

## TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE LANGUAGE LABORATORY: A PILOT STUDY FOR A QUESTIONNAIRE

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In recent years language laboratories have become thicker on the ground, many have been installed in schools and other institutions in which foreign languages are taught. Laboratory courses became very popular, and it was widely expected that most — or even all — aspects of language could be taught with magnetic tape and headphones. The wave of enthusiasm for the language laboratory has diminished since the limitations of teaching in the laboratory have been found.

The popularity of the language laboratory accompanied the development of technical equipment which provided better recording and replaying conditions, and the increasing popularity of the audio-lingual method of teaching languages. The laboratory was assumed to be a useful tool for conducting pattern practice drills (Croft 1972) enabling the teacher to spend classroom periods on more creative work. Hence, teaching in the laboratory was thought to require less effort on the part of the teacher, who merely supplied the students with the tape; this mistaken image of the teacher's role in the laboratory is still unfortunately shared by all too many practitioners. In fact teaching in the laboratory requires a lot more work of the teacher. Preparation for a laboratory class is more time-consuming than preparation of materials to be used in the classroom because it frequently requires the expenditure of several hours recording tapes in advance. There are not many courses commercially available except those written along audio-lingual lines, mainly pattern practice. Leaving the students alone with the tape and expecting them to learn grammatical structures automatically soon proved to be a failure, since the students, instead of internalising the patterns found the time spent in the laboratory dull; often they were unable to see any relationship between what

they were doing in the laboratory and in the classroom (Chastain 1971; Dakin 1973).

Consequently, language teaching specialists started to look for better techniques and methods to use in the laboratory to make the teaching more effective, and to ensure that the often costly equipment could be used despite its limitations. There were numerous experiments performed in Britain and the United States which indicated that teaching in the laboratory is at best equal in its effectiveness to teaching in the classroom. Croft stressed that "the value of the language laboratory lies not so much in the kind of equipment you have, but in the way you make use of it" (Croft 1972 : 396). Evidently, it is the teacher who has to search for more effective ways of using the laboratory, and of applying new methods to teaching. The potential advantages of the laboratory are numerous: the opportunity to hear authentic native speech in large quantities and in a variety of voices; the fuller use of teaching period; the psychological isolation of the student; the ability to compare the student's voice with the original; and the chance for students to work individually (Rivers 1968 : 321).

Language teachers have sought to eliminate mechanical drills which resulted in an unsatisfactory transfer and general boredom, and to replace them with drills and exercises which were based on the students' conscious generation of their own sentences. A very good and practical selection of exercises of this kind has been proposed by Dakin and Howatt (Dakin 1973; Howatt and Dakin 1974). One of the most interesting developments has been made by Keuleers, who is an advocate of cognitive code learning theory; a meta-language is proposed which could be used while practising new structures and generating new sentences within the framework of cognitive drills (Keuleers 1971, 1975).

This study may be seen as a further step in the search for ways of improving the use of the language laboratory. The analysis of the actual use of language laboratories in the Departments of English in Poland is based on information from four sources: the current curriculum; the teachers' evaluation of the language laboratories; the students' evaluation of the laboratory work; and the possibilities of the current technical equipment. The teachers' opinions will be gathered by means of a series of structured interviews, and will be treated as additional to and partly as explanatory of the students'.

A questionnaire is being prepared to obtain the students' evaluation of the language laboratory and as the first stage of this part of the study, a draft questionnaire was completed by 45 fourth year students in the English Institute in Poznań in April 1975. The purpose of this pilot study was to test the questionnaire and to improve it before it is used on a larger population. The results reported here cannot be treated as representative of all fourth year students of English in university departments since it is in no sense a sample.

Still it seems worthwhile to present some of the findings which may be of interest even before the results of the full questionnaire are available. Fourth year students were chosen because they should be able to give better evaluation of laboratory classes after almost four years' experience of such teaching, and also because they have some knowledge of foreign language teaching methods, and thus should show more understanding of the problem.

The questionnaire consisted of 21 groups of questions of which the first was concerned with the students' background, the next five contained questions on motivation and attitudes, and the rest were about the language laboratory.<sup>1</sup> The questions about the students' background and motivation were included to measure the influence of factors like motivation, attitudes toward English-speaking people and culture, travelling abroad, or practical English examination marks on their evaluation of the language laboratory classes.

The questions on motivation were based on those of Gardner and Lambert (1972). This battery of questions was shortened and adapted to fit the situation of the Polish students. The division between instrumental and integrative motivation was kept as valuable and practical although it was assumed that most of our students show neither instrumental nor integrative but a mixed type. It is realised that the motivation study included in the questionnaire is rather superficial, it is hoped, however, that it is sufficient for its present purpose.

