Two Case Studies of Community Language Learning with Possible Implications for the Natural Order Hypothesis

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ABSTRACT
This article sets out to describe two experimental series of community language learning—type sessions and to examine the data generated by them in terms of the realisations of functions focused on during them. It goes on to discuss implications that this may have for the natural order hypothesis. It begins with brief descriptions of both the methodology and the hypothesis.

A Brief Description of Community Language Learning

Those unfamiliar with this particular methodology who would like to find out more about it than is provided in the following brief discussion are advised to start their investigation with one of the excellent chapters in Richards and Rodgers or Larsen-Freeman.

One attractive feature of the methodology is that unlike several other fairly recent methodological innovations in language teaching there seems to be no strictly applied orthodoxy. Practitioners are relatively free to adopt and adapt specific techniques, adhering as much or as little to the classical version of the methodology as circumstances and the user's judgement dictate.

The variation used in the events described in this report was as follows; lessons were approximately 50 minutes in length and were conducted either daily or twice daily. Each lesson was broken down into two distinct but related phases which are traditionally labelled the investment and the reflection phase.

Investment Phase

Learners in a group of 8-9 were seated in an inward facing circle with the teacher (for reasons associated with this person's role vis a vis the learners he/she is normally referred to as a resource person [RP] rather than a teacher—I shall use the former term from this point, for the time being) outside the circle. The learners have at their disposal

a simple cassette tape recorder with a built-in microphone and are instructed in its use before the beginning of the first lesson. The learners decide what to say in the target language [TL] and in mother tongue [MT] request the necessary realisation of what they want from the RP. They make their request publicly and loud enough for everyone in the group to hear. The RP whispers the TL realisation into the ear of the student who requested it, who is then allowed and encouraged to rehearse the utterance as many times as necessary out loud before recording it on the cassette recorder. The next student (normally this is the person addressed by the first student) then follows the same pattern, making a public request, getting the necessary language relatively privately from the RP, rehearsing and then recording. Between each recording, of course, the pause mechanism of the cassette recorder is activated so that at the end of the investment phase, which typically lasts eight to ten minutes, there is on the tape a coherent, apparently fluent and reasonably well pronounced dialogue.

Reflection Phase

This follows on directly from the investment phase and is conducted in MT or a language held in common between teacher and learners. The term teacher has now become once more a legitimate label for the role of the practitioner involved in this phase, who is normally but not necessarily the same person as the RP of the investment phase. Learners and teacher then reflect upon and discuss their reflections in two areas. The first is methodological and under this heading and with the teacher's guidance the class are invited to explore the affective dimensions of this kind of learning experience—how they felt, how much they felt they were helping or inhibiting each other, how their motivation was increased or decreased etc.

      The second area of reflection involves the actual language input of the investment phase and now the learners are invited to listen to and appreciate their dialogue, request further syntactic, phonological or orthographic information, further vocabulary, drilling or indeed any other form of exploitation of the material that occurs to them.

      On the surface this phase would seem, potentially at least, to have much in common with a traditional language lesson but two key components are sufficiently different to require stressing. First the *content* of the lesson—its linguistic forms, theme and the functions realised—has been determined not by the teacher, the coursebook or any external syllabus but rather by the freely expressed needs of the learners as perceived by them. Secondly, the procedures followed during the lesson are largely dictated by the learners—they request more vocabulary when they feel they can take it, they seek out paradigms and explanations from the teacher when they perceive them as being helpful.

The Natural Order Hypothesis

It is in the nature of linguistic research and its subsequent applications that once a proposal has been labelled later critics and refiners of the concept will spend much time examining and criticising the label as well as the concept. The phenomenon I am about to describe has enjoyed a proliferation of labels. I have chosen Krashen's but the same

phenomenon, or one very similar, will elsewhere be found described as 'natural route,' 'natural sequence' and no doubt by other similar names.

