
Theoretical Overview

TOWARDS A VIEW OF LANGUAGE AND TEACHING IN TERMS OF THE TIME- SPACE CONTINUUM: AN ECOLOGICAL APPROACH

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Abstract

Proxemics, defined as the study of the cultural patterns in the spaces between people, is an under-explored aspect of English Language Teaching. Taking the ideas of E.T Hall, Geert Hofstede and M.A.K, Halliday as its starting point, the first part of this paper looks at lexico-grammar, reading, writing, spoken language and classroom interaction in terms of the cultural spaces between us when we communicate in English in Asia. In so far as time shapes our experience of space, time will be included as a spatial dimension in the discussion.

By understanding the role of spaces in the ways we learn or teach, we may develop more effective concrete practices in our classrooms. These spaces need to be hybrid forms of the different cultures found in the classroom environment. As an introduction to the use of proxemics in English Language Teaching, this paper describes the spaces within the text between the text and the writer and the reader, between students and teachers in the classroom and between the students and teachers when they speak to each other in English. In conceptualizing these spaces, it is suggested that we think, at least metaphorically, of language as geometrical in design.

As proxemic space is basically culturally shaped, this paper will concentrate on the impact of cultural space and how it influences the learning of English.

The second part of the paper will explain how the space identified in the first part may be made concrete in terms of one aspect of the teaching-learning process: the feedback system created by the teacher in collaboration with the student and with other teachers. Issues to be addressed include the ethics of the process, the humanistic values implicit in the process, the organic practices of ecological approaches to teaching, the production of authentic communicative dialogue between the teacher and the student and within each student, and the view that ecological writing has much to learn from the use of literature in language teaching.

The conclusion of the paper will relate this approach to broader humanistic concerns about the ways we research language and language teaching based on the idea that when we collaborate effectively, we are creating an environment in which real learning is fostered in ways that may have been downplayed in recent years or in contexts where the teacher's role has become overly mechanized and devalued. It is this change of emphasis which may lead to a reevaluation of the importance of the teacher and the student as human beings in the language learning process.

Key Words: Proxemics, ecological approach, English language teaching, cultural space, communicative dialogue.

มุมมองเรื่องช่องว่างและความต่อเนื่องของภาษาและการสอน: วิธีการเชิงนิเวศน์
บทคัดย่อ

Proxemics: ได้รับคำนิยามว่าเป็นการศึกษารูปแบบทางวัฒนธรรมที่ยังมีช่องว่างในเรื่องการสอนภาษาอังกฤษที่ยังมีการศึกษาวิจัยน้อย บทความนี้จะเริ่มจากความคิดของ ET Hall, Geert Hofstede และ MA, K, Halliday โดยจะศึกษาไวยากรณ์ระดับคำ (lexico-grammar) การอ่าน การเขียน ภาษาพูด และการมีปฏิสัมพันธ์ในชั้นเรียนในแง่ของช่องว่างทางวัฒนธรรมระหว่างผู้ที่สื่อสารด้วยภาษาอังกฤษในทวีปเอเชีย เนื่องจากเวลาเป็นสิ่งที่สร้างประสบการณ์ในเรื่อง ช่องว่างของเวลา และบทความนี้จะกล่าวถึงการอภิปรายเรื่องเวลาในมิติช่องว่างของเวลาต่อไป