The main group of questions dealt with the language laboratory classes and materials and asked the students for their opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of the laboratory, the types of classes and their importance within the course of learning the language, the time devoted to various exercises, the kinds of exercises and techniques employed, materials used, visual aids and the use of technical equipment.

The responses to the questions were card-punched and the results processed using the computer program Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Frequency distributions, percentages, and tabulations were produced using this package. Further analysis of the responses was directed towards the improvement of the questionnaire, for example a factor analysis of a matrix of Kendall's Tau rank correlation coefficients for the set of motivational questions.

Not all of the 45 students have been studying English for the same length of time: 53.3 percent started learning English more than ten years ago and another 37.8 percent eight or nine years ago. Since 91.1 percent of them had the first contact with the language at school they must have broken their education by either repeating the year at school or at the university, or waiting a year to gain admission to the university, often spending some time abroad;

<sup>1</sup> Copies of the draft questionnaire may be obtained by writing to the author.

60.0 percent of them have been abroad to England, the United States or another English-speaking country. The length of their studies is also reflected by their ages as 60.0 percent are aged 23 or over, while the expected age for fourth year students is 22 years.

The language abilities should be considered as good since 46.6 percent had received 4 or 4+ for their practical English examination after the third year, and a further 28.9 percent received 3+; it should be mentioned that the standard required to get a 4 is rather high in the institute in question. Nevertheless, they feel that they have not exerted themselves fully to improve their ability since 64.4 percent say that they did just enough to get along, and none of them thinks that his or her English is very good.