The following account of the natural order hypothesis must, necessarily, be brief but readers with an interest in this area are recommended the relevant sections of Klein, Ellis, Littlewood and Krashen *(Second Language Acquisition)*.

As the name suggests, then, the general proposition of this hypothesis is that under normal circumstances infants acquiring their mother tongue do so in a more or less predictable sequence. This sequence has been examined over the last two or three decades in a variety of studies (both longitudinal and cross-sectional) nearly all of which have concentrated on exposing the apparent sequence of acquisition of a small selection of structure words and inflectional endings which are collectively though rather eccentrically labelled 'morphemes' in the literature.

After the mainstream studies of infant acquirers of English as MT (e.g. Brown, J. and P. de Villiers) there have followed studies of infants acquiring other first languages, then studies of children acquiring second languages (e.g. Dulay and Burt) and finally studies of adults acquiring second languages (e.g. Bailey *et al.*). In all cases evidence has been found to support, to varying degrees, the hypothesis that: whether we are considering infant, child or adult acquirers, whether this is a first, second or subsequent language, there is a powerful and predictable underlying sequence of acquisition in operation.

From a language teacher's point of view, in the current communicative context, it seems a pity that virtually all the considerable work in this field has concentrated on the 'morphological' level of acquisition. The reasons for this are clear—these so-called morphemes are easily identified and readily elicited in tests.

If, however, we accept the considerable evidence for a natural order of acquisition in the area of syntax, language teachers are bound to be interested in the existence of such an order at other levels of language such as phonology and vocabulary. This article begins a very tentative enquiry into the existence of a natural order of acquisition at a functional level.

Why Choose Community Language Learning as an Exposer of Natural Order?

In any investigation of natural order, whatever the level, if the subjects of the investigation are not, in fact, in a natural acquisition environment then great care must be taken to eliminate what may be the temporary or even long-term effects of teaching. It is conceivable that taught, and consequently, learnt language may have a distorting effect on any analysis of the students' production. Since the sequence of learning is likely to coincide approximately with that of teaching (and how we teachers wish this were more than an approximate coincidence!) and since teaching sequences are often arbitrary, and certainly differ considerably from learning environment to learning environment, the assumption has been made for some time that while teachers go on teaching in a pre-determined sequence that is more or less reflected in their learners' learning sequence, there is a further independent and covert sequence of acquisition. What determines this acquisition sequence is not clear but it seems reasonable to speculate that it may partly, at least, be determined by communicative need. It would seem sensible, in other words, for the organism to equip itself linguistically by giving

priority to the acquisition of those items for which a particularly urgent or immediate communicative need was felt.

It was this speculation that led to the selection of Community Language Learning as a vehicle in these trials. Community Language Learning seems to provide a methodological framework in which there may be a convergence of learning and acquisition sequences. Immediacy of communicative need will determine both the potential acquisition sequence during investment phases and the teaching/learning sequence during the reflection phase.

It was also felt that, if the series of lessons proved long enough, the methodology would also provide concrete evidence of an acquisition sequence in that the transition from teacher dependence to teacher independence (what Curran [130-135] calls the transition from birth/childhood [stages 1 and 2] to adolescence [stages 3 and 4]) seems intimately bound up with the achievement of acquisition. In other words the point at which, during investment phases, students were in a position to contribute utterances direct in TL without seeking the mediation of the RP would demonstrate that the utterance in question had been acquired. Thus a study of such investment stage phenomena would provide some evidence of natural acquisition order.

Case Study 1

Description of the Event

The first series of CLL lessons considered in this study took place in Ourense, Northern Spain, under the auspices of the University of Santiago and with the support of the British Council. The lessons formed the background to a 'Xornadas'—a kind of refresher course for local practising teachers of English in the Spring of 1989.

The CLL group (nine people) were a self-selected sub-group out of the 30 or so participants at the Xornadas. There were representatives of both sexes in the group and they were all young adults.

