. Good language learners face up the language as a formal system with rules and regular relationships between forms and meanings. They pay attention to these features and, either independently or in comparison with the first language, develop the second language as a consciously perceived system which they constantly revise until the learning process is completed. They analyse the language and develop the necessary techniques of practice and memorization. They monitor their own performance and revise it in order to progress towards an improved second language command. They learn to exclude the first language more and more until they acquire internal standards of grammaticality and appropriateness. They are capable of treating the language as knowledge and as a skill to be acquired.
3. Social learning strategy. Good learners seek communicative contact with target language users and the target language community

either in person or vicariously through writings, media, role playing, or immersion. Good learners will tend to develop and use 'communication strategies', i.e. techniques of coping with difficulties in communicating in an imperfectly known second language.

4. Affective strategy. Good learners cope effectively with the emotional and motivational problems of language learning. They show persistence and they cultivate positive attitudes towards the self as a language learner, towards language and language learning in general, towards the target language and its society and culture.

The strategies as mentioned by Stern are part of the strategic competence of our model; they can be classified as language learning strategies. Some of them are cognitive strategies (most specimen of the academic learning strategy), while others are metacognitive strategies (active planning strategy).

The idea is that teaching language processing and language learning strategies may considerably improve the effectiveness of language education. Simply executing a specific language task (following the credo practice makes perfect), without paying attention to the cognitive process (language strategy), may result in a proper execution of the language task by pupils, but may also lead to new problems when pupils must execute a similar task within a diverging context. In this case no transfer will be obtained: acquired behaviour is not applied in new contexts.

Acquiring learning strategies is especially useful for pupils in order to learn efficiently. This means that pupils must be aware of *learning goals* and possible learning strategies to reach these goals. When the general learning goal is how to write an essay, the pupil may apply a strategy such as looking into good essays before writing their own (learning through models/examples). Application of this learning strategy may adjust or improve language strategies aimed at writing.

Strategic knowledge can be acquired via consciousness raising (see Haastrup 1991 and Cohen 1991) and/or direct instruction. At the end

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consciousness raising should be internalized. It is the task of the teacher to create as much as possible opportunities in which *metacognitive experience* (see below) has a chance. This experience should be of an inductive type of learning by observing communication processes and learning processes and abstracting, generalizing, hypothesizing and experimenting strategies. A possible teaching strategy of direct instruction of strategies is modelling by the teacher or peers. Haastrop (1991) used for instance protocols of good inferencers to classes to demonstrate strategies of good interactive inferencing.

The notion *metacognition* in the model refers to knowledge about one's linguistic, pragmatic, textual, socio-cultural and strategic knowledge and the knowledge about one's own functioning as communicator and language learner. So metacognitive knowledge includes for instance knowledge about the capacity of one's linguistic knowledge (for instance the knowledge about difficulties that one has with the conjugation of some verbs, which can lead to strategies as rehearsal, monitoring while communicating or avoiding). But metacognitive knowledge includes knowledge about the strategic knowledge and the way the learner uses this knowledge too: from experience the learner should know for instance that monitoring for linguistic behaviour is more difficult than avoiding particular verbs.

Language users and language learners differ in respect of the domain of meta-communicative and meta-cognitive knowledge. They differ also, as a result of this difference in respect to the increase of meta-cognitive and meta-communicative knowledge. Explicit education or experience can make a learner aware of metacognition. Fundamentally metacognitive knowledge results from *meta-cognitive experience* (Flavell 1976, 1978, 1981, Garner 1987, Elshout 1992), that is the awareness of the language user that he or another person find himself in a particular cognitive condition. The attention can be directed towards the cognitive task itself (for example rehearsing) but also towards characteristics of the person, the task and the strategy which influenced the mental state in which the subject got into. The existence of metacognitive knowledge points to the existence of

moments in which the learner becomes aware of his cognitive functioning and of (some of) the variables which he considered to be important for this functioning.

The learner can elaborate this metacognitive knowledge into a *metacognitive strategy*, which can be used intentionally. Someone who became aware that rehearsing a word list under particular conditions resulted in high school scores, shall try to manipulate the conditions into the direction of the succes experience. Stimulating metacognitive awareness or conscious raising (Cohen 1991) is a key feature in good (first and second) language teaching practice.

Finally it must be emphasized that 'knowing why' is an essential feature of metacognition. A learner must not only have the 'feeling' that a particular sentence is not grammatical but he should also be able to explain why. The simple observation that a certain expression is not suitable in a certain discourse without knowing why is not sufficient.

#### *Working memory*

In the model the working memory includes four components: problem analysis, memory search, strategy inference, strategy execution, monitor and internal output.

*Problem analysis* aims at defining the problem through detection, diagnosis and representation. The problem can be stated explicitly in the task or has to be inferred by the language user himself. It is not just an cognitive act, but affective strategies are part of the quality of representation or problem analysis: the language user must be sensitive to the problem(s) set by the task, and must be flexible and persistent. The result of the problem analysis is a definition or representation of the problem, in which the features of the task and the task situation have been considered. It must be stressed that the problem representation is changing during the task execution: during the task execution, the task situation is changing and the problem representation should include new information. Part of the process is generating criteria which the problem solving product should meet (goalsetting). These criteria or goals are temporally stored, via the *monitor*, in the

internal or mental output.

Note for instance the reading process. While reading a text a language user cannot identify a specific word. Detection of the problem takes place. The next step is to diagnose the problem by evaluating the importance of the meaning of this particular word. This evaluation takes into account (1) the reading task (scanning the text to estimate the word's importance for comprehension of the text) and (2) the task conditions (e.g. the time set for the task) and (3) learning conditions (e.g. is the word important enough to include in the mental vocabulary?). These three conditions have to be taken into account. Therefore even if the reading process would not be abbreviated by not knowing the word, the reader may decide to look up the word's meaning because he finds knowing words important in learning a language.

The *memory search* aims at generating the relevant cognitive conditions for problem solving. These cognitive conditions are added to the conditions set by the process of problem analysis. Cognitive conditions are characteristics of the available cognitive knowledge such as linguistic knowledge of morfeme analysis in case of word meaning problems and textual knowledge in case of problems in text construction. After (or during) generation of cognitive conditions the problem solver weighs the conditions. Many options are open for language usage. Problem solving in this domain is a heuristic process, with lots of freedom to choose. In weighing the conditions different language users can make different decisions. Suppose a strategy for word meaning derivation has proved to be rather effective in general. Now the question for the language user is whether in this particular case the specific conditions for this strategy have been fulfilled. The language user reconsiders the language problem from this perspective and concludes whether or not the conditions have been fulfilled. If the conditions have not been fulfilled two options are open: (1) changing the conditions (restate the problem or re-analyse the problem) or (2) inferring or developing another strategy.

When a language user has stated the cognitive conditions for the problem to be solved and he has evaluated whether or not the stated



conditions have been fulfilled, at least three options are open. An available strategy can be applied, an already existing strategy can be modified or a 'new' strategy can be developed. This process is referred to as *strategy inference*. A strategy is defined as a plan for goal orientated mental actions. If the match between the strategy and cognitive condition is perfect, then modification of the strategy is not necessary (default option). Otherwise a problem solving strategy must be modified or assembled. This process of modification and assembling must be characterised as interactive: when the match between the strategy and the cognitive conditions is not optimal an accommodation of the cognitive conditions and/or the strategy under construction is possible. For example: a language user reads an unknown word and knowledge of the word meaning is essential for his comprehension of the text. Then the strategy of morphological inference can be executed if the word meaning can be derived morphologically and the language user has the morphological knowledge at his disposal (default option). If a language user has a limited knowledge of morphology, he then has to decide to modify his strategy or to switch over to another. Strategy modification can exist of combining the morphological inference strategy with an guessing strategy. This guessing strategy can suppress the morphological strategy when the conditions that are necessary for executing this strategy are not fulfilled. If it is impossible to execute the morphological strategy under the conditions which were set a language user may also decide to re-analyze the conditions. Such a re-analysis, for instance, can take place by executing a (new) substrategy aimed at optimizing the cognitive conditions for fulfilling the execution of the morphological strategy (e.g. searching whether or not certain characteristics of the word meaning which are important for executing the morphological strategy can be derived from the textual context).

The interactive process of problem analysis, memory search and strategy inference should lead to *strategy execution* in order to solve the problem. If the task involves deriving the meaning of a word the (internal) output is the word's meaning, which can be stored in the long term memory (linguistic knowledge). If the task involves reading

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a text the applied strategy should lead to a full understanding of the contents (also internal output). If the task involves writing a text the application of a writing strategy should lead to a written text (external output). But under certain conditions there is another type of internal output. The interactive process of strategy inference (generating, modifying, checking the effectiveness) results sometimes in a new strategy which can be stored in the long term memory (in the domain of strategy knowledge). Another result can be a modified strategy, a more detailed strategy, (specification), a strategy which is more robust (generalization) and/or more fluent (proceduralization).