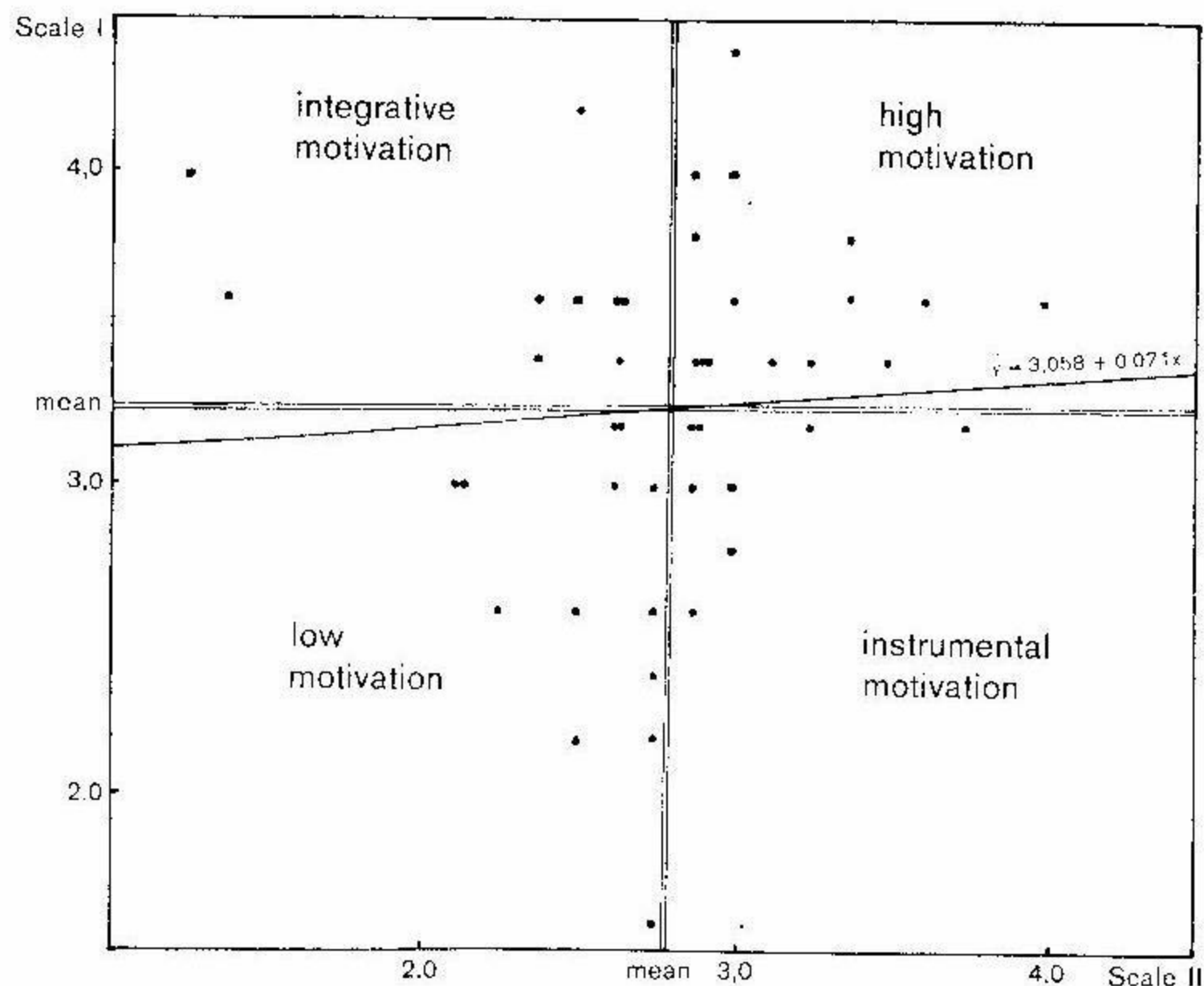


Figure 1

The analyses of the motivation scales gave the following picture of motivation patterns: 13 students (28.8 percent) have generally low motivation; 15 (33.3 percent) generally high; and the rest divides almost equally into 9

with motivation showing some integrative features, and 8 instrumental<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 1). There is a slightly stronger tendency towards integrative motivation, the average is 3.258, than towards instrumental motivation, the mean score is 2.788, but there is little relationship with the students' opinions on the process of teaching in the laboratory. To make the picture of integratively motivated students clearer let us examine the scores for some of the questions.

91.2 percent of all the students agree (35.6 percent) or strongly agree (55.6 percent) that studying English will help them to understand English-speaking people; 97.8 percent think it will enable them to meet and converse with more and more varied people, but only 8.8 percent would like to live among English-speaking people. This is also confirmed by the answer to a further question: 75.6 percent agreed with the statement "I'd rather live in Poland than elsewhere". They see the benefit of meeting English-speaking people and are eager to make an effort to be able to understand them better but they are not likely to identify with the English: only 17.8 percent believe that they could benefit from adopting some aspects of the English-speaking people's ways of life. All this results in a not very strong integrative motivation but also prevents the feeling of anomie. That is also reflected by scale III testing their attitudes towards English-speaking people and their culture. They did not think too highly of English-speaking people, the average is 2.611. 55.6 percent disagreed with the statement that English-speaking people are not very imaginative and 66.7 percent disagreed with the statement that they are narrow in their outlook. The students' divided themselves equally between those, 48.9 percent, who wanted to sound like native speakers and those, 42.2 percent, who did not, but even the latter preferred to have a native speaker as a teacher — 91.1 percent disagree with the statement "I'd prefer to be taught by a Pole than a native speaker however good he might be". There must be then some reasons for this situation other than the desire to be provided with a model pronunciation. A partial explanation may be found

<sup>2</sup> The four scales used in the questionnaire are: I integrative motivation; II instrumental motivation; III attitude to English native speakers; and IV attitude towards language laboratory work. The scales are Likert type scales, that is, summated rating scales. The responses to the questions range from strongly agree to strongly disagree over a five position ordinal scale, strongly agree being assigned 5, and strongly disagree 1. For each set of questions the responses to the individual questions are summed, and the sum divided by the number of questions answered. A respondent with a scale score of 3 would be interpreted as being neutral in relation to the battery of questions, with a score over three as being positively inclined, and under 3 as negatively inclined. The averages for all respondents are a measure of the general attitudes of these students. Likert scales are described in Moser and Kalton (1971: 361-366) and Kerlinger (1973: 496).

in the fact that more than half of the students seem to be impressed by the native speakers; 57.7 percent agreed (and 26.7 percent were uncertain) that they have met English-speaking people who impressed them more than any Pole. Taking into consideration the fact that they do not want to identify with the native speakers and most of them have had the opportunity to spend some time abroad and acquire some knowledge of foreign culture it seems worthwhile to try to explain their attitude more fully. Here the problem will be referred to again while analysing scale IV: the advantages and disadvantages of the laboratory.

Passing to the instrumental scale it is worth mentioning that 77.7 percent of all the students think that studying English will make it possible to find a more interesting job and 42.2 percent believe it will be a well paid job. 71.3 percent think that one should know a foreign language to be an educated person but only 33.3 percent study English to become teachers. Most of them then hope that their careers will be other than in education — more interesting and better paid. The instrumental motivation scale has been found to be related with some of the scale IV questions, which are commented on below.

The scale IV average score is 3.592, which is a positive answer to the question of whether the students like the laboratory classes or not. They see more advantages in the language laboratory than disadvantages. 86.6 percent of them treat it as an extra opportunity to listen to native speakers, 74.9 percent find it an opportunity to do more intensive work, 66.7 percent think the privacy given by the laboratory is one of advantages, and 60 percent agree that it gives the chance to speak more than in the classroom. 47.8 percent claim that they consciously make use of what they have learnt in the laboratory and 35.6 percent are uncertain about this.