ความเข้าใจบทบาทของช่องว่างในวิธีการเรียนรู้หรือการสอนอาจนำไปสู่ความสามารถในการพัฒนาวิธีปฏิบัติในห้องเรียนที่เป็นรูปธรรมและมีประสิทธิภาพมากขึ้น ช่องว่างเหล่านี้จะต้องมีรูปแบบผสมผสานของวัฒนธรรมที่แตกต่างกันซึ่งพบได้ในบรรยากาศในห้องเรียน เพื่อเป็นการแนะนำการใช้ Proxemics ในการสอนภาษาอังกฤษ บทความนี้จะอธิบายช่องว่าง ในข้อความ ระหว่างข้อความและระหว่างนักเรียนกับผู้อ่าน ระหว่างนักศึกษาและครูในห้องเรียน และระหว่างนักศึกษาและครูเมื่อพูดคุยกันโดยใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ ในความคิดเรื่อง ช่องว่างจะเสนอแนะว่าอย่างน้อย ควรคิดเปรียบเทียบกับภาษาในเชิงระชาคณิต เนื่องจากช่องว่าง (proxemic) ถูกกำหนดโดย วัฒนธรรม บทความนี้จะเน้นผลกระทบของช่องว่างทางวัฒนธรรมที่มีผลต่อการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ

ส่วนที่สองของบทความนี้จะอธิบายเรื่องช่องว่างซึ่งระบุไว้ในส่วนแรกที่จะทำให้เป็นรูปธรรมได้ในแง่ของกระบวนการ การเรียนการสอน ระบบข้อมูลสะท้อนกลับที่สร้างขึ้นโดยครูผู้สอนโดยความร่วมมือของนักศึกษาและครูท่านอื่น ๆ เรื่องที่จะกล่าวถึงจะรวมเรื่องจริยธรรมของกระบวนการ คุณค่าเชิงมนุษยวิทยาในขั้นตอนการปฏิบัติ วิธีการสอนในรูปแบบการรักษาสภาพแวดล้อม การเจรจาในการสื่อสารที่แท้จริงระหว่างครูและนักศึกษา และระหว่างนักศึกษาแต่ละคน ในมุมมองที่ การเขียนเชิงระบบนิเวศ จะต้องเรียนรู้หรือมากกว่าการใช้วรรณคดีในการสอนภาษา

ข้อสรุปของบทความนี้จะแสดงให้เห็นถึงความเกี่ยวเนื่องระหว่างวิธี proxemic กับมนุษยวิทยาอย่างกว้างๆ ในวิธีวิจัยการเรียนและการสอนภาษาจากความคิดที่ว่าการทำงานร่วมกันได้อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพจะสามารถสร้างสภาพแวดล้อมที่ทำให้เสริมสร้างการเรียนรู้ที่แท้จริง ซึ่งไม่ได้รับการศึกษามาก่อนหน้านี้ หรือในบริบทที่บทบาทของครูได้ถูกมองว่ามี การสอน แบบอัตโนมัติ มากเกินไปจนค่าของครูลดลง การเปลี่ยนแปลงจุดเน้นที่สำคัญนี้อาจนำไปสู่การให้ความสำคัญที่มากขึ้น ของครูและนักศึกษานในการเป็นมนุษย์ในกระบวนการเรียนภาษา

Introduction

This paper stems from a dissatisfaction with the ways we conceptualise language and the ways we teach language. Taking a lead from Spinoza's *Ethics*, I want to explore the possibilities of seeing language and the teaching of language as geometrically defined, not arithmetically analysed as is the case with most psychometric or parametric research which claims to be quantitatively based. In other words, number (frequency, distribution and probability) may be less important than the shapes of language and the spaces in which language is created and used. At the same time, I want to

avoid making a hasty suggestion that the study of language is a scientific enterprise in the sense that science is often assumed to mean a positivistic objective statement of universal truths. Geometry is just as much an art as a science.