The problem solving part of the model is a specification of the language processing model Bialystok sketched out (Bialystok 1991). She distinguished two interacting subskills/skill components: analysis of linguistic knowledge and control of linguistic processing. In our model, one type of output of the problem solving part of the model can be linguistic knowledge in general sense: structural principles of language and language use. Bialystok mentions three factors which promote the learner's analysis of a representational system: self reflection, literacy instruction and direct instruction. In our view, a very important learning strategy should be what Bialystok called self reflection: induction, generalization, specification of structural principles. The second subskill Bialystok mentioned, control of linguistic processing, refers to the ability of control attention to relevant and appropriate information and to integrate those forms in real time (Bialystok 1991, 71). The behavioural outcome is fluency: the result of skilled control procedures for selecting and integrating information in response to problems (op. cit. 72). We agree with Bialystok that language processing is a form of problem solving. And when selecting and integrating functions well in real time, then fluency is the result. In our model, Control of linguistic processing is one of the functions of the problem solving part. The difference is that the model we propose describes on a more detailed level the subprocesses and the relation and interaction between subprocesses and knowledge bases.

The model lacks a fluency component, which is very uncommon in models of foreign language processing and learning. To our opinion fluency is a feature of the knowledge itself. The status of the knowledge in the long term memory classes varies from declarative to procedural (Anderson 1983). Knowledge of a more procedural character leads to a more fluent process of language use or language learning. *Fluency* here refers to the skill of expressing one thoughts easily both oral or verbal as well to the skill of easily storing text phrases in the memory. Fluency also refers to the way mental processes elapse. It will therefore be clear that the capacity of the short and the long term memory plays an important role during the problem solving process. While reading the text a message must be (temporarily) stored and when necessary reverted to. Simultaneously a language user must retain interpretations or possible reactions to the message. During this process new information must be stored and the former text representation reconsidered. This process of storing information is more difficult in case of oral then of written discourse: in oral discourse it is impossible to return/ to the text.

### 3 LANGUAGE LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM

In this section we expound to what extent second language learning in the classroom can benefit from mother tongue teaching. Our ideas are based upon two theoretical frameworks: the contents of language education can be allocated in different competences as presented in the model of language learning (cf. Canale & Swain 1980) and the didactics are based on a cumulative learning process (cf. Bloom et al. 1956, Hammerly 1991) focused on evolving strategic knowledge and metacognition (cf. Baker & Brown 1984, Paris & Oka 1986).

For a good understanding first of all a distinction has to be made between three *different learning processes*: a) the process of learning a second language in the classroom (second language learning), b) the process of learning a second language in a natural setting (second language acquisition) and c) the process of learning a native language (native language acquisition). The process of learning a native language differs notable from the process of learning a second language. When learning (acquiring) a native language the learner does not already have knowledge of another language and the language to be obtained is local (dominant in surrounding society). In case of learning a second language in a natural setting a learner has already knowledge of a (native) language and the target (second) language to be learned is local. The process of learning a second language in the classroom implies also knowledge of another language, but lacks at the same time a natural surrounding: the second language to obtain is *remote* (not widely spoken locally). Thus, the absence of a natural language surrounding means that the learning takes place in a *artifici-*

*al sociolinguistic environment* which has large consequences for the practice of second language education.

The artificial context of second language learning in the classroom excludes to our opinion application of immersion programs (cf. Krashen 1984, Krashen & Terrell 1983) which employ the principle of acquiring a second language 'natural' in the classroom by means of unconscious and untutored learning (learning by using). Immersion programs are aimed at holistic acquisition: through classroom interaction learners develop a better control of the second language to be learned. By simply communicating linguistic competence will emerge as in case of natural language acquisition (details will fall into place by themselves).

In recent publications (cf. Adiv 1980, Hammerly 1991, Spilka 1976) the deficit of immersion programs for learning a second language in the classroom is being discussed. Although immersion can improve *fluency* it does not result in basic linguistic *accuracy*: students are being encouraged to communicate without any regards to grammar. Immersion primarily serves to improve vocabulary and therefore increases fluency, but most linguistic errors do not disappear and sometimes linguistic deterioration can be the case. Thus an error-laden classroom pidgin may become established such as 'Frenglish', a structural mixture of French and English (cf. Hammerly 1991). When using this classroom pidgin for many years during education it becomes extremely difficult to upgrade such a pidgin to a correct usage of the language at issue (e.g. upgrading Frenglish to correct French). Exclusively emphasizing communication in an early stage of a language program results in a suffering of linguistic accuracy and leads to linguistic competence needed at most for the bare transmission of messages.

Language competence defined on basis of the model for language learning implies knowledge about and ability to use a language in terms of the distinguished components (linguistic, textual, pragmatic, socio-cultural and strategic competence). Language performance must be defined as the behavior itself of those competences. Language

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learning in the classroom therefore implies submittence of subject matter pertained to the development of linguistic, textual, pragmatic, socio-cultural and pragmatic competence.

We assume that above all the process of learning a second language can foster from educational attention in mother tongue education to put forth strategic competence and metacognition which are significant factors in guiding the *cognitive process* of (mother tongue and second) language learning. Subject matter must be focused in particular on the acquisition of both language and learning strategies and must furthermore give attention to the interactive monitoring process of problem analysis, modifying conditions and inferencing problem solving strategies available or new. In doing so explicit notice of learning goals (students tend to learn primarily what is emphasized and do not learn well what is not emphasized) and directed feedback (not only on the product but also on the process) are important issues. Learning functions as preparing learning, taking learning steps, regulating learning, providing feedback and judgement and maintaining concentration and motivation should be activated by the teacher.

Activation of a particular learning function pertains to forcing the learner to undertake corresponding activities in a specified way. Although the learner has to perform the learning functions, the degree of external control is still relatively high. The learning functions are initiated and structured by the external source through the presentation or assignments (Biemans & Simons 1992, p. 322). Autonomous learning pertains to being able to prepare one's own learning, to take the necessary steps to learn, to regulate learning, to provide one's own feedback and judgement and to keep one self concentrated and motivated. The more the learning functions are fulfilled by the learner, the more self-regulated learning is (Simons 1991).

From the start of a second language course it is important to give intensive attention to the linguistic competence. Results of former research give enough indication that a certain *threshold of linguistic competence* is a prerequisite for sufficient second language performance (cf. Alderson 1984, Cumming et al. 1989, Bossers 1991, Hacquebord 1989). Good readers in the mother tongue for example will

(can) only read well once they have passed a threshold of linguistic competence in the foreign language (which of course does not mean that poor mother tongue readers will become good foreign language readers after passing such a threshold). There is no such thing as second language proficiency without linguistic control. Incorrect usage of language may not be effective in daily life communication, because linguistic errors can draw away the attention of listeners.

An important factor in the process of learning a remote second language is what a learner already knows about language. Therefore the native language can nor must not be denied in second language education. Previous knowledge of the native language can *facilitate* learning a second language (positive transfer or facilitation), but it can also *interfere* (negative transfer or interference). Interference of the native language during second language learning may lead to inappropriate behaviour (intrusive interference) or to not learning the new (inhibitive interference).

The strong cross-linguistic influence between first and second language learning has been demonstrated in a recent study conducted in Finland which is a unicultural bilingual country (Ringbom 1987). An analysis of errors in English (as a remote second language) made by students speaking Finnish (quite unrelated to English) and students speaking Swedish (a linguistic relative of English) showed that systematic differences in English performance must be attributed to the different native languages. Finnish speaking Finns find it far more difficult to learn English than Swedish speaking Finns.

The study of Ringbom affirms the hypothesis that the effect of deeply engrained knowledge of the native language on learning a second language can not be neglected. When the second language is close to the native language it can be learned much faster and easier than a typologically distant language (see also Odlin 1989). For example, second language learners will find much difficulty in learning structures which are absent in their native language: Dutch students learning German will meet problems when using the nominative, genitive, dative and accusative case because their native language offers no equivalents. Therefore it is important to give notion to the

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role of the native language in the process of learning a second language in the classroom. This means that in textbooks for second language learning facilitation of the learning process by cross linguistic transfer can be obtained by stressing both *similarities* and *differences* between mother tongue and second language. By doing so positive transfer will occur and negative transfer will be suppressed.

Stressing linguistic competence (e.g. accuracy) does not mean that what is learned must not be used for communication. On the contrary, from the beginning of the course language tasks must be defined within a *functional context* in which the main goal is to *communicate*. Within such a context attention must be given to the linguistic, textual, pragmatic and socio-cultural competence. Main aim of a second language course remains to produce graduates who perform the second language accurately (linguistic and textual competence) with reasonable fluency and with enough knowledge of how the language must be used (pragmatic competence) in a social and cultural appropriate way (socio-cultural competence).

A specific problem at learning a second language in the classroom is the impossibility to interact with native speakers. Students can interact with only one fluent second language speaker, the teacher, who is in general not a native. Further interaction takes place with classroom peers who control the second language as poorly as the student himself. Although peer interaction (which is in most cases loosely directed) can be most efficient and effective for enhancing fluency it hardly enhances accuracy in the *early* stages of the course because there is hardly any opportunity for the teacher to correct errors immediately (feedback on linguistic behaviour). To our opinion within textbooks for second language learning language tasks focused on communication (aimed at producing real messages) must be avoided when corrective feedback is impossible. Only when a certain *threshold of linguistic competence* is being realized untutored language tasks with classroom peers can be submitted. The communicative tasks set to the pupils should be carefully constructed: the students must control the language elements which are meant to be used in the tasks and some



measures should be included for adequate feedback.