The target language for this series was Finnish and none of the group had knowingly had any exposure to the language previously. Since the Finnish speaking RP had little or no Spanish and since all the participants were fluent speakers of English the series was a little out of the ordinary in that a second language acted as the mediating language instead of the more normal situation in which mother tongue is the mediating language.

There were a total of six lessons in the series, normally held twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

Transcript of Dialogues

Session one—Wednesday 15th March 12.30

1) Mistä olette kotoisin?   Where are you from?

2) Minä tulen Ourensesta   I come from Ourense

3) Minä tulen Santiagosta — I come from Santiago

4) Minä tulen Santiagosta myöskin — I come from Santiago, too

5) Minä tulen Meksikosta — I come from Mexico

6) Missä te assutte nykyään? — Where are you living these days?

7) Minä asun täällä — I live here

8) Missä te olette tänä kesänä? — Where are you going this summer?

9) Minä menen Taimaahan — I'm going to Thailand

10) Minä jään tänne — I'm staying here

11) Minä menen Itävaltaan — I'm going to Austria

12) Minä menen Englantiin — I'm going to England

13) Luultavasti Englantiin — Probably to England

14) En oikein tiedä — I don't really know

Session two—Wednesday 15th March 18.00

15) Terve — Hello

16) Mikä teidän nimenne on? — What's your name?

17) Minun nimeni on Adolfo — My name's Adolfo

18) Hauska tutustua — Nice to meet you

19) Flirtailetteko? — Are you flirting?

20) Oletteko mustasukkanen? — Are you jealous?

21) En mitenkään — Not at all

22) Jumalan kiitos — Thank God

23) Entäs drinkki tänä iltana? — What about a drink this evening?

24) Olisi hirveän mukava — That'd be very nice

25) Kyllä, minä kanssa — Yes, me too.

Session three—Thursday 16th March 12.15

26) Miten teidän saksantentti mani	How did your German exam go?
27) Ei erinomaisesti	Not brilliantly
28) Oletteko (te) koskan ollut Saksassa?	Have you ever been to Germany?
29) Usean kertaan	A few times
30) Oliko mukava?	Was it nice?
31) Kyllä	Yes
32) Onko kukaan muu teistä ollut Saksassa?	Has anybody else been to Germany?
33) Kyllä	Yes
34) Minä myöskin/(kanssa)	Me too

Session four—Thursday 16th March 18.15

35) Mitä tiedätte·Suomesta?	What do you know about Finland?
36) Se on Ruotsin vieressä	It's next to Sweden
37) On hirveän kylmä	It's terribly cold
38) He juovat votkaa	They drink vodka
39) He puhuvat suomea	They speak Finnish
40) Se on hassu kieli	It's a funny language
41) He eivät pidä ruotsalaisista	They don't like Swedes
42) He käyvät saunassa	They go to sauna

Session five—Friday 17th March 12.15

43) On kuuma täällä	It's hot here
44) Minä en usko	I don't think so
45) Onko teillä kylmä?	Are you cold?
46) Vähän	A little
47) Mutta tänään on aurinkoista	But it's sunny today

48) Niin on	Yes, it is
49) Pidättekö te kursista?	Do you like the course?
50) Kyllä	Yes
51) Pidättekö te lingvistiikasta?	Do you like linguistics?
52) En paljon	Not very much
53) Miksi?	Why?
54) En osaa sanoa miksi	I don't know why

Session six—Saturday 18th March 09.45

55) Kuinka meni viime yönä?	How was it last night?
56) Kysy häneltä	Ask him
57) Mina luulen että hän oli fantastinen	She was fantastic
58) Mihin te menitte?	Where did you go?
59) Oli liian kylmä mennä ulos	It was too cold to go out
60) Ensin menimme drinkille	First we went for a drink
61) Ja sitten söimme	Then we had dinner

Analysis of the Data

The utterances produced during this first series of CLL sessions yielded the following patterns of discourse. Broadly speaking there were two major categories of utterance:

    1. Initiations (or non-responses)

    2. Responses

Initiations fell into three categories:

    1. Requests for information

    2. Suggestions for joint action

    3. Assertions

These led as follows to the following responses (numbers in parentheses indicate line references in the data):

Requests for information:

RESPONSE

type A:	concrete response	(2) (3) (4) (5) (7) (9) (10) (11) (12) (13) (17) (27) (29) (31) (33) (36-42) (46) (50) (52) (57) (59-61)
type B:	avoiding response	(56)
type C:	response indicating incomplete or no knowledge	(14) (53)
type D:	response in the form of a counter-request	(20)
type E:	secondary associative response (e.g.«me, too!»)	(34)

Suggestions for joint action:

RESPONSE

type F:	positive acceptance	(24)
type G:	rejection	*N. B. none found in data*
type H:	unsolicited associative response from 3rd party	(25)

Assertion:

RESPONSE

type J:	agreement	(48)
type K:	disagreement	(44)

Discussion

As can easily be seen from this breakdown of the utterances there was a much wider range of response than initiation—ten distinct types of response compared to three types of initiation, in fact.

More remarkable was the ratio of response to non-response throughout the series. In comparison with informal observations of other series of CLL lessons there was a high rate of response. The actual breakdown session by session was as follows:

SESSION	NON-RESPONSES	RESPONSES
1	3	11
2	6	5
3	4	5
4	1	7
5	6	6
6	2	5
OVERALL	22	39

Overall ratio of non-responses to responses = 1.77

The only clues to this particularly high response rate are found in the first and most particularly the fourth session, where the group can be seen to be reverting to type—perhaps after a particularly strenuous input session and seeking refuge in traditional classroom roles. What seems to happen is that instead of a conversation developing the group has unwittingly nominated one of their number (usually the first speaker) as the 'teacher' the rest are content to be students and the net result is a language drill—i.e. one stimulus and a set of responses.

Functional Analysis of the Data

Functions Found

(Numbers in parentheses indicate line references in the data)

1. Enquiry about home town   [total 1]
   (1)

2. Anticipatible informative responses   [total 26]
   (2), (3), (4), (7), (9), (10), (11), (12), (13), (17), (27), (29), (31), (33), (36), (37), (38), (39), (40), (41), (42), (46), (50), (52), (60), (61)

3. Associative response   [total 3]
   (4), (25), (34)

4. Non-anticipatible response   [total 3]
    (5), (57), (59)

5. Enquiry about current domicile   [total 1]
    (6)

6. Enquiry about holiday plans   [total 1]
    (8)

7. Response indicating ignorance   [total 1]
    (14)

8. Greeting   [total 1]
    (15)

9. Enquiry about name   [total 1]
    (16)

10. Phatic communion   [total 1]
    (18)

11. Challenge on grounds of acceptable behaviour   [total 2]
    (19), (20)

12. Dismissal of challenge   [total 2]
    (20), (21)

13. Expression of relief (or mock relief)   [total 1]
    (22)

14. Suggestion for joint activity   [total 1]
    (23)

15. Acceptance of suggestion   [total 1]
    (24)

16. Enquiry about known past event   [total 2]
    (26), (58)

17. Enquiry about past experience   [total 4]
    (28), (30), (32), (55)

18. Enquiry about general knowledge of target community   [total 1]
    (35)

19. Assertion   [total 1]
    (43)

20. Counter assertion   [total 2]
    (44), (47)

21. Enquiry about personal well-being   [total 1]
    (45)

22. Agreement with assertion/counter assertion   [total 1]
    (48)

23. Enquiry about opinion on current events   [total 3]
    (49), (51), (53)

24. Response avoiding provision of information   [total 2]
    (53), (56)

Case Study 2

Description of the Event

The second series of CLL sessions considered in this study took place at the TESOL Centre at Sheffield City Polytechnic. The lessons formed the language learning component of a short initial training course for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages which took place in February/March 1991.