While Spinoza (1667) used Euclid's geometry of straight or curved lines, I (Conlon, 2009) would suggest that we need a new geometry; a more fractal one as is found in Chaos Theory. I would further suggest that this geometry look at the space defined or shaped by the fractal lines rather than the border lines themselves. The apparently empty spaces inside the patterns are what I suggest are the cultural and social forces that actually shape or define the lines around them. This may sound counter-intuitive, but when we turn the model of geometry inside out, we see that the "empty" space creates the lines rather than the lines contain or shape the space. We just as easily may think of an object and then realize it as a triangle as we think of a triangle and then look for a content that resembles that shape. In terms of grammar theory, the corollary to this inversion would be to see that our thought shapes or determines our grammar instead of our grammar rules generating thought. Such an inversion has been suggested by Halliday (1985) when he points out that meaning precedes the selection of a grammatical form, whereas traditional, more Aristotelean categorical models of grammar have assumed that we use the grammatical rules to generate our thoughts. This traditional view has been questioned since the time of Francis Bacon if not before, but has persisted as a distorting influence on linguistics that still seems to predominate in ELT.

While the approach to seeing language as a spatial patterning of sound or speech may offer a way of understanding the meaningfulness of visual patterns, we should at the same time remember that there is an auditory perspective or way of synaesthetically seeing with our ears or hearing with our eyes (as seems to happen when we read "silently"). In other words, sound, as in music or speech is patterned prosodically, melodically, and temporally. These sounds too are patterned in ways that may be approached through the reconceptualisation of linguistic space in fractal geometrical terms.

When we think of language and learning as spaces, we should not ignore the role of time as a part of space, as the fourth dimension. We

recognize this in our language when we talk of difficult texts that require a “long” time to read. Length is also often seen in terms of the length of a text which requires much time to read. Time is also taken when the language of a text seems to slow us down. A dense texts (text that is lexically dense and heavily nominalised in grammatical ways), requires us to slow our reading and feel the difficulty of reading it as a packed text that seems to impede our progress through it as a linguistic space.

The nexus between time and space may also be understood in terms of the length of time it takes to write a text. Many creative writers, such as Thomas Mann and Jack London, approached their writing task each day in terms of setting limits to how much and how long they would write; for example, Jack London worked for two hours or a thousand words, whichever came first.

The technical word for this matrix of time and space is “chronotope”, a word used by Bakhtin (1981) in his study of the novel as a genre. Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 44ff.) point out that ontological metaphors express the reality that time is space. They extend this idea to suggest that the experience or conceptualization of reality is defined metaphorically. I would consider the possibility of extending this point to see the word “reality” as embodying a metaphorical perception, and therefore much of what we understand as reality is an artistic creation which we realize in the time and space of our language.

If we think of reality as a matter of our perceptions of time and space, then it seems to make sense that we need a grammar and a theory of learning that explains language and its acquisition in terms of these forces or variables. We also need to consider the principles of phonology in terms of a yet to be developed model of a space-time continuum. Once these linguistic and pedagogical descriptions have been made, it may be possible to approach the study of language learning in terms of the broad experience of time and space; not as an axis or linear chart, but as a continuous flow of experience similar to our metaphorical uses of water in audio-visual imagery as I suggest elsewhere (2003).

When we as teachers approach the task of teaching the English language to speakers of other languages, we, perhaps unwittingly, think of the language as a foreign thing. This perspective of distance is implicit in the term “English as a Foreign Language” or EFL. As a foreign thing, English is distant, external or outside the student. Such an approach has increasingly been seen as an imperialistic import that threatens to take over the linguistic cultural space inhabited by the target learner. The political space opened by the debates over the role of English in Asia has served as an arena in which we call into question the distance between the native speaker (NS) teacher and the non-native speaker (NNS) students.

The problematic associated with an EFL approach has led to a reconsideration of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in which the language actually used by the NNS is accepted as inhabiting a space with its own linguistically valid parameters. Linguists who have argued for the accentuation of ELF have sought to overturn the old power distance between the inner circle theorists/ teacher trainers and the expanding or outer circle teachers and students. While EFL space was characterized as distant and understood in terms of a top-down relationship where the NS teacher had power as the owner of the language and the student was seen as a passive learner or consumer of what was deemed acceptable English, ELF narrows the space between the student and the language by pointing out that the language is inside the student as his or her own English. While the terminology of the concentric circles first developed by Kachru (1986) carries in it the old paradigm of distance, it remains to be reconstituted in terms of the inversion of the circles whereby the outer circles have their own spaces and can be studied as ecosystems of the constantly morphing English language. Such circles may be divergent to the point where “outer circle” English shapes what has been seen as core or “inner circle” English.