The impossibility for interaction with native speakers does not imply that the oral skills are inferior to the written. On the contrary, in second language education primacy must be given to oral skills (speaking and listening) while these can only be developed and practiced inside the classroom. Listening plays an important role in the language acquisition process and a good listening ability will make foreign language learning easier. Although modalities as reading and writing are subordinate to oral skills, this of course does not mean that no attention at all must be given to these modalities in the classroom. Textbooks must also give much attention to the acquisition of oral skills. Or to say it differently, in textbooks there must be at least a balance between the number of reading/writing exercises and the number of speaking/listening exercises (learning tasks as well as language tasks). An overflow of reading and writing exercises in textbooks indicates that the importance of oral skills during the process of learning a second language is being denied.

In our view a functional approach of language teaching must be aimed at *cumulative learning* (cf. Bloom et al. 1956). A language curriculum based upon cumulative learning includes two elementary maxims: a) learning a language is a complex cognitive process which proceeds bottom-up gradually developing language performance and b) lower level language skills must be mastered before higher level skills are taught (cf. Resnick 1976, Singley & Anderson 1989). For the educational practice this means that both learning and language tasks must be defined and ordered in such a way that they only appeal to preceding subject matter which is more or less controlled by students. To communicate before linguistic control of specific rules is being established results in an amount of errors that can not be effectively corrected by the teacher and this in turn brings up the danger that errors become habitual and finally terminal (cf. Hammerly 1991). Cumulative learning is aimed at both *transfer of learning* and *transfer of training* (Cormier & Hagan 1987). Transfer of learning occurs during the learning process when prior knowledge or skills facilitate

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the acquisition of new knowledge or skills (cumulative learning). A special case of transfer of learning is the application of learning strategies, developed in the formal education of the classroom, in other situations. Pupils should be able to educate themselves without teachers, which implies further practice in the four categories of learning strategies (Stern, 1991: 411): Active planning strategy, 'Academic' (explicit) learning strategy, Social learning strategy and Affective strategy. This means that linguistic competency should be the educational goal and learning matter, and that the way the language is taught to the learners should activate and stimulate the learning functions in the learner. This implies the stimulation of problem solving processes which we included in the language learning model and the achievement of metacognitive experience.

Transfer of training directs to the application of knowledge and skills in communicative situations (language tasks) diverging from the original learning situation. In the context of transfer of training the distinction between *near* and *far transfer* (cf. Salomon & Globerson 1987) seems significant too. Near transfer means that transfer takes place between tasks which are highly similar qua cognitive complexity, while far transfer refers to transfer between tasks of a different cognitive complexity. Execution for example of a series of learning tasks (plain task repetition) each focussed on accurate usage of particles can result in a proper execution of the learning tasks submitted (near transfer), but this does not necessarily guarantee that students will use particles accurately in a more complex language task such as writing an essay (far transfer). It is clear that far transfer is the final aim of language education: students must be able to apply acquired skills and knowledge to new contexts. This means that within a language course far transfer must be stimulated by explicit teaching in which students are directed in using their skills in different task settings.

Explicit teaching of strategies (strategic competence) and metacognition can improve far transfer of training (cf. Baker & Brown 1984, Paris & Oka 1986, Paris et al. 1983). When students have to solve a

particular language problem they can considerably gain profit from available problem solving strategies. Reading for instance is a fairly complex cognitive process which must be controlled and evaluated in between. To do this in a proper way a reader must not only have knowledge about strategies (knowing what), but he must also be able to use his strategic knowledge (knowing how) when this is demanded by the context of the task (knowing when). In relation to these characteristics we define a strategy as a plan for mental action to achieve a certain goal (cf. Garner 1988). Such a definition assumes that the use of strategies is conscious and goal-directed supervised by metacognition. It must be stressed that there is no one-to-one relation between setting a certain language goal (task) and utilizing a specific strategy: a same strategy can be used to solve different goals and a same goal can be achieved by different strategies.

The benefits of, as we call it, strategic education have been object of some studies mostly in the field of reading comprehension (Baker & Brown 1984, Brown & Day 1983, Garner 1987, Fisher & Mandl 1984). Didactical research by Scott Paris et al. (1984) to the reading strategies as employed in his primary school method "Reading & Thinking Strategies" (Scott Paris, 1987) showed prove that reading strategies can be easily trained and can improve the understanding of reading tasks significant.

Because most students do not discover (or develop) effective problem solving language strategies by their own, explicit teaching is necessarily. This means that textbooks for language education must pay attention to: a) attaining knowledge about strategies (declarative strategic knowledge: knowing what), b) acquiring knowledge about strategy use (metacognition: knowing when) and c) using strategies (knowing how) in different task settings with regards to monitoring the task decomposition (i.e. problem analysis, setting modifying conditions, strategy inference, output evaluation). In doing so it is most important to encourage students in using strategies by giving them directed feedback. Exposition of non-motivated students to a language course what so ever will not significantly improve the out-

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put.

## **4 ANALYSIS OF TEXTBOOKS**

This study focuses on the teaching of first and foreign languages to pupils aged eleven to fifteen. This means that the analysis of textbooks is restricted to books for the last two grades of primary education (age 11-12) and the next three grades of secondary education (age 13-15). In primary school the teaching of English is compulsory in the last two grades only. In secondary education at least one foreign language is compulsory. They can choose among English, French and German; sometimes Spanish or Russian is available. Student almostt always choose English.

In the Netherlands secondary education caters education for pupils aged twelve to eighteen. The primary aim of the Secondary Education Act is to facilitate the moving on of pupils to the various streams in secondary and higher education. First of all each pupil spends one year in a transition class before being transferred to one of the four main streams in secondary education: junior secondary vocational education, junior general secondary education, senior general secondary education and pre-university education.

Junior secondary vocational education offers a four year course. After attending this stream pupils can move to senior vocational education or leave the educational system. Junior general education also lasts four years and is chiefly meant to prepare pupils for senior secondary vocational education, but in practice many pupils first move on to the last two grades of senior general secondary education before going on to higher vocational education. Senior general secondary education, which lasts five years, is a basis for higher vocational education or for the fifth grade of pre-university education, which has

six grades and prepares pupils for university.

*Selection of textbooks*

In Dutch primary and secondary education textbooks play an important role in the mother-tongue and foreign language teaching (cf. Oostdam & Emmelot 1990; Oostdam 1991). Most teachers use at least one textbook for language education and most of the time in class is spent on working with textbooks. Therefore, some widely used textbooks for the last two grades of primary education and the next three grades of secondary education have been selected for an analysis which aims at discovering to what degree transfer can be facilitated between first and second language learning.

Teachers can choose among a great number of textbooks available to teach first and foreign language skills. A complete package of textbooks and accompanying teaching materials (posters, tapes, tests) which are appropriate for use in several consecutive grades will be referred to as teaching methods. On basis of the criterium of actual use a selection has been made per schooltype and per subject of some widely used textbooks for Dutch, English and French. English as a foreign language was chosen because of the possibility to compare textbooks for primary and secondary education. Therefore a comparison is possible for L1 as well as L2 within and between primary and secondary education. French as a foreign language was chosen instead of German in order to compare languages within language families (such as Dutch and English) and between language families (such as Dutch and French).

Twelve textbooks have been analysed (see note 1): two MT and two FL (English) textbooks for primary school and three MT and five FL textbooks for secondary school (three English and two French).

*Scoring-features*

In every textbook a random sample of language exercises has been selected. Revision exercises, tests and differentiation exercises were

excluded from selection. For each grade four units in each textbook were analysed, namely the first and last two units. The amount of exercises varied per textbook. In general at least seventy-five exercises per textbook were scored.

When rating the language exercises we followed the classification and numbering of exercises employed in the textbooks: an exercise separately presented in a textbook, has been rated as such. Parts which can be clearly distinguished within the framework of separately presented exercises in textbooks have been interpreted as separate exercises as much as possible. An exception has been made for a specific text comprehension task (text followed by questions): although every question can be interpreted as a separate exercise, the decision has been made that it still concerns only one exercise for text comprehension.

Each exercise has been scored at the presence or absence of relevant features as distinguished within the model of language learning:

- a. which is the mode of communication? (reading, writing, speaking, listening);
- b. which domain of learning does the exercise appeal to? (linguistic, pragmatic, textual, socio-cultural),
- c. is the exercise focussed on a language processing or language learning strategy, on both or neither of the two?;
- d. does the exercise contain an explicit statement or learning goal indicating the context for transfer of knowledge or skill?;
- e. is the exercise focussed on the stimulation of monitoring or regulative activities?;
- f. on which type of activities is the exercise aimed (typology constructed to cover a large amount of cognitive actions of learners).

An analysis of these categories offers possibilities to check to what extent strategy orientated language education has been realized and to what extent FL education has been geared to MT education.

Scoring was done by two experienced researchers with a extended scoring guide. A random selection of exercises (n=81) obtained from

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all textbooks have been scored by both researchers in order to establish a measure of scoring-reliability. The percentage of agreement occurred to be satisfactory: mode of communication (88%), domain of learning (94%), strategy (98%), context for transfer (94%), monitoring or regulative activities (98%) and type of activities (67%).

