

Issues Involved in Context, Comprehension and Content

Cuestiones del contexto, la comprensión y el contenido

Rigoberto Castillo
Universidad Distrital
(Bogotá, Colombia)

Abstract

This chapter discusses the role that context plays in comprehension when teaching and learning content. Two constructs provide the framework: The first deals with Cummins' (2000) distinction of Basic Interpersonal Communication skills (BICS), Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency skills (CALPS) and Common Underlying Language Proficiency (CULP). The second construct appeals to Bradford and Johnson's findings on the role of context in comprehension (cited by Omaggio 1986). As a replication of Bradford and Johnson's experiment a reading workshop was conducted with 19 teachers of English participating in the First English Content-Based Learning and Instruction Symposium held at Universidad de La Sabana in Bogotá D.C in 2006. The teachers were given a science text in French in which the effect of no-context, partial-context and full-context on reading comprehension was explored. Results suggest that the successful completion of the task did not correlate highly with the participants' self-assessment of their French proficiency but with the presence or absence of advance organizers, in this case pictorials. The results and the implications for course and materials design close the discussion.

Key Words: content-based instruction; advance organizers; course design; material design; reading comprehension.

Resumen

Este capítulo discute el papel del contexto en la comprensión cuando se enseñan y aprenden contenidos. El marco teórico está conformado por dos conceptos: El primero concierne la distinción que hace Cummins (2000) entre las habilidades básicas de comunicación interpersonal (BICS, por sus siglas en inglés), las habilidades cognitivas de competencia de la lengua académica (CALPS, por sus siglas en inglés) y la competencia en una lengua subyacente común (CULP, por sus siglas en inglés). El segundo concepto se refiere a los hallazgos de Bradford y Johnson relacionados con la función del contexto en la comprensión (citados por Omaggio, 1986). Se replicó el experimento de Bradford y Johnson en un taller sobre lectura con 19 docentes de inglés que participaban en el primer simposio sobre enseñanza y aprendizaje de inglés basado en contenidos que se llevó a cabo en la Universidad de la Sabana en Bogotá D.C. en el 2006. Los docentes recibieron una lectura de ciencias en francés en la que se exploraba el efecto de la falta de contexto, el contexto parcial y el contexto total en la comprensión de lectura. Los resultados sugieren que un desempeño satisfactorio de la tarea no tiene una alta relación con la autoevaluación de los participantes de su nivel de competencia en la lengua francesa sino, más bien, con la presencia o ausencia de ayudas visuales avanzadas, en este caso ilustraciones. Cierran la discusión los resultados y sus implicaciones en el diseño de cursos y materiales.

Palabras Claves: enseñanza basada en contenidos; ayudas visuales avanzadas; diseño de cursos; diseño de material; comprensión de lectura.

INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to address the concern of foreign language educators with the content of their teaching and the delivery of their teaching, what Marzano (2000) calls *classroom curriculum design*, i.e., the teacher level factor related to the sequencing and pacing of content along with the experiences students have with that content. In foreign language, sequencing is usually associated with the complexity of grammatical structures or of the lexicon. The pacing may depend on the length of the text, of its rhetorical structure or of the complexity of the task. Nonetheless the author argues that for the learner to succeed in a task, sequencing and pacing need be closely linked to the provision contextual clues.

Cummins' (2000) distinction of Basic Interpersonal Communication skills (BICS), Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency skills (CALPS) and Common Underlying Language Proficiency (CULP) suggest, among other things, that background knowledge and strategic knowledge, I would add, accounts for comprehension and the subsequent language development. On the other hand, researchers like Bradford and Johnson (1972, cited in Omaggio, 1986) argue for the need of organizers to make sense of meanings and messages. This was demonstrated in a series of experiments, one of which was replicated with a group of 19 teachers of English.

It was assumed that if successful completion of the reading task depended on language proficiency alone, those participants WHO self-assessed as highly competent in the French language would have scored significantly higher than those who self-assessed as low competence. However, the replication showed that the self-assessed proficiency did not correlate with significant score differences in the reading task. The results pointed in the direction that foreign language learners rely as much on background knowledge and on strategic knowledge as on language proficiency to fulfill a reading comprehension task.