It could be argued that theories such as World Englishes and Globish have within them an unexpressed view of the space occupied by the English language. In such theories’ recognition of the new realities of how the English language is morphing as it lives in different spaces there may be room to think of how we create these models as spaces in which to study the new varieties of English. When the ASEAN 2015 policy is implemented in South-East Asia, a space will open or expand in which we can study and teach the English language in ways that do not damage the ecosystem of the

language here. Hopefully, one product of the ASEAN 2015 policy will be that we have the time and space in which to think of how time and space may be studied as the two main variables in how our ecosystem maintains itself. As teachers, we need to understand what is happening in our classrooms in new ecological ways: how our language and actions are shaped by the students and our own experience of space and time.

As all language and teaching is local, such acts are shaped by sociocultural forces understood in terms of time and space. The environment of the classroom, understood as the time and space experience in which the language is used, studied and learned in it is also an ecosystem.

While such ideas as have been considered above may seem foreign or new in ELT, there are several theorists whose work may be used as scaffolding on which to enunciate a theory of language and teaching which addresses the ecological issues we have raised. In the work of E.T. Hall, Geert Hofstede and M.A.K. Halliday there are several possibilities for deepening our understanding of what the issues are that need to be addressed in an ecological approach to ELT. Before considering briefly their ideas, it may be helpful to place the discussion in a concrete context. One such context comes from my own experience as a teacher in Thailand. The next section will state this experience in terms of a problem often faced by the “foreign” language teacher here.

THE TALE OF TWO CLASSES

I have two sections of students. These sections seem to be at the same level at the beginning of the course but by the end of the course, one section seems to make more progress than the other section.

Conventional possible explanations:

1. I prefer or like the students in one section more than I do the students in the other section
2. The “pre-test” (and/or “post-test”) was faulty in some way
3. The two sections met at different times (morning and late afternoon)
4. I was in a better mood in the mornings or afternoons

All of these explanations have been studied to some extent. Teachers' research methodology and teaching methodology courses have hopefully made them aware of the Halo effect, the Hawthorn effect, etc.

Teachers' and/or students' journals have been used to gain insight into how students and teachers in such classes think and feel about what is happening in the lessons.

But, without a deeper understanding of the sociocultural forces of time and space, much of this research won't be effective because it has only looked at the class in an atomized or overly analytical way by breaking things down too much without looking at the aspects of culture (educational culture) that Hall and Hofstede identify as important. Nor has such research looked closely at the actual language being used, taught and learned in those classes in terms of the ecology of the classroom.

In the research paradigms that have been used in ELT, emphasis has been placed on the visible, the tangible, empirically observable facts. What have been overlooked too often are the invisible, the hidden, actions and words we all use in our classes all the time, even when we are not speaking. In terms discussed in the introduction, we have been looking at the lines instead of the spaces inside those lines.

In *Chaos in the Classroom* (2009), I have tried to look at the ways students communicate with their teachers in many different ways, not just by speaking Thaiglish or English or Thai etc. They communicate so much more through their voices, their tone of voice, their body language, the ways they present themselves and their work, etc. I argue that we as teachers have often been blind or deaf to these attempts to communicate with us, often because of the confusion or ignorance we feel about the students' cultures.

When we are blind or deaf to the students' rich and various communications, we are making the students' communications acts seem invisible and silent (the blankness that we have overlooked inside the geometrical shapes). Such a result can clearly be harmful as it tends to make students lose motivation and trust in us and in themselves.

This blindness and deafness needs to be addressed. We can't fob it off by just saying that it is a truism that we as human beings mis-communicate more often than we communicate effectively. Such an excuse should be unacceptable for a teacher of language, or for any other teacher for that matter.