### *Mode of communication*

Distinguished modes of communication are reading, writing, speaking and listening. Only if the exercise was explicitly aimed at the development of one of those skills, the exercise was rated as such. If the exercise lacked an explicit statement about the mode of communication rating on this feature did not occur. Please note that some exercises ask for writing although they are not focussed on development of writing skills. In those cases writing is not the mode of communication: learning goal is not writing, but writing is just an instrument in the learning process.

### *Domain of learning*

The distinguished knowledge domains within the model of language learning (chapter two) are linguistic, textual and pragma-linguistic knowledge. All exercises which make an appeal to linguistic knowledge on sentence level or below were scored as linguistic. Exercises which invoke linguistic knowledge above sentence level were scored as textual (text production and text comprehension). If the situational context is involved in task execution, then scoring on the feature pragma-linguistic took place.

### *Language processing or language learning strategy*

The distinction between language processing and language learning strategies within the strategic competence offers possibilities to discriminate between exercises directed on learning strategies for effective communication and exercises directed on the acquisition of strategies for effective learning. A language processing strategy can be pertained to the linguistic, textual or pragma-linguistic domain.



Scoring on this feature took place if the learning context of an exercise is directed to teaching students some kind of strategy (procedure or heuristic) for solving language processing or language learning problems. The scoring was rather freely. Each exercise containing some explicit remarks on how to solve a problem have been scored on this feature.

*Learning goal*

If the function and object of the exercise is explicitly pointed out to students than scoring on the feature context for transfer is scored. Again scoring has been rather freely. If within an exercise some statement is being given about the function of the exercise or the context of learning rating took place.

*Metacognitive control*

If within an exercise guidance is being given to the process of task execution by means of explicit criteria for evaluating applied strategies and/or task performance than the feature metacognitive control was scored.

*Type of activities*

For the analysis of a covering classification of exercise types has been composed (cf. Neuner et al. 1981, Van der Voort & Mol 1989). A distinction has been made in three main exercise types each directed on a different type of activity: exercises regarding a) receptive as well as productive language skills, b) receptive language skills and c) productive language skills.

In respect of both receptive (reading and listening) and productive (writing and speaking) language skills primary types of exercises are distinguished in reference to:

- *vocabulary*: object in view is to impart and increase students' vocabulary (e.g. learning word-lists by heart);
- *dictionary usage*: object in view is to become familiar with entries, abbreviations, symbols, references, et cetera (e.g. selecting a given

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- word meaning from the entry fitting a specific context);
- *word paraphrase*: object in view is paraphrasing unknown words in the second language through well-known words);
  - *reproduction*: object in view is to become acquainted with orthography and grammatical rules by means of reproducing given words, verb forms, prepositions, pronouns and such like in sentences, text phrases or texts (e.g. exercises with blanks for characters or syllables must be filled in, sentences are to be constructed by means of a substitution table, a text must be copied, a dictation is given);
  - *recombination*: object in view is an active application of grammatical rules and vocabulary in divergent situations (e.g. substituting words or phrases, extending sentences, changing the adjunct of time, translating sentences, et cetera);
  - *language functions*: object in view is to become acquainted with words or phrases which must be used in a particular context (e.g. placing an order in a restaurant, making reservations in a hotel, starting a phone call, making excuses, et cetera);
  - *text structure*: object in view is to achieve a broader understanding of the text structure i.c. the logical line of thought in the text (e.g. analysing the usage of connectives on sentence or text level, the usage of text schemes, reordering single paragraphs into a well formed text);
  - *topic anticipation*: object in view is a mobilization of students' knowledge towards a topic (e.g. by means of a classroom conversation or a visual demonstration).

For the receptive language skills (reading and listening) exercises have been distinguished in reference to:

- *language perception*: object in view is the recognition of characters, words and word phrases (e.g. by means of exercises for word recognition, syllable identification, intonation, et cetera);
- *word meaning derivation*: object in view is a derivation of the meaning of singular words or word phrases from the context by

means of knowledge about the text topic, knowledge about grammatical rules and structures, knowledge about morphological rules, et cetera (e.g. in a given text omitted words must be derived from the context);

- *content prediction*: object in view is a prediction of the contents of a text i.c. a fragment which is unknown (e.g. in relation to a topic students are questioned about their expectations of the text contents);
- *global perception*: object in view is a rough overview of a (mostly) written text (e.g. submitted questions must be answered after perception of a text in general, such as questions for finding names, dates and places in the text);
- *text comprehension*: object in view is a full understanding of written or oral text (e.g. after the perception of a text true/false, multiple choice or open questions must be answered, headlines must be given for paragraphs, a summary must be given of the contents, et cetera);
- *critical reflection*: object in view is a critical reflection on written or oral text (e.g. students are being asked to their point of view, an analysis is requested whether the argumentation or statements the author brings forward are relevant or not).

For the produktive language skills (writing and speaking) exercises have been distinguished in reference to:

- *pronunciation*: object in view is to become familiar with the pronunciation of singular words or word phrases (e.g. utterances heard on tape must be repeated, dialogues with stipulated roles must be performed);
- *guided writing*: object in view is writing a text or phrase with a logical line of thought on basis of well-structured exercises (e.g. [re]writing i.c. completing a text with reference to key words, given information, pictures, cartoons);
- *free writing*: object of view is writing a text or phrase with a logical line of thought for which no restrictions are imposed on

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contents and presentation (e.g. writing an essay on occasion of a title, answering an advertisement);

- *reconstruction*: object in view is a reconstruction in one's own words of either a written or spoken text or a depiction (e.g. retelling a story by means of key words)
- *communication*: object in view is participating in communicative situations corresponding as much as possible with reality (e.g. information-gap exercises in which participants not sharing the same information have to raise this information-gap, role-plays in which participants have to perform a dialogue on the basis of particular information, a class-dialogue with given roles in both mother tongue and/or foreign language, et cetera).

## 5 RESULTS

In this section we present the results of the textbook analysis. Goal of this analysis is to discover to which extent interlingual transfer between L1 and L2 curricula can be realized. The description of the classification scheme of text book exercises is given in section 4. This scheme and the analyses reported here were grounded by the model of language learning presented in section 2.

The first point of interest (see table 1 and 2) is the distribution of exercises over the distinguished modalities (reading, writing, listening and speaking) and the domains of knowledge (linguistic, textual, pragmatic and socio-cultural). Globally it is expected that the emphasis on modalities and cognitive domains should be more or less the same in the different curricula and that diversity can be explained by language education philosophy or differences in language proficiency correlated by educational levels (primary versus secondary) or differences in language learning time (L1 versus L2).

Second point of interest concerns the extent of strategic language learning. Primarily we will look to the input: language processing tasks (LPT) and language learning tasks (LLT). We have reclassified different types of exercises as LPT or LLT (See Table 3). Similarities and differences between L1 and L2-curricula in primary and secondary education will be discussed. Aim of this step is to determine the *potential* amount of strategic language learning. Next step is to determine the *real* amount of strategic language learning. Four features of exercises that enables strategic learning are being discussed: language strategies, learning strategies, learning goals and metacognitive control or monitoring. The assumption is that strategic language learning will facilitate interlingual transfer of learning. It is assumed that when

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*Results*

attention is being given to how pupils can solve language and learning problems by means of strategies, they must be able to apply learned problem solving strategies into new situations and they must be able to generate, combine, infer new strategies independent of the language in object.

### *Modes of communication and knowledge domains*

Table 1 reports the distribution of the exercises over the four modes of communication and the four distinguished domains of knowledge. A large percentage (40-60%) of the exercises is not specified. These tasks are not framed into a specific modality of communication.

If the category non-specified is excluded differences between L1 and L2 curricula and differences between primary and secondary school are more clearly: the relative weight of the four modalities differ. In primary as well as in secondary school L1-curricula compared to L2-curricula are characterized by a vast amount of writing and a little amount of listening. Compared to L1-curricula, there is a lot more listening in L2-curricula.

Comparing primary and secondary curricula, an increasing amount of reading is observed. In L1-curricula, reading becomes more and more important in secondary education to the disadvantage of speaking. In L2-curricula, there is also an increase of reading, at the disadvantage of speaking in EFL and listening and writing in FFL.

While the written skills (reading and writing) are superior in L1-education they are less in foreign language education, although reading remains relative important (see table 1). From the oral skills speaking seems to be far more important than listening: only a very small percentage of exercises in L1 is directed at improving student's listening abilities. The underestimation of listening skills, especially in foreign language education, is somewhat queer when taking the vital importance in respect of listening ability in daily life communication and the learning process.

Table 1: Frequencies per schooltype for modality and domain in

textbooks for mother tongue (L1), English as a foreign language (EFL) and French as a foreign language (FFL); percentages and total number of rated exercises.

	primary school		secondary school		
	L1	EFL	L1	EFL	FFL
<i>Modality:</i>					
reading	19.4	6.6	22.5	16.0	14.6
listening	6.8	14.8	3.0	9.3	8.1
writing	16.4	7.2	9.3	3.6	1.9
speaking	15.8	29.6	2.6	11.4	24.0
non specified	41.5	41.8	62.6	59.8	51.5
<i>Modality:</i> (excluded non specified)					
reading	33.2	11.3	60.1	39.7	30.0
listening	11.7	25.4	8.1	23.1	16.7
writing	28.0	12.4	24.7	8.8	3.9
speaking	27.1	50.8	7.0	28.3	49.4
<i>Domain:</i>					
linguistic	32.2	57.2	62.3	65.5	59.6
textual	63.9	40.8	33.9	34.4	38.3
pragmatic	3.6	-	1.8	.1	1.9
socio-cultural	-	1.6	-	-	-
non specified	.3	.3	2.0	-	.3
Number of exercises	366	304	1254	1096	371
Number of textbooks analysed	2	2	3	3	2

## **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Results*

From table 1 it is also clear that most attention in textbooks is restricted to the linguistic and textual domain. It is peculiar that almost no subject matter is being presented in L1 as well as L2 education to the pragmatic and socio-cultural domain.