The paper presents a theoretical framework in which three types of English language proficiency are discussed. Then issues in context and comprehension are presented. The workshop that replicates one of Bransford and Johnson's experiments is described and the results discussed. The paper closes with a discussion on the meaning of the results and the implications for course and materials design.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Types of Language Proficiency

In order to frame the discussion of teaching content, it is necessary to refer to two types of second language proficiency: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). As Susanne Wagner (2005) states Second Language educators commonly use these terms coined by Jim Cummins in 1980 who found that while most learners may learn sufficient English to engage in social communication in about two years, it took five to seven years to acquire the type of language skills needed for successful participation in content classrooms.

BICS refers to the ability to comprehend and respond to conversational language. It describes social, conversational language used for oral communication. Also described as social language, this type of communication offers many cues to the listener and is context-embedded language. On the other hand, CALP is the context-reduced language of the academic classroom. It takes five to seven years for English language learners to become proficient in the language of

the classroom. Learners who are proficient in social situations may not be prepared for the academic, context-reduced, and literacy demands of mainstream classrooms.

As Cummins suggested later, the terms BICS and CALP tend to be imprecise, value-laden, simplified, and misused to stereotype the language proficiency of English language learners (Baker, 1993; Cummins, 1984 in Shoebottom, 2001) then he addressed this problem through a theoretical framework, which embeds the CALP language proficiency concept within a larger theory of Common Underlying Language Proficiency (CULP).

For Cummins, in the course of learning one language a child acquires a set of skills and implicit meta-linguistic knowledge that can be drawn upon when working in another language (Shoebottom, 2001). This common underlying language proficiency (CULP), as he calls these skills and knowledge, is illustrated in the diagram below. It can be seen that the CULP provides the base for the development of both the first language (L1) and the second language (L2). It follows that any expansion of CULP that takes place in one language will have a beneficial effect on the other language(s).



The two codes are separate, that is, two languages are visibly different in outward conversation. The two codes are fused such that the two languages do not function separately. Regardless of the language in which a person is operating, the thoughts that accompany talking, reading, writing, and listening come from the same central processing system.

When a person owns two or more languages, there is one integrated source of thought. People can function in two or more languages with relative ease. This theory may also serve to explain why it becomes easier and easier to learn additional languages. Besides the knowledge of the L2 the speaker has acquired the communication strategies and other strategic knowledge that allow him/her to grasp the structure of a new language. Bilingualism and multilingualism are possible because people have the capacity to store two or more languages.

Information processing skills and educational attainment may be developed through two languages as well as through one language. Cognitive functioning and school achievement may be fed through one monolingual channel or equally successfully through two well-developed language channels. Both channels feed the same central processor.

For these authors (Cummins, 1984; Baker, 1993 in Wagner 2005) language proficiency alone will not determine when English language learners are prepared to use their second language (L 2) to learn with their grade level monolingual English-speaking peers. Previous schooling, academic knowledge and literacy skills that second language learners have in their first language (L 1) are also strong determiners.

The language the child is using in the classroom needs to be sufficiently well developed to be able to process the cognitive challenges of the classroom. Speaking, listening, reading or writing in the first or the second language helps the whole cognitive system to develop. However, if children are made to operate in an insufficiently developed second language, the system will not function well. If children are made to operate in the classroom in a poorly

developed second language, the quality and quantity of what they learn from complex materials and produce in oral and written form may be relatively weak.

The Role of Context in Comprehension and Learning

The issue of comprehension and learning is a matter of context which shall be understood as reading the word within the reading of the world. Then educators would agree that using language for communication can be developed provided that learners are exposed to forms presented and practiced in communicative contexts. These contexts have, among other qualities: the specification of purpose of communication, settings, situation, characters, roles in the interaction, status, etc.

As result, it is valid to argue that classroom tasks, materials, and testing should be designed to resemble actual use of language for communication. Nonetheless, some classroom practices and textbook exercises that work on language at the word or sentence level are quite common. Transformation exercises, use of a tense or a mode according to prompts given are examples easily found in today's materials or classrooms. Sentences are not connected to one another in a logical sequence, relationship or situation.