If we are ever to get to the bottom of the mysteries of class dynamics, we need to study the interactions between all the participants, the teacher and the students, in terms of their habitation of the space and time in their class. In other words, we need to study our problem from an ecological perspective. In order to do this, we need to revisit what others have found in their research on language and society. Three possible starting points, the work of Hall, Hofstede and Halliday, will now be briefly discussed in order to highlight some possible links between them that may be used in enunciating the problem we have researching ELT situations in the way I have been advocating here.

E.T. Hall

Hall (1969) suggests that there is a "hidden language" of space. His view is that our cultures shape the spaces we experience in our daily lives. One implication of his approach is that there may not be any empty space (a vacuum): The space between two speakers or a speaker and an audience is meaningful. As the space changes by shrinking in distance or angle, so too might the language being used in that space. Hall points out that we have several different voices depending on the type of space we are in at the time: intimate space or distance, personal space, public space etc. He also interestingly links this space to our bodies' biology and the chemicals we emit or send and we receive in a tactile way through our skin and nose (our sense of smell and touch). His point is that in our social environment, it is not only the things we see, the visible objects, but the spaces between these things and between these things and ourselves that have meaning to us and that this meaning is cultural.

One result of this space being hidden or invisible is that we often are not consciously aware of it and its effect on the way we think and act.

Geert Hofstede

Hofstede (1991) has suggested that culture is software which we use to program our mind. While leaving aside the unfortunate implications such an extended metaphor may hold and the perhaps Eurocentric or Western aspects of the categories he uses, the point that links him to Hall's ideas is that he sees culture in terms of five dimensions which seem to have spatial qualities. These may be understood or visualized in terms of the distances between two polar opposites on a cline.

- The cline between the individual and the group
- The cline between a need for certainty and a willingness to accept uncertainty
- The cline between masculine and feminine "values" or attitudes
- The cline between a high power distance and a low power distance
- The cline between a long term perspective and a short term perspective

All five of these dimensions can be understood in terms of the physical spaces they imply between people who are being studied in terms of their positions on the clines. These spaces indicate a person's attitude towards others who are in his or her immediate surroundings at the time they are being observed.

M.A.K. Halliday

Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) explains the ways we organize our language in terms which suggest that the relationships between text and discourse, grammar and lexis, the spoken and the written forms of language are all intertwined and need to be studied as existing in an ecosystem: holistically as well as in detail.

In a nutshell, Halliday looks at how what happens in one part of a text or a discourse influences or shapes what happens elsewhere in that text or discourse. His approach to grammar allows him to show how the lexico-grammar is the material, visible or audible "thing" that creates these shapes and influences. This SFG approach explains how our speech or writing is organized.

This organization, as Halliday constantly reminds us, is a natural thing. (It is also, he warns, a messy thing)

What has not been fully studied yet is the way our lexico-grammar, our voices and writing, our texts and discourses, influence the cultural spaces identified by Hall or the cultural distances identified by Hofstede. The question that needs to be discussed is: Can these three systems or ways be used in conjunction with each other to help us study what happens in a classroom?

Four Areas or Spaces for Expanded Research into the Proxemics of ELT

In order to develop an ecological approach to teaching English in Thailand, work needs to be done on the proxemic qualities of many things. The following are a series of non-exhaustive lists of linguistic and pedagogical topics that could be further explored in a more comprehensive study of the roles of space and time in ELT using the ideas of Hall, Hofstede and Halliday .