Some relationships have been found between scale IV and scale II; they are not very significant but may be explained when examined in the context of a larger number of students. Dividing all the students according to the instrumental scale, among 23 students characterized by relatively high instrumental motivation, 12 liked the laboratory more than average and 11 less than average and among 22 students with low instrumental motivation 9 liked the laboratory more than average and 13 less than average. If we look at it more closely we see that the largest number of students can be found in the middle (11), grouped about the mean both on the instrumental motivation scale and the liking the laboratory scale (Fig. 2). There is only one individual with low scale II and high scale IV scores and two with high scale II and low scale IV scores but there are three with both low scale II and scale IV scores and 5 with both high scale II and scale IV scores. With as small number of students the numbers are open to widely varying interpretation but there may still be an interdependence between motivation and liking the laboratory showing that the more instrumentally motivated the students are the more advantages of

the language laboratory they see. Similar results were obtained by tabulating motivation against questions included in scale IV. In one case out of 13 students with low motivation 5 disagreed and 8 agreed that the laboratory constitutes a valuable extra opportunity to listen to native speakers and out of 15

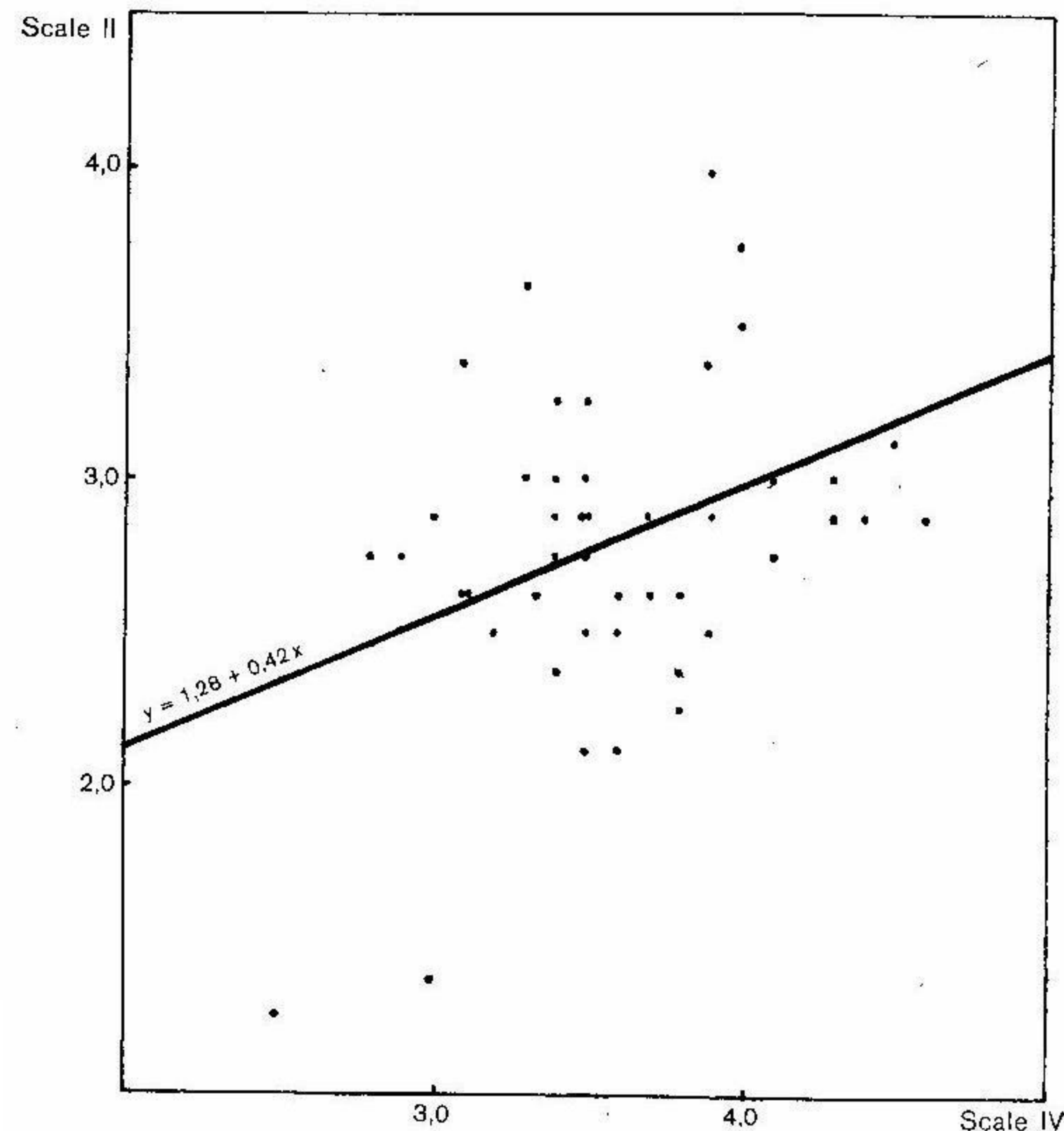


Figure 2

with high motivation 10 disagreed. Of 8 instrumentally motivated 7 agreed and of 9 integratively motivated only 6. In the analysis of the relationship between motivation and this question, the difference between integrative