The thesis put forward here concerns the teaching of content. For classroom curriculum design texts and tasks at the word or sentence level need be kept at a minimum. Instead, teachers need to propose tasks and texts in which previous knowledge is activated, and which provide enough background information for the learner to grasp the key concepts. By the same token, context should be rich to move the learners from decoding words or sentences to actually work on the meanings and messages.

Omaggio (1986:99) stresses that "the effective use of contextual cues may need to be taught overtly to second language learners, especially if their previous experience with language study has not exploited such cues to the fullest extent." Issues of discourse, context and communication may hinder or enhance comprehension. Learners may compensate a lack of linguistic proficiency by acquiring and applying strategies in the use of contextual cues and in use of relevant background knowledge.

Omaggio (1986:102) discusses four studies by Bransford and Johnson (1972) "that show clearly that relevant contextual knowledge is a prerequisite for comprehending ... In all four studies, subjects who were supplied with appropriate contextual information (background knowledge) before hearing a passage demonstrated significantly better comprehension ratings and recall scores than did subjects who were not provided with a context after hearing the passage." These and other studies lend considerable support to Schema Theory in that they demonstrate that subjects do not simply interpret sentences per se and store meanings verbatim. Rather, they create semantic products that are a joint function of input information and prior knowledge. Other authors have also demonstrated that the comprehension process is an active, hypothesis-testing procedure in which the reader reconstructs his own version of a passage from existing schemata. (1986:102-120).

THE WORKSHOP

A replication of Bradford and Johnson's experiment was conducted at the First English Content-Based Learning and Instruction Symposium held at Universidad de La Sabana in Bogotá D.C. in order to make the point that there is more to language proficiency than linguistic competence. Nineteen teachers of English who attended the session were asked to self-evaluate their French

language proficiency. They were divided into three groups: high proficiency, middle proficiency and low proficiency (or no proficiency at all).

They were asked to hypothesize that if given the same reading in French which of the three groups would perform better in the comprehension tasks. As expected the audience agreed that the high proficiency group will score the highest followed by the middle and the low proficiency group.

The experiment consisted in following a reading passage in a one-page text about the water cycle. Then they read on their own. The reading was followed by a completion tasks in which participants had to identify fifteen aspects of the water cycle. They carried out the task in collaboration with the people of the same group.

The three groups and the texts given to each are described below:

1. The high proficiency group: They received the test passage and were not given pictorial support. Reading passage *A* below.
2. The middle proficiency group. They received the test passage and were given partial pictorial support. Reading passage *B* below.
3. The low proficiency (or no proficiency at all) group. They received full pictorial support. Reading passage *C* below.

Reading passage A.

Qu'est-ce que le cycle de l'eau?



1. Qu'est-ce que le cycle de l'eau? Je peux facilement vous répondre - c'est "moi" partout! Le cycle de l'eau décrit l'existence et le mouvement de l'eau sur, dans et au-dessus de la Terre. L'eau de la Terre est toujours en mouvement et change toujours d'états, du liquide à la vapeur à la glace et vice versa. Le cycle de l'eau fonctionne depuis des millions d'années et toute vie sur Terre en dépend; la Terre serait un bien triste endroit à vivre sans elle.
2. Le cycle de l'eau n'a pas de point de départ, mais les océans semblent un bon point de départ. Le soleil réchauffe l'eau des océans; celle-ci s'évapore dans l'air. Les courants d'air ascendants entraînent la vapeur dans l'atmosphère, où les températures plus basses provoquent la condensation de la vapeur en nuages. Les courants d'air entraînent les nuages autour de la Terre, les particules de nuage se heurtent, s'amoncellent et retombent en tant que précipitation. Certaines précipitations retombent sous forme de neige et peuvent s'accumuler en tant que calottes glaciales et glaciers. Quand arrive le printemps, la neige fond et l'eau ruisselle. Une grande partie des précipitations retournent aux océans ou s'infiltrent dans le sol.
3. L'eau s'écoule aussi en surface. Certains écoulements retournent à la rivière et donc vers les océans. L'écoulement de surface et le suintement souterrain s'accumulent en tant qu'eau douce dans les lacs et rivières. Mais tous les ruissellements ne s'écoulent pas vers les rivières. Une grande partie s'infiltré dans le sol. Une partie de cette eau reste près de la surface du sol et peut retourner vers les masses d'eau de surface (et l'océan) comme résurgence d'eau souterraine. Certaines nappes souterraines trouvent une ouverture dans le sol et émergent comme des sources d'eau douce.
4. L'eau souterraine peu profonde est absorbée par les racines des plantes et rejetée dans l'atmosphère via la transpiration des feuilles. Une quantité des eaux infiltrées descend encore plus profondément et réalimente les aquifères (roche souterraine saturée), qui stockent d'énormes quantités d'eau douce pour de longues périodes. Bien entendu, cette eau continue à bouger et une partie retourne à l'océan où le cycle de l'eau "se termine" ... et "recommence"...