1. Internal Textual Proxemics:

1. Collocations
2. Colligations
3. Lexical strings
4. Lexical density
5. Textual cohesion
6. Readability factors: print size, length of text, etc.
7. Sentence length
8. Amount of empty or white space on a page
9. Visual information such as lists, charts, etc.
10. Paragraph size
11. Open or closed narratives
12. Genre conventions
13. Prepositions and prepositional phrases
14. Text length
15. Modality
16. Transitivity
17. Nominalisation
18. Cataphora and anaphora

19. Discourse markers or sign posts
20. Formality and informality
21. Adjacency pairs
22. Textual cohesion
23. Intertextuality

2. External Textual Proxemics:

1. The writer's voice
2. The reader's voice in the head or the voice when reading aloud
3. The impact of the dimensions identified by Hofstede: uncertainty avoidance, power distance, etc.
4. Familiarity with Roman script as opposed to Thai script
5. Critical distance or attack skills in reading
6. Writer's tone (authoritative, personal, conversational, etc.)
7. Authenticity
8. "Cramming" techniques in textbooks
9. Visualised meanings: metaphors, prosodic features, etc.
10. A sense of an audience; its size and seating
11. A sense of the writer's presence
12. Politeness
13. Accent as a sign of speech community membership
14. Textual power distance
15. Textual certainty and uncertainty language
16. The long or short time perspective of the writer's language
17. The readability of the text
18. The print used in the text

3. Proxemic spaces between students:

1. Where students sit: front or back of room
2. Room size
3. Crowding or class size
4. Seating: movable chairs or fixed desks
5. How close students sit and work in groups
6. Gender issues
7. Mood of students
8. Uniforms: cohesion or conformity?

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9. Nationalities of students: international or from one country?
 10. Polite speaking volume
 11. Social status: economic, political, ethnic, educational background
 12. All five of Hofstede's dimensions

4. Proxemic spaces between the teacher and the students:

1. Cultural attitudes towards a teacher and a student
2. Where the teacher stands or sits
3. How close a teacher can be to a student: ways of not touching students
4. The use of cyber-technology: power-point, blackboard, whiteboard, etc.
5. Eye contact
6. Classroom management: pointing, arranging groups, etc.
7. Enabler teachers who sit with students
8. Mobile or stationary teachers
9. Lecterns, podiums, etc.: linear or polysynchronous lines of flight or flight distances
10. Ways of monitoring in-class work
11. Pointing feet
12. Motioning for a student to come closer: waving the hand
13. Noisy rooms often seem to be smaller rooms
14. Teachers who sit on furniture or slouch
15. Teacher's facial expression, tone of voice, etc.
16. All five of Hofstede's dimensions

While the description of these qualities is being made, it is important that the researcher and the teacher understand the descriptions in an ecofriendly way by developing a sensitivity to the ethics of such an approach. It is also necessary to remember that each class is different as it comprises different human beings doing similar but not identical things. Every change in an initial condition will produce, over time, divergent linguistic and pedagogical actions. Such an ethics would need to cover, among other things, the following five humanistic actions:

Humanistic Ethics: cross-cultural and professional actions:

1. Seeing the students as culturally situated human beings

2. Seeing the class and the lesson through the students' cultural eyes
3. Bridging the cultural spaces between you and your students in a hybrid cultural way
4. Using authentic and relevant teaching materials or textbooks which are aware of the cultural proxemics of the students: space as a local concept: *All teaching is local.*
5. The feedback process enables a teacher *to show* the students that the teacher cares for their views and experiences and wants to know them as human beings and on their own terms.

Ecolinguistics

When looked at in the ways I have suggested, then the ecology of language advocated in Ecolinguistics needs to be wider in its terms of reference than just a metaphor or a study of the ways language and the natural environment interact as two distinct things, or in terms of a discourse analysis.

The language is an organic part of the classroom environment. So, it is more than a metaphorical ecology we are looking at. As an organic part of the class, it is not a separate thing to the environment. Nor should a discourse analysis (a necessary tool for the study of linguistic ecosystems) of what is happening in the class environment fail to seek to fully explain what is happening to communications in the class. It is through acts of communication that the class' ecology is maintained.

For a student or teacher interested in pursuing the ideas we have been discussing, the following is a list of linguistic topics that probably should be understood before looking at the environment outside or around the texts that are used in the class.