Once again there were nine people in the group, they were young adults and both sexes were represented. In this case there was no element of self-selection. This extended language learning experience is a compulsory element in the training course and this group of nine was selected arbitrarily, whilst the remainder of the course participants took a course in the same language, of the same duration and conducted by the same RP/teacher but delivered along more traditional eclectic lines.

The target language for this series was Norwegian and again none of the group had knowingly been exposed to the language previously. The RP was a bilingual Norwegian/English speaker.

There were a total of six lessons in the series, in this case spread over some ten working days.

Transcripts of Dialogues

Session one—Tuesday 26th February

1. Hei   Hallo

2. Hei   Hallo

3. Hvordan har du det?   How are you?

4. Takk, bare bra   Fine, thank you

5. Jeg heter Nick. Hva heter du?   My name's Nick. What's your
                                            name?

6. Jeg heter Leonie	My name's Leonie
7. Ha det	Goodbye
8. Ha det	Goodbye

Session two—Wednesday 27th February

9. Hvordan er varet i dag?	What's the weather like today?
10. Det er tåkete	It's foggy
11. Jeg liker ikke tåke, gjør du?	I don't like fog, do you?
12. Nei, ikke jeg heller. Det er vanskelig når du kjører bil	No, I don't either. It's dangerous for driving

Session three—Friday 1st March

13. Unnskyld	Excuse me
14. Ja, hva skal det vare?	Yes, what would you like?
15. Jeg tar en blotkake og en kaffe	I'll have a cream cake and a coffee
16. Jeg tar et wienerbrød	I'll have a Danish pastry
17. Skol det vare noe å drikke?	Would you like something to drink?
18. Ja, jeg tar mineralvann	Yes, I'll have a mineral water
19. Har dere smørbrød?	Do you have any sandwiches?
20. Nei, dessverre, bare kaker	Unfortunately not—only cakes
21. En té med melk, takk	A tea with milk, please
22. Hva blir det?	How much is that?
23. Kr. 32.70	Kr. 32.70
24. Varsågod	There you go
25. Takk	Thank you

Session four—Monday 4th March

26. Jeg kan få en voksen til Bergen	Can I have one adult ticket to Bergen?

27. En vei, eller tur—retur?   One way or return?

28. Tur—retur, takk. Hva blir det?   Return, please. How much is that?

29. Tohundreogfemti kroner   Two hundred and fifty kroner

30. Når går neste tog?   When does the next train go?

31. Halv elleve, fra spor nummer tre   Half past ten, from platform three

32. Takk   Thank you

Session Five—Wednesday 6th March

33. Unnskyld, hvor ligger hotell Bristol?   Excuse me, where is the Bristol Hotel?

34. Det ligger i Storgata   It's in the High Street

35. Hvor er Storgata? Er det langt å gå?   Where is the High Street?

36. Nei, det er like ved   No, it's close by
Det er rett opp i gata til   It's straight along the
høyre   street on the left
Det er en moderne bygning   It's a modern building,
tvers overfor parken   right opposite the park

37. Takk for det   Thank you

Session six—Thursday 7th March

38. God dag   Hallo

39. Varsågod   Can I help you?

40. Har De et varelse ledig?   Have you any rooms free?

41. Et enkeltvarelse eller et dobbetvarelse   Single or double?

42. Et doobeltvarelse, takk   Double, please

43. Vi har et varelse med bad i   We have a room on the
fjerde etasje passer det?   fourth floor with a bath. Is that all right?