Taken from the United States Geological Survey. Le cycle de l'eau. Available at: <http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/watercyclefrench.html>

The task proposed was the same for all participants. Nonetheless, Passage A was cognitively demanding and context-reduced in term of Cummins (2000: 67-85): "the different tasks we expect our students to engage in can be categorized in the model presented in the diagram below.

Tasks range in difficulty along one continuum from cognitively undemanding to cognitively demanding; and along the other continuum from context-embedded to context-reduced.

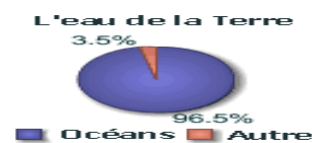
context	embedded
A	C
cognitively undemanding	cognitively demanding
B	D
context	reduced

A context-reduced task is one such as listening to a lecture or reading dense text, where there are no other sources of help than the language itself, (as was the case of the reading passage A). On the other hand, a context-embedded task is one in which the student has access to a range of additional visual and oral cues; for example, he can look at illustrations of what is being talked about or ask questions to confirm understanding," (as was the case of the reading passage C, and to a lesser extent passage B).

Reading passage B. Qu'est-ce que le cycle de l'eau?



1. Qu'est-ce que le cycle de l'eau? Je peux facilement vous répondre - c'est "moi" partout! Le cycle de l'eau décrit l'existence et le mouvement de l'eau sur, dans et au-dessus de la Terre. L'eau de la Terre est toujours en mouvement et change toujours d'états, du liquide à la vapeur à la glace et vice versa. Le cycle de l'eau fonctionne depuis des millions d'années et toute vie sur Terre en dépend; la Terre serait un bien triste endroit à vivre sans elle.



L'océan est un dépôt d'eau. Environ 1 338 000 000 km³ de la fourniture totale mondiale d'eau de 1 386 000 000 km³ est stockée dans les océans. Ceci représente environ 96,5 %. Les océans fournissent environ 90 % de l'eau évaporée qui entre dans le cycle de l'eau.

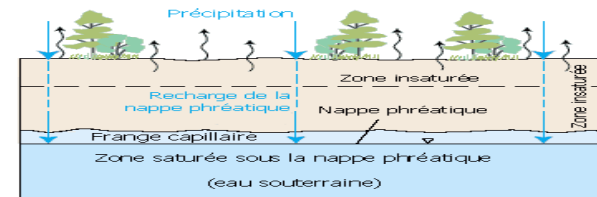
L'océan est un dépôt d'eau. Environ 1 338 000 000 km³ de la fourniture totale mondiale d'eau de 1 386 000 000 km³ est stockée dans les océans. Ceci représente environ 96,5 %. Les océans fournissent environ 90 % de l'eau évaporée qui entre dans le cycle de l'eau.

2. Le cycle de l'eau n'a pas de point de départ, mais les océans semblent un bon point de départ. Le soleil réchauffe l'eau des océans; celle-ci s'évapore dans l'air. Les courants d'air ascendants entraînent la vapeur dans l'atmosphère, où les températures plus basses provoquent la condensation de la vapeur en nuages. Les courants d'air entraînent les nuages autour de la Terre, les particules de nuage

se heurtent, s'amoncellent et retombent en tant que précipitation. Certaines précipitations retombent sous forme de neige et peuvent s'accumuler en tant que calottes glaciales et glaciers. Quand arrive le printemps, la neige fond et l'eau ruisselle. Une grande partie des précipitations retournent aux océans ou s'infiltrent dans le sol.