Table 2 is a specification of the results reported in table 1. Frequencies are given per modality and curricula for the different domains. In all curricula for reading most of the attention is directed into the textual domain. So in most instances students should read whole texts or fragments in order to answer the questions or fulfil the reading task. Only in a few cases it is required to read no more than just one sentence for task execution (linguistic domain).

In all but L1-secondary curricula listening a quarter to a third of the exercises is devoted to the linguistic domain. In secondary L1 education exercises directed at the linguistic domain are rare. More generally, in L1-curricula the emphasis in oral modes, speaking and listening, on the linguistic domain is clearly different to L2-curricula. This is not surprisingly, because one could expect that oral reception and production in mother tongue is more or less linguistically sufficient so more emphasis can be put on developing textual competence.

The same conclusion holds for writing: L2-curricula put more emphasis on the linguistic domain than the L1-curricula. Comparing both L1-curricula, it is notable that in primary education the linguistic domain in writing is less represented than in secondary education. Moreover, in primary education the linguistic domain in writing is almost neglected.



Table 2: Frequencies for different domains of knowledge per modality and curriculum (percentages)

modality/domain	linguistic	textual	pragmatic	rest
<i>L1 primary school:</i>				
reading	-	100.0	-	-
listening	20.0	80.0	-	-
writing	3.3	96.7	-	-
speaking	3.4	96.6	-	-
non-specified	71.7	19.1	8.6	.7
<i>EFL primary school:</i>				
reading	5.0	95.0	-	-
listening	24.4	75.6	-	-
writing	45.5	54.5	-	-
speaking	43.3	56.7	-	-
non-specified	89.0	6.3	-	4.7
<i>L1 secondary school:</i>				
reading	8.2	90.8	.7	.4
listening	2.7	94.7	-	2.6
writing	25.9	74.1	-	-
speaking	6.1	93.9	-	-
non-specified	92.4	2.0	2.7	2.9
<i>EFL secondary school:</i>				
reading	12.0	88.0	-	-
listening	38.2	61.8	-	-
writing	53.8	46.2	-	-
speaking	27.2	72.8	-	-
non-specified	92.1	7.8	.2	-
<i>FFL secondary school:</i>				
reading	11.1	88.9	-	-
listening	26.7	63.3	10.0	-
writing	42.9	57.1	-	-
speaking	50.6	48.3	1.1	-
non-specified	83.2	14.7	1.6	.5

*Strategic language learning*

The results in table 3 (see below) show the potential amount of strategies offered in the textbook. Exercises in word paraphrase for instance offer students the opportunity to acquire the learning strategy of paraphrasing while recombination exercises offer the possibility to learn to recombine given elements. These learning activities can become learning strategies in outschool language learning when learners must learn autonomously. We stress again that activities labelled 'learning tasks' have the *potential* power to become learning strategies: text books can offer them just as activities purely aimed at the acquisition of knowledge and/or language (learning tasks), but can offer them too as activities aimed at the acquisition of procedures or strategies how to learn (learning to learn tasks).

The results in table 3 show that in primary school language education textbooks for both mother tongue and foreign language learning give more or less equal emphasis to exercises focused on learning strategies and language strategies. In secondary education a shift towards learning strategies can be observed: learning activities take about two third of the language curriculum. It seems that the opinions about language teaching in primary and secondary school differ: in primary school both L1 and L2-curricula stress communication more than the acquisition of language elements (compare the categories Communication, Reproduction and Recombination). This is in contradiction with our hypothesis which stated that communication exercises follow after a certain level of language acquisition (language threshold). When a large proportion of communication exercises is given in primary school one would expect an increase of that proportion in secondary school: in cumulative language education language proficiency should *precede* communicative competence. At the same time it is striking that primary L1 and EFL-curricula show the same proportion of communication exercises. It was expected that the proportion of communication exercises in L1 exceeds the proportion in L2, because of the difference in language proficiency and the language threshold in L2.

Remarkable is the difference between the two school levels with regard to L1-curriculum. Many activities show more or less the same

frequencies, but some differences are striking. There is much more recombination and text comprehension in secondary L1-education, while there is much more communication and free writing in primary education. These differences resemble partly the differences between the primary and secondary EFL-curricula: there is much more recombination in secondary school and much more communication in primary school.

In Dutch schools pupils begin to learn English as a foreign language in primary school and French as a foreign language in secondary school. When EFL and FFL curricula are compared to each other one could hypothesize that the primary school EFL curriculum is more or less the same as the secondary FFL curriculum: both curricula confronts students with a new language. In one respect this seems to be true. For the amount of pronunciation exercises the primary EFL and the secondary FFL curriculum look more into each other than both EFL curricula. But in another respect, there seems to be a strong secondary foreign language effect. The secondary EFL en FFL curricula are more alike than the primary EFL and secondary FFL curricula: the amount of recombination exercises in secondary education is in secondary L2-education definitely larger than in primary L2-education. Obviously there seems to be different opinions about teaching methodology in primary and secondary L2-education. In one respect there is a similarity between primary and secondary EFL curricula: the amount of vocabulary exercises is about 15% in primary as well as in secondary education.

**Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.***Results*

Table 3: Potential amount of strategy. Frequencies per schooltype for exercises aimed at cognitive activities in textbooks for mother tongue (L1), English as a foreign language (EFL) and French as a foreign language (FFL)

Types of activities	Primary school		Secondary school		
	L1	EFL	L1	EFL	FFL
<i>Language Learning</i>	37.4	51.3	57.7	70.6	66.2
Vocabulary	7.2	15.5	6.5	14.8	8
Dictionary Usage	2.9	1	3.8	-	-
Word paraphrase	.5	-	.6	2.8	5.1
Reproduction	10.0	11.4	7.6	16.6	10.8
Recombination	12.8	8.0	37.4	28.0	26.6
Language perception	1.2	3.0	-	4.2	3.0
Word meaning derivation	2.5	.5	1.4	1.5	-
Pronunciation	0.3	11.9	.4	2.7	12.7
<i>Language processing</i>	58.8	47.5	36.7	29.4	35.9
Language function	.3	3.7	.3	2.0	1.4
Text structure	5.8	1.0	4.7	.2	-
Topic anticipation	3.6	.5	.8	.1	-
Content prediction	1.3	-	-	-	-
Global perception	1.3	-	.3	.6	.3
Text comprehension	8.5	18.1	16.1	17.3	20.4
Critical reflection	6.9	.5	4.9	1.2	-
Guided writing	2.3	2.9	3.0	1.3	2.7
Free writing	13.0	4.2	4.1	.7	-
Reconstruction	-	1.7	.1	1.6	5.3
Communication	15.8	14.9	2.4	4.4	5.8
Unclassified	4.9	1.8	5.6	.1	1.1
Number of excercises	366	304	1254	1096	371
Number of textbooks	2	2	3	3	2

A last remark on table 3 is about the variation of exercises or activities.

It is clear that in FFL-curricula there is less variation in exercises than in the other curricula. Of all distinguished types of exercises seven (more than 30%) remain unutilized.

In Table 3 we reported the potential amount of language learning strategies. Now it is the question whether these cognitive activities are *indeed* exploited as language learning strategies: do students learn to use recombination, reproduction, pronunciation et cetera as learning strategies or do they just exert those activities to acquire language elements? Is language education aimed at the enlargement of strategic competence? Each exercise has been scored on several relevant features (see table 4):

- . is the exercise focussed on language processing or learning strategies, on both or neither of them?
- . does the exercise contain an explicit statement or goal, indicating the context for transfer of knowledge or skill?
- . is the exercise focussed on the stimulation of monitoring or regulative activities?

Table 4 shows that in L1 education attention is being given to language strategies and metacognitive control. So students are taught in 20-25% of the exercises some procedures to solve language processing problems.

*Language strategies.* In primary school L1-textbooks 97 exercises (26.5%) haven been characterized by language strategy; four types of exercises were most prominent: topic anticipation (11.3%), text structure (11.3%), recombination (18.6%) and free writing (16.5%). In secondary L1-textbooks 248 exercises (19.8%) have been rated as containing language strategies. More than half (52%) of these exercises belong to the category of recombination. So in a few instances, students got a procedure or strategy for topic anticipation, text structure and free writing. The activity of recombination is somewhat different: in case of recombination, object in view is not the act of recombining itself, but

## **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Results*

some linguistic, textual or pragmatic element. If recombining was also learning object of the task (i.e. learning to recombine), than it had been rated as a learning strategy too. Exercises which are both aimed at language strategies as well as learning strategies, are very very few in number (the combination 1+2 in table 4).