and instrumental motivation was kept, so that it is possible to observe what impact the particular type of motivation has on the students' attitude towards the language laboratory. It is interesting to observe that students with generally high motivation do not think the laboratory is an extra opportunity to speak the language. This must be then the group of students who are active in the classroom so that they do not feel the need to speak more. The laboratory is then more valuable for those whose motivation is not that strong and who probably do not speak much in the classroom — unless they are asked — either because they are shy or because the classroom activities are not stimulating enough.

This is also confirmed by the result obtained by comparing students' marks for the last practical English examination and their attitude towards the laboratory. The majority of those who liked the laboratory more than average have got 3+ or 4- for their English. The fact that instrumentally motivated students see the opportunity to speak in the laboratory better than the integratively motivated ones shows that the former, who want to use the language as a tool to reach their mainly economic goals, want to work more to improve their command of English. They see their aim clearly and practice in the laboratory is an obvious means to achieve this aim. On the whole their motivation is slightly stronger than of those with integrative tendency.

A relationship has been found between the scale III (attitude towards native speakers) and scale IV. There are 5 students (11.1 percent) who like the laboratory and have a negative attitude towards native speakers; 10 students (22.2 percent) who do not like the laboratory and have a positive attitude; 14 (31.1 percent) who neither like the laboratory nor native speakers and 16 (35.6 percent) who like both the laboratory and native speakers. There may be a relationship between the attitude towards native speakers and attitude towards the laboratory and this problem will be probed by extending and rearranging scale III by adding more questions concerning native speakers as teachers. In the present questionnaire scale III had too many negative statements which could also influence the results. It is a point of interest to note that there is a group of students who dislike the laboratory and like the native speakers and this group is twice as big as that whose members like the laboratory and dislike the native speakers. The need to explain this, and the relationship between motivation and attitudes, makes it even more important to revise this part of the questionnaire (Fig. 3).

Summing up the results from scale IV, it may be mentioned that the majority of the students seem to like working with tape recorders and neither the time limit nor the more artificial teaching situation than in the classroom is treated as a disadvantage. 53.6 percent are happy to work without the help of the teacher and the lack of response other than correct answer being repeated

by the voice recorded does not constitute an obstacle in learning, at least with the type of classes and materials they are acquainted with.

The next section of the questionnaire dealt with language laboratory materials and types of classes distinguished according to the abilities taught.