3. L'eau s'écoule aussi en surface. Certains écoulements retournent à la rivière et donc vers les océans. L'écoulement de surface et le suintement souterrain s'accumulent en tant qu'eau douce dans les lacs et rivières. Mais tous les ruissellements ne s'écoulent pas vers les rivières. Une grande partie s'infiltré dans le sol. Une partie de cette eau reste près de la surface du sol et peut retourner vers les masses d'eau de surface (et l'océan) comme résurgence d'eau souterraine. Certaines nappes souterraines trouvent une ouverture dans le sol et émergent comme des sources d'eau douce.

4. L'eau souterraine. L'eau souterraine peu profonde est absorbée par les racines des plantes et rejetées dans l'atmosphère via la transpiration des feuilles. Une quantité des eaux infiltrées descend encore plus profondément et réalimente les aquifères (roche souterraine saturée), qui stockent d'énormes quantités d'eau douce pour de longues périodes. Bien entendu, cette eau continue à bouger et une partie retourne à l'océan où le cycle de l'eau "se termine" ... et "recommence".



THE RESULTS

The results of the replication did not confirm the participants' hypothesis. The group scores proved to be independent of the self-assessed French language proficiency. The variation in the individual scores was high for the three groups. Individual low scores appeared in the three groups. As for group scores, the low proficiency group (that received the rich content passage) scored close enough to the high proficiency group. This result can be attributed to the full pictorial support provided.

Group	Context	Individual scores/15	Average Group scores
The high proficiency group	was not given pictorial support Reading passage A	8, 9, 9,11, 13, 15	10.8
The middle proficiency group	was given partial pictorial support Reading passage B	5, 6, 6, 7, 11, 12	7.8
The low proficiency group	received full pictorial support Reading passage C	5, 7, 9, 11, 11, 12, 13	9.7

Results of the replication suggest that the various picture conditions affected the reading comprehension of the subjects in the target language. In the low proficiency group the highest score (13/15) was obtained by a geographer who speaks several languages, but not French, and who claimed he had relied on previous knowledge on the topic of the water cycle, to cope with the task. The middle proficiency group attributed its scores to the difficulty of the completion task. The high proficiency group felt the text and the task of passage A were very complex.

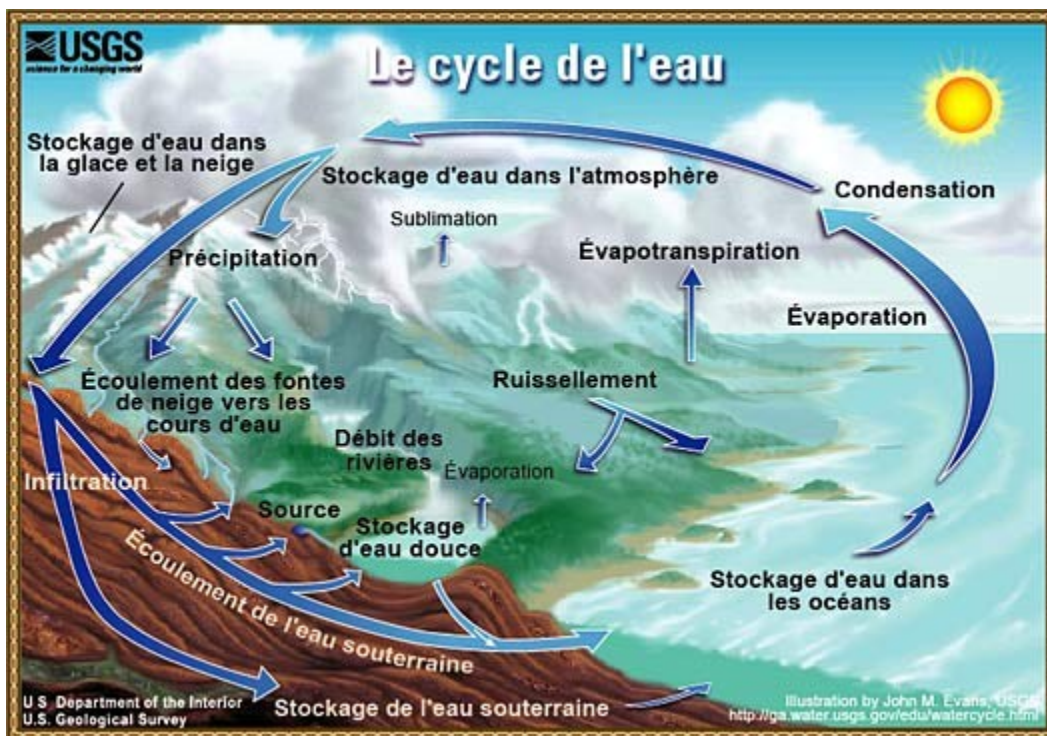
The participants' hypothesis was partially confirmed: The three groups were given the same reading passage in French; the high proficiency group scored the highest, but did not score significantly higher than the other two groups. The low proficiency group that had the full