Which are the language strategies, taught by the recombination exercises mentioned above? Inspection of the results show that almost all recombination exercises which were coded as a language strategy exercise fall into the linguistic domain without a specification of communicative modality. 18 Out of 47 (primary school) and 129 out of 469 (secondary school) recombination exercises contain a strategy for solving a language problem on the linguistic level (13 in primary and 125 in secondary school) or a language problem on the textual level (5 in primary and 4 in secondary school). This implies that only a small part of recombination exercises has a language strategy as object. Most frequent use of recombination exercises is not learning a language strategy but simply blind training of language elements.

*Learning strategies.* Learning strategies, which gave students the opportunity of learning to learn, are very rare. Never is made explicit by the textbook authors which function or context of use these learning strategies serve (table 4: combination 2 and 3), and almost never students learn to plan, monitor and evaluate the execution of these learning strategies (table 4: combination 2 and 4).

*Learning goal.* Another important feature of a good exercise is the presence of an explicit learning goal, in which the function of the exercise and/or the context for transfer is communicated to the student. Not more than 3 percent of the exercises in L1 education includes such a feature.

Table 4: Frequencies per schooltype for presence language strategy, learning strategy, learning goal and metacognitive control in textbooks for mother tongue (L1), English as a foreign language (EFL) and French

as a foreign language (FFL); percentages and total number of rated exercises.

	primary school		secondary school		
	L1	EFL	L1	EFL	FFL
language strategy (1)	26.5	5.1	19.8	.8	-
learning strategy (2)	2.3	.3	1.4	-	-
learning goal (3)	2.8	-	1.6	-	.2
metacognitive control (4)	16.9	.3	7.7	.1	-
<i>Combinations:</i>					
1 + 2 + 3 + 4	.3	-	.3	-	-
1 + 3 + 4	1.3	-	.6	-	-
1 + 3	.8	-	.5	-	-
1 + 4	7.8	-	3.7	.1	-
2 + 3 + 4	-	-	-	-	-
2 + 3	-	-	-	-	-
2 + 4	-	-	.1	-	-
1 + 2	1.5	.3	.3	-	-
3 + 4	.3	-	.1	-	-
Number of exercises	366	304	1254	1096	371
Number of textbooks analysed	2	2	3	3	2

*Metacognitive control.* In primary school L1-textbooks 62 exercises (16.9%) have been characterized by some feature of metacognitive control; four types of exercises were most prominent: recombination (9.7%), free writing (14.5%), communication (22.6%) and critical reflection (21%). In secondary L1-textbooks 97 exercises (7.7%) have been rated as containing metacognitive control. Almost half (43.3%) of these exercises belong to the category of recombination; other exercises belong to the categories of free writing (8.2%), communication (13.5%) and vocabulary (9.3%). In all these exercises students got some guidance during task execution by means of explicit criteria for evaluating their output.

It seems that most of the procedures are taught by deduction: the text-

## **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Results*

book authors present a procedure and students are asked to exert this procedure in a task. This can be deduced from the fact that no more than 8 (primary school) to 4 percent (secondary school) of the exercises show a combination of strategy and monitoring (metacognitive control): only in these cases students learn to exert the strategy under guidance and have the opportunity to learn how to guide themselves.

### *Conclusion*

In L1 as well as L2 textbooks, about half of the exercises is not directed to reading, listening, writing or speaking. These exercises are restricted for about 80% to the linguistic domain.

Only to a very small extent there is some talk of strategic language education with prospects of transfer. In foreign language education no attention at all is being given to neither strategic competence nor metacognition. Learning goals are seldom identified.

On basis of the results of the textbook analysis it is not plausible that opportunities for intra- and interlingual transfer are being employed or even utilized. Differences or similarities between mother tongue and the foreign language at issue are not stressed: L1 and L2 learning in the textbooks seem to be on their own and take place rather isolated from each other.



## 6 EXERCISES FOR STRATEGIC EDUCATION

Results of the textbook analyses show much stress on practising, but less on learning. While in mother tongue textbooks to some extent attention is being given to the acquisition of language strategies and metacognition, such attention in foreign language textbooks is practically absent. Although to our opinion the central task of teachers should be to provide students with the opportunity to gain experiences in *learning*, they usually will not succeed in doing so in daily educational practice in which the use of textbooks is prominent. The contents of the employed textbook determines to a high degree the educational practice in the classroom.

To improve language education learning should be stressed a great deal more. There is for instance much emphasis on reading and writing in mother tongue education (see table 2), but it is to be doubted whether or not there is much learning *while* reading and writing. According to us this is not the case: students execute reading and writing tasks, sometimes get (mostly undirected) feedback afterwards and subsequently have to execute different tasks. It may be considered a miracle that students learn from this kind of language education.

In a cognitive approach of language learning students should learn not simply to execute for example writing tasks, but to gain mastery of the writing process. Students should not handle a task at random and just wait and see where they will end up. On the contrary, they have to acquire linguistic, textual, pragmatic and strategic competence in order to deal with communicative tasks and to increase their chance of successful performance. Besides they have to gain control in executing language tasks by applying metacognition and monitoring the problem

## **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Exercises*

solving process. They should not read and write but learn *how* to read and write.

Good learners are active learners. They do not just execute language tasks and have control of the underlying cognitive process, but they also look upon language tasks as learning tasks. By doing so good learners develop into autonomous learners. In education aimed at turning out autonomous learners students have to learn how to *plan* task execution (by problem analysis, setting modifying conditions, strategy inference), how to *control* and *evaluate* the task execution (by monitoring the problem solving process and invoking metacognition).

In view of a cognitive approach of language learning a proper (language or learning) task should at least consist three elements: 1) a stated educational goal in which the function of the (language or learning) task is indicated, 2) plain assignments for monitoring the problem solving process, and 3) explicit criteria for evaluating the task output. It may be clear that the extent to which the student is guided in the task execution should gradually diminish in the language program finally resulting in more independent learning behaviour. At the end of a language course students must be able to execute whole language tasks on their own strength without explicit references to goalsetting, monitoring and evaluating task performance.

In this section we shall demonstrate these three characteristics of a cognitive approach of language learning on the basis of some selected language exercises from the L1-textbooks. We will demonstrate that several language exercises can be largely improved by merely adding elements stressing and directing the cognitive process behind task execution. We will discuss the exercises upon the following principle: first we present that part of the exercise (mostly the core) which can be presented as separate, subsequently we present elements added by the textbook writers themselves, and finally we make proposals for further qualitative improvement.

### *Setting an explicit educational goal*

Out of 'Functioneel Nederlands' (part two, HV, H1, exc. 3, p. 9-10) we

*Exercises*

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cut an exercise about the meaning distinguishing use of the stress (the linguistic domain). The essence of the task follows below:

***Stress***

*You can pronounce the following words in two ways. The stress is differently then. Choose about fifteen words. Write them down twice and underline the syllable with the stress. Also make up sample sentences.*

*N.B. Of course you may use your dictionary. It may help you.*

This task is clear for students. A characteristic of words is given and it is briefly explained step by step what students have to do. In this connection it is less important that it is not clear whether the sentences the students have to make up need to be written down. In fact students is taught, in a very implicit way, to check their answers (if they do not succeed in making a sentence, they don't have a hold on the meaning of the word). What the schoolbook authors add themselves preceding this task essence is an explicit educational goal.

*If Dutch is your mother tongue, the stress of words almost never creates a practical problem. You simply know which syllable is stressed. You have learnt this with the greatest of ease when you were still small and now you apply this knowledge without having to think about it.*

*Still it is good to do think about it once in a while. In order to learn a foreign language it is useful if you are a bit 'stress-sensitive'. And playing with language can be quite fun.*

## **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Exercises*

The above exercise clearly shows that an explanation of the educational goal is a surplus: virtually always the passage in the task can be removed without changing the learning activities for the student. If from the point of view of formulating such an explicit educational goal may look adequate, from the didactical point of view it is doubtful whether a student learns something more or something different by simply explaining the educational goal. We take the view that other elements as well should be added to an exercise, such as feedback, if an educational goal is to be achieved. When discussing the other exercises we will come back to this.

Finally we would like to remark that the exercise offers possibilities for training learning strategies. What the student learns, is that he can look up the meaning of a word in a dictionary. If he has succeeded in indicating the two ways of stressing but does not know what sentence he will make, the dictionary can help. The authors could also have chosen to learn students that they are able to find information about stress in the dictionary. In this case we can speak of strategic education focussed on learning: the students learn how to acquire language and language characteristics. It would be interesting with that to make students also actually look in dictionaries of foreign languages. The connection with and the function of the educational goal becomes clearer then and students will learn a general rule: for every language the dictionary can be consulted for information about stress, although sometimes different ways to indicate stress are used. By using the dictionary also self-reflection can take place: after stressing syllables has been indicated students have to look up in the dictionary whether they really have put in existing distinctions (evaluation).