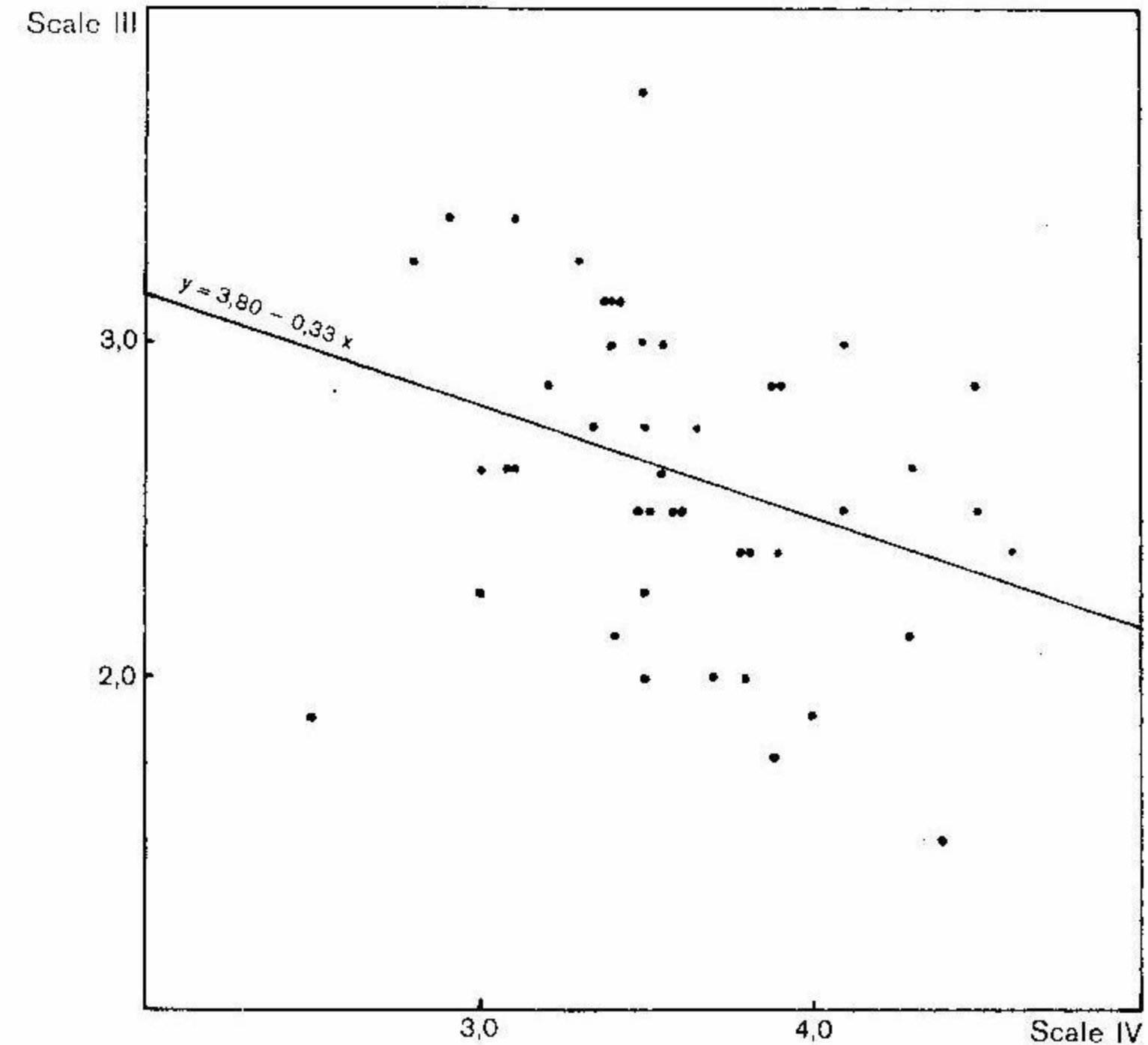


Figure 3

The first group of questions was expected to give information on the importance of teaching particular abilities in the laboratory; the second group of questions asked whether the time devoted was adequate and the third sought evaluation of materials used. The percentages obtained for these three groups of questions are illustrated in Table 1.

As is shown in Table 1, the students consider teaching intonation, listening

Table 1

Opinions of the importance, time spent, and quality of materials used in selected language laboratory activities, n=45

| No | Ability   | most im-<br>portant-<br>moderate | less and<br>least<br>important | enough time<br>devoted | very good<br>& good | satisfactory | poor and<br>very poor |
|----|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| 1  | Segmental phonetics                                       | 88.8%                            | 6.6%                           | 75.6%                  | 60.0%               | 31.1%        | 6.6%                  |
| 2  | Intonation  | 95.5                             | 2.2                            | 64.4                   | 64.4                | 51.1         | 4.4                   |
| 3  | Grammar exercises   | 71.2                             | 20.0                           | 57.8                   | 37.8                | 46.7         | 13.4                  |
| 4  | Exercises in conscious self-control over FL pronunciation | 77.8                             | 11.1                           | 20.0                   | 11.1                | 37.8         | 28.9                  |
| 5  | repetition of longer sentences                            | 60.1                             | 33.3                           | 46.7                   | 31.1                | 35.6         | 28.9                  |
| 6  | repeating and memorizing short dialogues                  | 57.8                             | 37.8                           | 62.2                   | 37.7                | 44.4         | 13.3                  |
| 7  | listening comprehension                                   | 88.9                             | 4.4                            | 57.8                   | 53.3                | 28.9         | 11.1                  |
| 8  | oral summary of texts heard from the tape                 | 64.5                             | 38.9                           | 31.1                   | 26.6                | 42.2         | 21.1                  |
| 9  | other active exercises in speaking                        | 66.6                             | 17.8                           | 15.6                   | 42.2                | 33.3         | 24.4                  |

Not all the percentages equal 100% because of some missing observations. The students were instructed not to answer those questions concerned with classes they did not have.

comprehension and phonetics to be most important, then grammar exercises and exercises in conscious self-control in foreign language pronunciation followed by other active exercises in speaking, oral summary of texts heard from the tape, and finally two types of repetition exercises.

The intonation, phonetics, grammar and listening comprehension have high scores on both the importance and the time but it is interesting to note that other active exercises in speaking have quite a high importance score and only 15.6 percent think the time devoted to them was sufficient. If we, however, take into consideration the number of these uncertain about the amount of time devoted to the exercise, 51.1 percent, it becomes impossible to say that they feel it is important and not taught enough. On the other hand, the high number of "don't knows" could have resulted from a lack of experience with this sort of exercise.