context version of the reading scored almost as well as the high proficiency group and significantly better than the middle proficiency group, which had the partial context version.

Reading passage C. Qu'est-ce que le cycle de l'eau?

1. Qu'est-ce que le cycle de l'eau? Je peux facilement vous répondre - c'est "moi" partout! Le cycle de l'eau décrit l'existence et le mouvement de l'eau sur, dans et au-dessus de la Terre. L'eau de la Terre est toujours en mouvement et change toujours d'états, du liquide à la vapeur à la glace et vice versa. Le cycle de l'eau fonctionne depuis des millions d'années et toute vie sur Terre en dépend; la Terre serait un bien triste endroit à vivre sans elle.

Un résumé très rapide du cycle de l'eau



2. Le cycle de l'eau n'a pas de point de départ, mais les océans semblent un bon point de départ. Le soleil réchauffe l'eau des océans; celle-ci s'évapore dans l'air. Les courants d'air ascendants entraînent la vapeur dans l'atmosphère, où les températures plus basses provoquent la condensation de la vapeur en nuages. Les courants d'air entraînent les nuages autour de la Terre, les particules de nuage se heurtent, s'amoncellent et retombent en tant que précipitation. Certaines précipitations retombent sous forme de neige et peuvent s'accumuler en tant que calottes glaciales et glaciers. Quand arrive le printemps, la neige fond et l'eau ruisselle. Une grande partie des précipitations retournent aux océans ou s'infiltrent dans le sol.

3. L'eau s'écoule aussi en surface. Certains écoulements retournent à la rivière et donc vers les océans. L'écoulement de surface et le suintement souterrain s'accumulent en tant qu'eau douce dans les lacs et rivières. Mais tous les ruissellements ne s'écoulent pas vers les rivières. Une grande partie s'infiltré dans le sol. Une partie de cette eau reste près de la surface du sol et peut retourner vers les masses d'eau de surface (et l'océan) comme résurgence d'eau souterraine. Certaines nappes souterraines trouvent une ouverture dans le sol et émergent comme des sources d'eau douce.

4. L'eau souterraine peu profonde est absorbée par les racines des plantes et rejetée dans l'atmosphère via la transpiration des feuilles. Une quantité des eaux infiltrées descend encore plus profondément et réalimente les aquifères (roche souterraine saturée), qui stockent d'énormes quantités d'eau douce pour de longues périodes. Bien entendu, cette eau continue à bouger et une partie retourne à l'océan où le cycle de l'eau "se termine" ... et "recommence".

Task for the three groups. . Parties du cycle de l'eau

Le U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) a identifié 15 parties du cycle de l'eau:

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has identified 15 parts of the water cycle. **Please complete them.below.**

- ▶ [O](#)
- ▶ [L'én](#)
- ▶ [L'eau dans l'atmosphère](#)
- ▶ [La conden](#)
- ▶ [Les précipi](#)
- ▶ [Le stockage de l'eau](#)
- ▶ [L'écoulement des fontes nivales](#)
- ▶ [L'écoulement de sur](#)
- ▶ [L'écoulement fluvi](#)
- ▶ [Le stockage de l'eau](#)
- ▶ [Les infil](#)
- ▶ [La résurgence des eaux](#)
- ▶ [Les sourc](#)
- ▶ [La transp](#)
- ▶ [Le stockage des eaux](#)