### *Feedback on language strategies*

From 'Taalkabaal' we took a lesson for speaking: a sharing as an introduction of a theme ('the civilized world': theme 1, week 1, lesson 1). First of all we present the essence once more. We would like to show that what the teaching method authors add to the apparent essence, leads to a qualitatively different learning process. The essence of the lesson is

the sharing, for which the teachers receive the following indications:

*Sharing*

*Some of the following suggestions can serve as a lead: What do you think of the neighbourhood in which you live? And of the house in which you live in? Why? Have you ever moved? What was it like, what did you think of it, tell something about it? Do you like to live somewhere else for a while, for instance when you stay with someone or when you are on a holiday. What is nicer than being at home and what is worse or even annoying? Are things different in your neighbourhood during the holidays? For instance, are there more children to play with, or is just nobody around? Are there any tourists coming? Is this nice or not, and why?*

The sharing could very well start instantly with these beginning questions. For the development of the lesson it would be a very functional start. The authors, however, apparently have another intention with this lesson: training of language strategies. The sharing is not just goal, but also means. For this purpose procedures are brought up from the memory: in a conversation with the children the teacher reminds the students of some linguistic procedures or strategies. Together with the children the teacher brings up skills which have been discussed in preceding grades (discussion skills, skills in summarizing and making of notes). From the teachers guide teachers receive indications, which precede the essence of the indications for the sharing:

**Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Exercises*

*introduction  
subject and goal*

*This first thematic discussion is a discussion with the entire class, the teacher (or a student who enjoys it) acts as a panel chairman and two students make a summary. The discussion is about living at different places and at different times of the year.*

*essence  
learning discussion*

*You remind the children of the discussion skills and the skills in conducting and summarizing a conversation (see subject matter about discussion skills). These skills have been practiced repeatedly in the previous school years. An important help with summarizing is to make notes. Also this skill you can briefly discuss (see remarks).*

The authors could have confined with this; information about the theme "The civilized world" has been collected and tasks have been divided in the classroom: there are summarizers, there is a panel chairman and a possibility for practice is offered (the sharing itself). But the authors apparently start from the point of view that strategy training without reflection is not (sufficiently) valuable. For this reason they suggest to make the sharing itself the object of reflection as a completion of the lesson.

*completion  
discussion*

*After the sharing the summarizers give their summary by the help of their notes. You talk with the children about the development of the discussion. Did everyone stick to the discussion skills? How went the summarizing?*

It is remarkable that the specific questions for the completion concern the process; there are no questions about the quality of the contributions or the summaries, but questions about the process. This way students acquire a learning strategy: the possibility to look at language performance processes and to talk about them. It will be clear that the teacher who only focuses at the essence (he performs the sharing about the civilized world) is aiming at something completely different with students and learning than the teacher who uses the situation of the sharing to reach the linguistic learning goals. With a minimum of extra time a lot more is learnt and taught than the main activity, the sharing itself, would suggest.

In Taalkabaal we found an interesting lesson on reading (E2, theme 8, week 1, lesson 7). Essence is a text with eight questions:

1. *What does Anton sell?*
2. *It is the first time that Godfried Klepperbeen is slapped by Anton?*
3. *Do you think the nanny (De Vrome) is really blind? From what can you conclude this?*
4. *Is it crowded on the brug where Puntje and the nanny are begging?*
5. *What did Anton need the money for?*
6. *Where did Puntje and miss De Brome the money they got?*
7. *What would Puntje have put in Anton's hand secretly?*
8. *In the sentence (line 78-79) it says: "I'm wearing high-lows?" What do you think they are?*

A text with questions: can it be more traditional? What do students learn from this? The students read the text and make questions and subsequently the teacher discusses the answers to the questions. The students correct the fault answers and by this the lesson is completed.

In this lesson from Taalkabaal, however, the authors try to teach the students how they can find answers to questions. For this purpose two steps have been included in the teacher's manual. First the text is introduced and read. After that the teacher discusses with the students

**Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Exercises*

about a way in which you can find answers. This procedure is explained as follows:

*introduction*

*classical*

*Tell the children that all of them are going to read a similar part from a book.*

*Essence*

*Classical*

*You introduce the story. The book of which the text was chosen, is called Puntje en Anton. Puntje is a girl, Anton is a boy. Puntje lives in a large house, together with her father, a busy businessman; her mother, who is always out on the town; miss De Brome, the Puntje's nanny and Berta, the maid. Puntje's parents are hardly ever at home and the nanny takes advantage of this. At night Puntje joins her on her begging trip. The money they earn is for the nanny's finance; for Robert the Devil.*

*individually*

*Now the children are going to read the text on p. 171-174 of the themebook. Tell them that subsequently you will question them about the text.*

*learning discussion*

*Before you start questioning you will have a short talk explaining how to find the answers in the text in a quick way.*

- 0 You remember where you can roughly find the answer. After that you will look and read*
- 0 If you don't remember anymore you will pay attention to catch-words, when you glance through the text.*
- 0 Sometimes the answer cannot be found in the text. You can find indications in the text about what the answer could be, but you have to think of it yourself.*



The teacher then asks questions about the text one by one. At each question the teachers asks helping questions, concerning the procedure to find the answer. These helping questions are standard questions: students learn to apply the procedure themselves, because, if necessary, the three steps are completed at each question.

1. *What does Anton sell?*
  - a. *Do you remember where about this can be found in the text? If you do, you are going to read there. If you cannot find it right away, then:*
  - b. *What words will you watch if you are going to look for the answer. For instance: 'Anton' or 'sell'.*
  
2. *Is it the first time that Godfried Got a blow from Anton?*
  - a. *Do you remember where about this can be found in the text? If you do, you are going to read there. If you cannot find it right away, then:*
  - b. *What words will you watch if you are going to look for the answer. For instance: 'Godfried', 'Anton' 'blow' or 'to hit'.*
  - c. *If the answer is not literally in the text, could you then find something about the fight between Anton en Godfried?*

It is suggested to complete the lesson with a classical discussion about the story and the search for answers to the questions of the texts. Although the indications in the curriculum are somewhat vague, it is very ?? that in this discussion students can be invited for reflection and flexibilization of the strategy offered: in some cases you have to follow the three steps, sometimes step 1 or step 1 and step 2 will do. By that more is learnt than the simple rule: follow step 1 up to step 3. The lesson is completed with a collective reflection on the process, by which students learn to look at their own solving process.

**Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Exercises*

*Completion*

*Classical*

*You discuss the course of the lesson with the children. Was it difficult to answer the questions? Did the children enjoy the story?*

*Feedback on learning strategies*

In Taalkabaal (E1, theme 2, week1, lesson 1) we found a lesson in which a learning strategy is brought up. It concerns a thematic discussion here, in which discussion skills as well as introducing a theme are goal of the lesson. There must be worked with an inner and an outer circle. This lesson is much like the lesson we discussed above, in which the sharing was the main issue as a teaching method, but clearly adds a component.

After the discussion has taken place, the teacher classically lists the observations of the students (every student lists one skill). This discussion can be regarded as providing feedback: the outer circle children give feedback about their discussion skills to the inner circle children. The lesson could have ended there, but the authors take the opportunity to draw the attention to 'observing as learning strategy'. After all, the teacher is advised to continue the discussion based on experiences acquired in the inner and outer circle. One of the questions is: "Do the children of the outer circle (observers) feel that they are learning something by observing?" The learning strategy induced here is learning by observation: students learn that observing can attribute to the improvement of their own discussion skill (see below).

*goal*

*Motivate the children fo the subject of the theme going from their own knowledge and experiences.*

*Inner circle: working on discussion skills and skills in conducting a discussion*

*Exercises*

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*Outer circle: observing the discussion skills in the inner circle*

*observation*

*Do the discussion skills still create problems?*

*Do the children in the outer circle observe the discussion skills in the inner circle?*

*Is the task of the children in the outer circle clear?*

*How does the task of the panel chairman and the summarize develop?*

*introduction*

*subject and goal*

*Tell the children that in this lesson they will talk about travelling: before, now and in the future.*

*The class is split up in two parts: an inner and an outer circle are formed. You appoint a panel chairman and a summarizer in the inner circle. The inner circle will do the discussion. The children of the outer circle observe how the children of the inner circle practice their discussion skills: every child observes one discussion skill (see remarks).*

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*Exercises*

*learning discussion*

*You discuss the task of the students in the outer circle, several children observe the same skill. They do this separately. It is convenient, if you give every child in the outercircle a notebook with the skill to observe and a helping question (see remarke). You discuss the tasks of the panel chairman (see remarks) and the summarizer.*

*essence*

*discussion*

*Than the panel chairman starts the discussion. The subject of discussion is: Travelling into the future. Suppose you would live in the future:*

*How would you travel?*

*Where would you to travel to?*

*With whom would you travel?*

*What would you experience on the way?*

*The idea is that a discussion will develop around this clue.*

*You can help the summarize with making notes, by making notes yourself as well. You do this on the black board (see remarks).*

*After the discussion the summarizer gives a summary based on his notes. The summary is briefly discussed in the inner circle: the outer circle also oberves this discussion.*

*classical discussion*

*Than follows a report of the observation conducted by the teacher. You list the observations per discussion skill. You emphasize that during the following discussions the children have to pay special attention to the things which have come up during the observations.*

*Exercises*

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*conclusion*

*discussion*

*Finally you discuss the children's experiences. Did the outer circle find the observing difficult? How did the inner circle feel about being observed this way?*

*Do the children of the outer circle feel that they learn something by observing?*

*You announce that the inner circle and the outer circle will be reversed next week.*

*Conclusion*

In this chapter we demonstrated that with some additions existing exercises can be qualitatively improved. We want to stress two points. First it is probably not a necessity for good language education that all exercises in textbooks are constructed according the principles of strategic language learning. For instance the amount of guidance during task execution should gradually diminish in textbooks.