In evaluating language laboratory materials the students gave the highest mark to materials used in teaching intonation, phonetics and listening comprehension, that is, to those types of classes which also got the highest scores on importance and time. They were very critical about materials used as exercises in conscious self-control, nobody evaluated them as very good, but the really low score could be due to quite a number of missing observations. Also oral summary and listening comprehension materials were evaluated as satisfactory rather than good. It seems then that there is a need first to improve materials to be used as exercises in conscious self-control and then listening comprehension and oral summary.

Generally, the materials are considered to be either good or satisfactory. The students do not like to give the highest or the lowest marks. For example, taking into consideration students' opinions about oral summary exercises, there is only 1 person who thinks that it is least important in teaching in the laboratory and the materials used very poor and only 1 person who thinks it very important and the material used very good. Nobody evaluated it as having very good material and being least important, or having very poor material and being most important. There are 10 who believe that it is important and having either good or satisfactory material; 5 most important and satisfactory materials and 3 quite important and good material. Therefore the greatest number of answers are clustered around the modes of both variables, and this bivariable distribution seems to be characteristic of all the students' answers to this questionnaire. One gets also the impression that in making an evaluation of the materials they are influenced by their quantity.

In this context another point of interest may be the question concerning other active exercises in speaking since it had not been taught to all the students. Only 60 percent admitted that they had had some experience with that sort of class, still they believe it is quite important and they would like to have more of it — 55 percent of those who had it think that the time devoted to it

was not sufficient. Also 44 percent of those who had this type of exercises think that the materials were very poor.

The general evaluation of teaching materials was also aimed at in two further questions which dealt with the degree of difficulty of the materials. The impression one gets from the answers to these questions is that the materials are too easy since 31.1 percent of the students agreed that they are very easy and 68.9 percent categorised them as manageable while nobody said they are difficult.<sup>3</sup> Of all 45 students 53.4 percent thought that the teaching materials should be more difficult, 33.3 percent were uncertain about it and only 13.6 percent would like them to be kept on the same level of difficulty but none strongly disagree with the statement: "I would prefer to have more difficult materials to work with in the language laboratory". Of those who agree with that statement 20 evaluated the materials as either good or satisfactory and none of those who disagree think the materials are good. Hence, for those who would like to make a greater effort while learning, it is important to have interesting and stimulating materials but, for those students who prefer not to work too hard it does not matter how interesting the materials are, since, unless too difficult, the materials are more stimulating when they require more work.

Since the questionnaire did not ask about the techniques and procedures applied it is difficult to judge whether it is possible to improve the teaching materials simply by changing the techniques to make more stimulating and more difficult tasks for the students, or whether only the content of the materials should be taken into consideration.

The further analysis of the materials used has been done on the basis of the results of other questions. The first of these gave information about the types of exercises used in teaching abilities 1 to 6 (mainly phonetics and grammar). One attempted to find out whether the exercises are limited to mechanical and repetitive drills or whether there are some more varied exercises requiring creativity. It was found that most of the exercises are mechanical, the mean percentage for the 6 types is 81.5 percent and percentages for each of the abilities taught are shown in Table 2.

The students were instructed to give further explanation on the kind of exercises if they said that they were not mainly mechanical. Of those who said "no" to this question 5 gave extra information about type 4, two about type 3, and two about type 6, and one about types 2 and 5. Type 3 exercises other than pattern practice were meaningful drills and contrastive exercises; type 6 exercises were described as "demanding understanding and thinking" and constructing new dialogues on the basis of the ones heard was mentioned. The type 4

\* Similar results were obtained by Zarska (1975).

explanation put stress on the possibility of self-control while listening again to the tape which shows that the exercise was actually nothing else but a four-phase drill and reveals that the student did not realize that this should be an ordinary way of practising all kinds of drills. The type 2 explanation mentioned practising the same intonation pattern in various contexts and in the type 2 and

Table 2

Percentage of students describing drills as mechanical

| ability                                  | %    |
|--|------|
| segmental phonetics                      | 95.6 |
| intonation                               | 97.8 |
| grammar exercises                        | 64.4 |
| exercises in conscious self-control      |      |
| over FL pronunciation                    | 64.4 |
| repetition of longer sentences           | 86.7 |
| repeating and memorizing short dialogues | 80.0 |

5 comment the student said that the sentences practised were too long and too difficult for repetition.

All the comments are fairly vague; still, they provide the information about meaningful, contrastive and situational exercises being used. It seems, however, that this must have been rather exceptional, or that the presentation and practising was not done satisfactorily because only very few students noticed that the exercises were of a different kind even though they had some knowledge of teaching materials and techniques. Therefore, it seems to be important to look more closely at the methods and techniques employed in the laboratory.