44. Er det en heis?   Is there a lift?

45. Ja, heisen er der borte   Yes, the lift is just over there

46. Hva koster det for en natt?	How much is it for a night?
47. Kr. 420	420 kroner
48. Ja, det er bra. Jeg tar det	Yes, that's fine. I'll take it
49. Varelse nr. 48. Her er nøkkelen.	Room number 48. Here's the key
50. Takk	Thank you

Note on the Nature of the Data

Clearly in this second series there is a departure from the patterns of interaction exhibited during the first series. For some reason the group has chosen to role-play from the third session onwards and have done so within the constraints of self-imposed situations rather than being themselves in the here and now. This is one of many choices available to CLL groups and will doubtless have influenced the data in more than a merely thematic way.

Analysis of the Data

The utterances produced during the second series of CLL sessions yielded the following patterns of discourse. Once again there were broadly speaking two major categories of utterance:

    1.   Initiations (or non-responses)

    2.   Responses

Initiations fell once more into three substantial categories, though this time there was a richer variation within these categories than had been apparent in the Ourense series:

    1.   Requests for information or physical objects
    2.   Phatic communion and 'social language'
    3.   Assertions and the provision of unsolicited information

These led to the following responses (numbers in parentheses indicate line references in the data):

Requests for information/physical objects:

    RESPONSE

        type A: concrete responses   (6) (10) (14) (18) (20) (23) (29) (31) (34) (36) (41) (45) (47)

type D: responses in the form
of a counter-request (41)

Phatic communion and 'social language':

RESPONSES

type A: concrete responses (4) (34)

type L: echoic responses (2) (8)

type M: offer of help (38)

type N: acknowledgement (14)

type O: no verbal response (after [37] and [50])

Assertions and the provision of unsolicited information:

RESPONSES

type A: concrete responses (12) (49)

type N: acknowledgement (25)

type O: no verbal response (after [5])

Discussion

Once again this kind of breakdown of the utterances generated in the second CLL series suggests a wider range of response than non-response. Again, if we count examples of no verbal response as a type of response, we have the same ratio as in the first series, i.e. 3 types of initiation and 10 types of response. It is not possible to make too much of this coincidence of discourse between the two series of events, and although it is interesting it must be admitted that the divisions of utterances into the types set up for the purpose of this analysis is to some extent arbitrary. This is particularly true of types of initiation such as «Phatic communion and 'social language'» where utterances as diverse as 'thank you' and 'How are you?' are lumped together more as a matter of convenience than of analytical rigour.

The breakdown of the *number* of responses compared to non-responses as opposed to *types* of response or non-response was as follows:

SESSION	RESPONSES	NON-RESPONSES
1	4	5
2	3	2

3	8	6
4	5	3
5	4	4
6	11	6
OVERALL	35	26

overall ratio of non-responses to responses = 1.35

The reduction in this series of the non-response:response ratio can be accounted for by the use of role-plays no doubt intended by the participants to simulate natural one-to-one conversations.

Functional Analysis of the Data

Functions Found

(numbers in parentheses indicate line references in the data)

1. Greeting   [total 2]
    (1) (38)

2. Echoic response to greeting   [total 1]
    (2)

3. Phatic communion—enquiry about health   [total 1]
    (3)

4. Conventional response to enquiry about health   [total 1]
    (4)

5. Statement of unsolicited information   [total 1]
    (5)

6. Enquiry about name   [total 1]
    (5)

7. Anticipatible informative responses   [total 20]
    (96) (10) (15) (16) (18) (20) (21) (23) (28) (29) (31) (34) (36) (36) (36) (42) (43) (45) (47) (49)