Secondly we were very selective with regard to the exercises in the demonstration. Not nearly all exercises in textbooks have enough potential to be reformed into a strategic exercise. The better the textbook, the more possibilities teachers and students will have to add strategic features.

## 7 DISCUSSION

As we have expounded in former sections (3 and 4) language education can be much more effective when learning is stressed a great deal more. In contemporary language education there is for instance much emphasis on reading, but it can be doubted whether there is much *learning* while reading. Within the classroom full attention is given to the *product* and little attention is given to the *process*. Students fulfil reading tasks, get some undirected feedback afterwards and subsequently execute other tasks. Such methodology following the credo practice makes perfect, may at the end result in a proper execution of language (i.c. reading) tasks within a specific (educational) setting, but the question remains if pupils are able to execute similar tasks in diverging contexts.

It is assumed that language education can gain considerable profit when more attention is given to the process of language production and perception. In other words, it is not enough to look at *what* pupils are doing, but also at *how* they are doing it. More attention to the process of language production and perception means a shift towards a strategic approach of language learning. Such, as we call it, strategic education, has been object of some studies mostly in the field of reading comprehension (cf. Baker & Brown 1984, Brown & Day 1983, Garner 1987, Fisher & Mandl 1984). Results of these studies indicate that strategic education has its benefits.

In terms of the model for language learning (see section 3) more attention to the process of language use means that language education must try to enlarge *strategic competence*: students must become aware of strategies which can be applied for problem solving. Within this scope of strategic competence we have made a distinction between *language strategies* (directed at the communication process) and *learning*

*strategies* (directed at the learning process). It is assumed that students who have knowledge of problem solving strategies are capable to employ these strategies in diverging situations (tasks) rather independent of the language at issue. Furthermore they will be capable to generate or infer new strategies or combine acquainted strategies with new ones. In a strategic approach to language learning students not simply learn to execute tasks, but to gain mastery over process of how to solve tasks. Students should not handle a task at random (just wait and see where they will end), but they should have the competence how to deal with problems set by a task in order to increase their chance to successful task performance.

More *learning* and less *instruction* in the classroom implies explicit notice within the educational practice towards how to solve language and/or learning problems. This means that in first and foreign language education more stress must be put on strategic learning in two ways: 1) students must have the opportunity to acquire language strategies for solving language processing tasks (learning *how* to communicate) and 2) students must have the opportunity to acquire learning strategies for solving language learning tasks (learning *how* to learn).

Within a strategic approach proper exercises (language or learning tasks) must comply with at least three important features: an *educational goal* in which the function of the task is indicated, assignments for *monitoring* the problem solving process, and explicit criteria for *evaluating* task output. As stated before the extent to which guidance is given in task execution by goalsetting, monitoring and task evaluation, must finally be eliminated: from *external* management by the teacher to *internal* management by the pupil. Main aim of a language course is to establish *autonomous learners*. Autonomous learning means that students are able to prepare and regulate their own learning, to take the necessary steps to learn, to provide one's own feedback and judgement and to keep oneself concentrated and motivated (Biemans & Simons 1992). The more such learning functions are fulfilled by the learner, the more self-regulated learning is (Simons 1991).

A key criterium for judging whether a language exercise may be suitable or not is the degree of establishing a *metacognitive experience*,

## **Fout! Bladwijzer niet gedefinieerd.**

*Discussion*

that is the awareness of language users that they find themselves in a particular cognitive condition. Establishing a metacognitive experience means that after task execution students have the self induced conviction that something is being learned. Writing exercises for instance aimed at the improvement of structuring a text through the use of text schemata, must make students aware that knowledge of text schemata is important for improving their own writing ability.

In sections five and six we have reported the results of our analysis of textbooks pointed to the presence of relevant features for strategic language education. Analyses of textbooks for L1 have shown that although attention towards strategic language education is scanty, it must be stressed that still 20-25% of the exercises are directed to teach pupils some kind of strategies i.c. procedures to solve language processing tasks. Further inspection of the results demonstrate that more than half of the exercises aimed at language processing tasks fall into the category of recombination within the linguistic domain and without any specification of communicative modality. This implies that most of the language strategies are directed to a well performance of for instance rules for grammar, spelling and parsing.

Learning strategies directed at learning how to learn are very rare. Besides it is never made explicit to students in which function or context of use these learning strategies serve. Furthermore there is no attention to the process of executing these learning strategies by means of planning, monitoring or evaluating.

A small number of exercises (about 17%) includes the feature of metacognitive control. These exercises contain some guide-lines for task execution by means of explicit criteria for evaluating in between or final output. In addition it appears that only a small percentage of the exercises (no more than 3 percent in L1) includes a relevant feature as presence of an explicit learning goal in which the function of the exercise and/or the context for possible transfer are clarified.

Section seven contains a description of exercises selected out of the textbooks fitting within strategic language education. It is shown that



L1 textbooks contain promising exercises. For each feature (language strategy, learning strategy, learning goal and monitoring) we have discussed one or more exercises as encountered in textbooks and we have demonstrated that the learning outcome of exercises can sometimes be easily increased by adding some elements for qualitative improvement.

The description of exercises demonstrates to our opinion that strategic education is realizable educational practice. For the adaption or construction of exercises the following *heuristic* can be followed.

First step is selection and formulation of educational goals. Before constructing an exercise it has to be clear what pupils must learn, which is not the same as what pupils or the teacher must do. While formulating the educational goal special attention must be given to the distinction between language strategies (directed at solving language processing tasks) and learning strategies (directed at solving language learning tasks). When for instance an exercise is submitted to students aimed at learning how to order information according to a specific rhetorical text scheme, e.g. fixed parts in an argumentative text in which a point of view sustained, the educational goal concerns a language strategy. When pupils is taught that such rhetorical text schemes can be observed in other texts as well and that looking at other texts can improve ones own writing ability than the educational goal concerns a learning strategy (learning through reflection).

Second step in the heuristic has to do with designing criteria for evaluating the problem solving process and its final output. In case of a language or learning strategy it must be determined how students can plan, monitor and evaluate task execution. This means determination of explicit criteria on account of which pupils can examine whether or not applied problem solving strategies have been successful for adequate task performance. Within the educational practice the teacher must give support and guidance to this process of planning, monitoring and evaluation (suggestions for how this can be done have been discussed in section seven at the description of exercises). Important questions to be answered by the teacher (i.c. the constructor of strategic exercises) are in any case: How can pupils receive assistance in planning the problem

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*Discussion*

solving process?, Which help can be given for self-monitoring?, Which ways are open for attaining a metacognitive experience? Finally it is most important to give attention how applied strategies within a specific task setting can be deployed in other task situations. Special attention to the appliance of learned strategies in different contexts can foster transfer within and between modalities (intralingual transfer) and languages (interlingual transfer).

We conclude this report with the statement that the position of affairs within textbooks towards strategic language learning is somewhat disturbing. Strategic education within textbooks is hardly realized, although for some years there is a strong call for such education among educationalists (cf. Baker & Brown 1984, Griffioen & Damsma 1982, Paris & Oka 1986). When comparing L1- and L2-curricula, one can state that the situation in mother tongue education is less alarming as in foreign language education. In textbooks for L1 there is to a certain extent attention for strategic learning, although it remains restricted to the linguistic domain without any explicit links to a communicative mode (in L1 or L2). In textbooks for L2 strategic language learning is totally absent. It is therefore not very plausible that some kind of pollination will take place between curricula for L1 and L2 education. The textbook analysis show not only a rupture between teaching methodology for primary and secondary education, but also between mother tongue and foreign language education. Both L1 and L2 curricula are differently organized in such a way that foreign language education does not profit from mother tongue education and the other way round. The statement can be maintained that subject matter acquired in mother tongue education will have no *systematic* impact in foreign language education.

## NOTES

1) For primary education two widely used teaching methods for the subject Dutch have been selected: "Taal actief" and "Taal totaal". These methods share about sixty percent of the market (cf. Kuhlemeier 1989). Since the teaching of English as a second language is compulsory in the last two grades of primary education, the two most widely used teaching methods for this subject have been selected: "Engels Basisonderwijs" and "Real English" (cf. Edelenbos, Suhre & Zuidema 1989).

Teaching methods that are used by a great number of teachers for the teaching of Dutch are "Taalcirkel" and "Functioneel Nederlands" (cf. Kuhlemeier 1989; Oostdam 1990). The method "Taalcirkel" is only suitable for junior vocational education, whereas "Functioneel Nederlands" has different textbooks for all four schooltypes of secondary education.

The most widely used teaching method for the subject English are "Mainstream", "Learning English" and "In Focus" (cf. Kuhlemeier & Van Werkhoven 1991). At present the method "Mainstream" is being revised by its publisher and will be published under the new title "Unicom". All methods have different editions of schoolbooks for the four schooltypes of secondary education. The methods "Mainstream" and "Learning English" are widely used on all four schooltypes. The method "In Focus" on the other hand is most widely used in lower, higher and academic education. For the subject French, teachers of all schooltypes use the methods "Allons y tous" and "Bienvenue en France" in particular (cf. Kuhlemeier & Van Werkhoven 1991).

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