Preliminary Research Issues

1. How a text organizes feedback loops in itself
2. How a discourse changes or morphs when we change our inputs into it
3. How our spoken and written communications feedback on each other and so shape and change each other

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4. How the lexis and grammar we use interact with each other and with our paralinguistic communications
 5. How our cultures in part influence and shape all of these things
 6. How we create, maintain and change the physical spaces in our language and in our teaching and learning practices
 7. How these physical spaces also create, maintain and change our language

One theme or eternally recurring motif in these issues is the feedback process. While the idea of language feeding back on itself has not been explored in ecolinguistics, it needs to be understood that through feedback language morphs and grows. This is most clearly seen in the writing process where drafts of texts are prepared.

Feedback

Elsewhere, I (2008) have identified 25 positive effects of feedback between the teacher and students. Many of these aspects have a proxemic quality: feedback opens, closes, or changes the spaces and distances between the teacher and the students. Some of the more tangible proxemic aspects of feedback are:

1. It is supportive and builds scaffolding
2. It shows the student that the teacher cares about what the student has to say
3. It helps students understand that any text is more than just a collection of grammar and vocabulary rules
4. It elicits real language from the teacher and the students
5. It shows and doesn't just tell the students what the teacher is trying to teach
6. It stresses effective communication and negotiation of meaning and learning
7. It enables the teacher and students to integrate their language use in real (authentic) dialogues
8. It creates synergies
9. It builds trust between the participants who disclose what they think and feel about what is happening in the environment
10. It provides continuous and "natural" stimulation of language production

All of these effects will in turn feedback into the ecosystem of the class and contribute to the maintenance of a positive or effective dynamic of learning. Such an environment is, at least in my view, a healthy thing. While it may seem to produce a lot of redundancies and even seem wasteful to some, we should remember that learning quite often occurs despite, or around the edges of, what we directly teach or communicate to our students. Such learning is more than incidental or accidental: it is ecological learning.

Caveat

The one drawback to all this in practice is that it takes a lot of effort from both teachers and students to create and maintain such a feedback system. Students may need to be explicitly taught about how to use this feedback process to its full extent. It also requires voluminous amounts of thick data from the researcher who must be willing to study language, teaching and communication in relationships with each other.

It may turn out that if such a way was fully implemented, the teacher and students may experience a paradigm shift in their views of what a classroom is and how it can work.

While we must recognize that in any classroom there are many different cultures and sub-cultures and that each one of these has its own rules for proxemic space, it would be wrong to dismiss as impossible the tasks of organizing and utilizing all of the spaces. We need to approach teaching with a new way of seeing things: a *Chaos Theory of Education*. These ideas have been discussed in more detail in Conlon (2009).

Finally, there is the question of finding materials that offer representations of the chronotopes I have been considering.

Literature as Language Learning Material:

Stories, novels, films, songs, music videos etc. are sources of material and language which have implicit and explicit proxemic spaces. As Hall stresses, artists have always been sensitive to the spaces and distances between

people. We need authentic, culturally relevant materials which have an opening for the student to enter them through. Materials created by students, Asian writers, etc. can be found which bridge the gap that often exists between the Asian student and the Western writer or teacher. With the explosion of creative works being produced in English by Asian artists, this material should not be hard to find. Elsewhere, I (2011) have extended many of the ideas set out here in a study of Pira' Sudham's novel *Shadowed Country* (2005). In that essay, I attempted to describe the ways a text is shaped by the writer's cultural understanding of proxemics in relation to the theme of death.

In so far as the reader's schemata matter in teaching the skill of reading, the choice of materials in which the writer shares the student's deeply rooted cultural proxemics seems to be a promising way of encouraging our students to see more in the texts we use than just a collection of grammar rules and new words. Such texts may actually be open to the student, so that he or she can enter into them and enjoy the ecosystem that is any great work of literary art.

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