8. Valediction   [total 1]
    (7)

9. Echoic response to valediction   [total 1]
    (8)

10. Enquiry about the weather   [total 1]
    (9)

11. Expression of likes/dislikes   [total 1]
    (11)

12. Invitation to agree   [total 1]
    (11)

13. Associative response   [total 1]
    (12)

14. Expression of opinion   [total 1]
    (12)

15. Seeking of attention   [total 2]
    (13) (33)

16. Acknowledgement   [total 2]
    (14) (25)

17. Enquiry about wishes   [total 2]
    (14) (17)

18. Enquiry about availability of goods or services   [total 4]
    (19) (30) (40) (44)

19. Enquiry about cost of goods of services   [total 3]
    (22) (28) (46)

20. Statement accompanying handing over of goods or money   [total 2]
    (24) (49)

21. Expression of thanks   [total 4]
    (25) (32) (37) (50)

22. Request for goods or services   [total 1]
    (26)

23. Response in the form of an enquiry   [total 2]
    (27) (41)

24. Enquiry about location   [total 3]
    (33) (35) (35)

25. Offer of assistance   [total 1]
    (39)

26. Enquiry about interlocutor's opinion   [total 1]
    (43)

27. Acceptance of offer   [total 1]
    (48)

28. Statement of intention   [total 1]
    (48)

29. Agreement with assertion/counter-assertion   [total 1]
    (12)

Conclusions

One test of the degree to which CLL as a methodology is efficient as an instrument that may reveal a possible sequence in the natural order of acquisition of realisations of functions is to run separate sequences of CLL sessions and then compare the elicited utterances that the different series generate.

In these two cases the particular series studied were selected randomly from a number of similar events. The two series were far removed from each other both in time and geographically. There was no communication between participants of RP/teachers.

The first conclusion that must be drawn is that such series of CLL events are simply too short to reveal any actual acquisition sequence since they provide little or no evidence of spontaneously produced, previously acquired utterances (i.e. without the mediation of the RP). The best they can do is offer us a glimpse of a potential acquisition sequence as demonstrated by the elicited language corpus. In other words whatever actual acquisition sequence might eventually have emerged from a longer series could not contain items other than those present in the elicited language corpus.

In this sense what we need to look for is coincidence of elicited function between the two series since clearly such coincidences will indicate a greater likelihood of these items being sufficiently central to the needs of such learners as to be on their 'shopping list' of items that need to be early acquired.

At first sight the data would seem to be disappointing in this respect in that out of a total of 47 differently identified functions only 6 coincide. They are (numbers in parentheses indicate line references in the data):

1. Greeting
   (Ourense 15) (Sheffield 1, 38)   [total 3]

2. Enquiry about name
   (Ourense 16) (Sheffield 5)   [total 2]

3. Anticipatible informative responses
   (Ourense—various) (Sheffield—various)   [total 46]

4. Associative responses
   (Ourense 4, 25, 34) (Sheffield 12)   [total 4]

5. Acceptance of offer/suggestion
   (Ourense 24) (Sheffield 12)   [total 2]

6. Expression of agreement
    (Ourense 48) (Sheffield 12) [total 2]

A comparison, however, of the number of utterances that this represents shows a more dramatic degree of coincidence. Out of a total of 111 utterances, some 58 (i.e. 52%) are realisations of functions elicited in both series.

Summary Table I

	Series 1 (Ourense)	Series 2 (Sheffield)	Totals
Total number of functions	24	29	53
Total number of utterances	61	50	111
Total number of functions coinciding	6	6	6
Number of utterances included in above category	32	26	58
coincident utterances as a percentage	52.5%	52%	52%

If we now remove from these figures the major category of anticipatible informative responses (this is a catch-all category, which in any case could be argued to contain a lot of language which contrary to the spirit of the methodology was not elicited freely form the RP) the figures look like this: out of a total of 46 different functions 5 coincide but represent 12 out of a total of 65 utterances (18.5%)

Summary Table 2

	Series 1 (Ourense)	Series 2 (Sheffield)	Totals
Total number of functions	23	28	51
Total number of utterances excluding			

anticipatible informative responses	35	30	65
Total number of functions coinciding	5	5	5
Number of utterances included in above category	6	6	12
Coincident utterances as a percentage	17.1%	20%	18.5%

Whichever set of figures one chooses to rely on the proportions are dramatic and point to the fact that adult learners, given the freedom to translate their own perceptions of their communicative needs into direct action in the classroom, exhibit, even in small scale experiments of this sort, a significant communality of perceived functional need.

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