Responses to the task

Parties du cycle de l'eau

Le U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) a identifié 15 parties du cycle de l'eau:

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has identified 15 parts of the water cycle. **Please complete them.below.**

- ▶ [Océans](#)
- ▶ [L'évaporation](#)
- ▶ [L'eau dans l'atmosphère](#)
- ▶ [La condensation](#)
- ▶ [Les précipitations](#)
- ▶ [Le stockage de l'eau dans la glace et la neige](#)
- ▶ [L'écoulement des fontes nivales vers les cours d'eau](#)
- ▶ [L'écoulement de surface](#)
- ▶ [L'écoulement fluvial](#)
- ▶ [Le stockage de l'eau douce](#)
- ▶ [Les infiltrations](#)
- ▶ [La résurgence des eaux souterraines](#)
- ▶ [Les sources](#)
- ▶ [La transpiration](#)
- ▶ [Le stockage des eaux souterraines](#)

DISCUSSION

The effect of visual does not vary with self-assessed target language proficiency. There are significant interaction effects between proficiency and availability of the contextual visual. Visual and contextual cues have a positive effect on comprehension.

The participants in the workshop had the opportunity of exploring the sources of difficulty of some academic tasks for learners. They acknowledge that sometimes their learners are assessed using texts that are context-reduced, contrary to what has been done in class, in which conversation, illustration and elaboration on the topic are of ordinary practice.

Following Cummins' (2000:68) argument it can be said that learners who took the context reduced version of passage A "relied exclusively on linguistic cues to meaning, and therefore successful interpretation of the meaning depended on knowledge of the language itself. Context-embedded communication is more typical of the world outside the classroom, whereas many of the linguistic demands of the classroom (e.g., manipulating text) reflect communicative activities that are closer to the context-reduced type." It follows then that foreign language teachers need to consider that "language and content can be acquired more successfully when learners are challenged cognitively but provided with the contextual and linguistic support or scaffolds required for successful task completion" Cummins (2000:71).

Following Cummins it can be safely argued that tasks that provide contextual support can be considered as attempts to render cognitively demanding academic content and language more like everyday communication. For contextual support to contribute to the learning of content it must start with the activation of the learner's background knowledge. Thus pictorials, experiential learning, drama and other resources need be used to make abstract concepts comprehensible. Teachers face an interesting challenge ahead to design a course in which learners move from context-embedded to content-reduced tasks that would allow learners to acquire complex notions as well as to develop their second language.

Other studies cited by Omaggio (1986) have explored the role of advance organizers when presented before, during or after a task. These suggest that ambiguity is reduced, that the organizers activate the schema and facilitate comprehension tasks. Therefore, teachers are in a better position to judge when to use or promote the learner's use of advance organizers such as pictorial representations, diagrams or charts.

For content teachers, the classroom curriculum design needs to take into account the types of proficiency, the role of context in comprehension and the cognitive demands that tasks pose on the learners. To sequence and pace content along with the experiences students have with that content, teacher need to be aware of the relationships among proficiency, context, comprehension, and task difficulty.

REFERENCES

- Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Marzano, R. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria, Va. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Omaggio, A. (1986). *Teaching language in context: Proficiency-oriented instruction*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

- Shoebottom, P. (2000). *The language learning theories of Professor J. Cummins*. Retrieved from <http://esl.fis.edu/teachers/support/jcummins.htm>
- United States Geological Survey. (n.d.) *Le cycle de l'eau*. Retrieved from <http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/watercyclefrench.html>
- Wagner, S. (1990). BICS, CALP and CUP: Second language proficiency and learning theory. *Teacher Today, IER*, 5(4). Retrieved from <http://www.thecenterlibrary.org/cwis/cwisdocs/bics.html>

BIODATA

Rigoberto CASTILLO holds a Ph.D. in Foreign Language Education and an M.A. in Applied Linguistics from University of Texas at Austin. He is a professor at Universidad Distrital, Bogotá, Colombia, and a member of the research group “Formación de Educadores” ranked in the top category by the Colombian Research Council, Colciencias. He has published articles in national and international journals. He has served as Boardmember and President of the Colombian Association of Teachers of English from which he received the Claire de Silva Award.