Similar answers were gathered to a further question. There were 48.9 percent of the students who maintained that listening comprehension is limited to answering questions, and there were 37.8 percent who disagreed. 11 commented giving as an example the retelling of a story from a different point of view, vocabulary exercises and discussions based on a text heard beforehand, the latter being a useful productive exercise for which there is no need, however, to use the language laboratory.

Productive exercises were discussed in questions concerning the evaluation of the active exercises in speaking. The highest score was given to answering questions about a previously heard text which students seem to have most experience with; 93.3 percent of them said that it is most valuable. 86.6 percent think that role-playing and oral summary are very useful and only 68.8 percent praise repetition, with 4.4 percent who consider it to be a

waste of time. Since oral translation and role-playing are regarded as valuable exercises and since these two types of exercises are hardly ever used, as it was revealed by the teachers' oral comments on the laboratory classes, it seems necessary to introduce them possibly in place of some repetitive drills. For this sort of exercises to be used in the laboratory a lot of manipulation with students' tape recorders is required: so at present they are not used at all. This, however, should not present too many problems in execution since the students are eager to cooperate and appreciate the possibility of working with their own recorders very much. 88.7 percent think that it is useful to use them both for listening from one track and working on the other track recording their answers, comments, etc.

Another problem which the questionnaire was concerned with was the relationship between language laboratory activities and those in the classroom. 66.7 percent of the students say that the laboratory classes are not integrated with the rest of the course and 24.4 percent do not know. It seems then necessary to increase the cooperation between teachers of practical English and also between those teaching in the laboratory and teaching other courses than practical English because they also could use the language laboratory for their own purposes.

The students believe that the laboratory classes should be an integral part of the practical English course and they seem to blame the teachers for the lack of coordination. They think that teachers should function in the language laboratory not actually by teaching but only by monitoring them, detecting and correcting errors. Since they are accustomed to listening to the tape and repeating recorded instructions they do not realize that it is the teacher who actually tries to teach them the language and that the tapes are only a medium of instruction. Therefore, they underestimate the role of a teacher; 22.2 percent of the group opined that it was only the materials which helped them in the work in the laboratory, which is worrying even though 77.7 percent praise both the teachers and materials.

The last two groups of questions dealt with visual aids and other non-aural materials. It seems that students are glad to use them, especially all sorts of booklets with texts and exercises.

Although the questionnaire generally served its purpose, it seems that some changes should be made before it is used for the further investigation of the effectiveness of the language laboratory. To mention but a few possible improvements, scale II could be rebuilt and the questions grouped according to whether they are concerned with occupational (job and career) or social (parental encouragement, social recognition, etc.) matters.

There is an obvious need for the explanation of the students' attitude towards native speakers as foreigners and as teachers. At present it is impossible to state why they want native speakers teachers even if they are not partic-

ularly interested in acquiring native-like accent. Therefore, it seems necessary to expand scale III (attitude towards native speakers) especially the part asking if they prefer to be taught by a Pole; this should aim at achieving a picture of differences between Polish and foreign teachers.

Some names of the types of classes should be changes, like exercises in conscious self-control over foreign language pronunciation because large number of missing observations suggests that some students did not understand what kind of exercises were thought of; or to explain by adding a group of questions dividing the active exercises in speaking into various kinds like role-playing, dialogues, and exercises in simulated situations, etc.

Some other questions may be moved into different parts of the questionnaire and some other may be dropped, for example, the one asking for an appraisal of printed materials could be transferred from the end of the questionnaire to the part where the tape materials are evaluated.

On the basis of the results of the questionnaire presented above it seems possible to formulate the following hypotheses and suggestions:

1. the students of the fourth year are poorly motivated and it is possible that their motivation decreases during the process of study and therefore it seems to be necessary to try to maintain and reinforce it;

2. the syllabus for the language laboratory should be coordinated with syllabuses for other practical English courses so that parts of the material taught could be prepared in the classroom and only drilled in the laboratory, and on the other hand materials used in the laboratory, for example listening comprehension, could be further used in the classroom conversations and discussions; also teachers of other courses should be encouraged to cooperate with laboratory teachers and use recorded materials as illustrations, for example to illustrate sociolinguistic differences in speech, etc.;

3. since materials used in the laboratory are easy and this is one of the reasons for the tediousness of the course, they should be made a little bit more difficult and varied. The use of non-aural materials suggests itself as very useful — not only pictures and slides but first of all booklets with grammar exercises, or exercises in note taking;

4. it seems necessary to reduce the number of mechanical drills and to replace them with cognitive exercises (examples can be found in Dakin's book) and to expand the range of listening comprehension, which now is limited to answering questions, and other active exercises in speaking, like role-playing or translation;

5. translation exercises in particular and many other exercises require the use of a tape recorder by a student and it must be said that if the laboratory is to be different from a tape recorder in the classroom each student should use his/her tape recorder and not be limited to listening only to the master tape.



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