

# [III] TEACHING CONTENTS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

## — MODULETTE MATERIALS: LANGUAGE AND CULTURE —

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### 1. Introduction

In teaching language, there are many articles that discuss how to teach. This article, however, will concentrate on what to teach, because the writer believes this is most important and it also determines how to teach.

Students put much energy into learning words, idioms, structures and grammar, but these do not guarantee they will become good users of the language, nor even understand it well. Beyond them there are those aspects which interest and fascinate learners of another language. Students do not seem to be given much exposure to these aspects in spite of their interest. It is important or maybe even crucial in learning another language to appreciate various phenomena about language, to be aware of differences in language and culture, and to deepen insight into our own. It will broaden their minds, foster tolerance and cultivate both their personality and intellect.

We will examine this phase in language learning and present one way of dealing with it. To facilitate this, we are going to use the idea of modular materials, which will also be useful in providing stimulation, enjoyment, and an occasional change from the daily routines of language learning.

In the 1960s, in the heyday of audiolingualism, large-scale multi-media language programmes were prosperous. In the 1970s, however, they were reconsidered, and modules became fashionable. Earl W. Stevick, referring to modules, mentions their "usability, organization, responsibility and pluralism." (Stevick, 1971, p.28-43) H. Stern also points out their "flexibility, quality, sequential order and multiple approach." (Stern) Modules have some kind of sequence, but they are more flexible and can be utilized according to one's needs.

Developing the idea further, the writer has prepared shorter and simpler materials, which she proposes to call "modulettes". Constituting materials in the form of "modulettes" makes it quite easy and convenient both to prepare and to use them. In these forms we can develop materials in any sphere. Here, we are going to utilize "modulettes" for teaching materials about language and culture.

### 2. Aims and Construction of Modulettes

The word "culture" covers such a wide range, that we have to choose the best moment to present a particular topic. Moreover, the students are different in their needs, interests, concerns, and abilities. To increase the chances of individual involvement, we should consider the students' needs and interests at a certain time — that is to say responding to the real concerns of the students here and now. Textbooks cannot always meet these concerns. Therefore, modulettes aim to provide what textbooks lack — they are not everything, but only supplementary. It goes without saying that it is necessary to teach the basic things such as vocabulary and grammar. However, they are not enough. We can and should

include linguistic insights and aspects of the cultural heritage. These stimulate the students' interest in the language and motivate them to a considerable extent.

These modulette materials aim to present important and interesting aspects of the language in a form presented as simply as possible. Each modulette is made to be used within a 50-minute class period. It may be utilized as supplementary material when we have a little time left, or as the basis for a period when the teacher is absent. In either case, it requires students to work on their own with less explanation by the teacher because usually it includes all the written explanations necessary as well as plenty of visual materials such as charts, matching exercises and so forth.

### 3. Contents

Through these learning materials, students enjoy the study of language, think about what language is, and are exposed to other cultures in the world. They can compare their own language with other ones and, furthermore, renew their understanding of their own country.

Then what should be chosen as material? In language education, first of all, we have to know the state of languages in the world – in what country which language is used, and also other aspects of living languages such as pidgins and creoles. The everyday English found in signs and advertisements also interests students. It is essential to understand that every language has levels and degrees of politeness, though they may be different in their expression. Grammatical understanding is not enough, so it is necessary to teach other aspects of functional English. It is also interesting to present such linguistic phenomena as onomatopoeia and mimesis, especially where they differ between languages. Non-verbal language is also indispensable because communication is not only realized through verbal language. Such non-verbal expression plays a role far more important than we realize.

We can learn about the lives of other people through their holidays and other main events in their countries. We enjoy becoming familiar with general aspects of daily life such as meals, manners and the like. Superstitions may be of some use to understand differences and similarities between societies. It is rather difficult to understand foreign humour and other features of behaviour, yet they are worthwhile and significant to know.

We should not forget classics such as the Greek myths which are rich in imagination, Bible stories that are full of interest, and Fables full of human wisdom. These can enrich the students' cultural experience. We have to value this heritage transmitted from olden times, because it has not lost its appeal over time.

Besides those mentioned above, there are other interesting aspects of language. These include the differences between British English and American English; the origins of words, names, months, the days of weeks; the relation between animals and their meat, and so on. Linguistic aspects of interest to us also include homonyms, prefixes and suffixes. Furthermore, we may enjoy tongue twisters as training in pronunciation. There is almost no limit to the number of examples we can find of the above cultural and linguistic phenomena.

The following is a list of the materials gathered; some were prepared by the writer herself, some adapted from others' brochures and books, some copied from various books.

**TEACHING MATERIALS  
FOR  
LANGUAGE AND CULTURE**

1. Map of English in the World
2. United Kingdom
3. Classroom English
4. Functional English
5. Signs
6. Advertisements
7. Borrowed Words
8. Homonyms
9. Suffixes and Prefixes
10. Onomatopoeia
11. Gestures
12. Proverbs
13. British English and American English
14. Japanese English and English
15. American Humorous Stories (including Tall Stories)
16. British Humorous Stories
17. Easter
18. Thanksgiving Day
19. Halloween
20. Christmas
21. Greek Myths – Prometheus Gives Fire to Man  
– Echo
22. Bible Stories – The First Seven Days  
– The Tower of Babel
23. Aesop's Fables
24. Etiquette at Meals
25. English Meals
26. Superstitions
27. Original Meaning of Months
28. Original Meaning of Days of the Week
29. Names
30. Animals and Meat
31. Tongue Twisters
32. Cross Word Puzzles
33. United States (slides)
34. Discovery of American Folk Songs (VTR)

**APPENDIX**

1. Pictorial Test
2. Oral Reading Test
3. Pronunciation and Stress

#### 4. Utilization of the Materials

The contents mentioned above deal only with language and culture. However, we can also expand it by including other aspects such as techniques and strategies in reading, writing, listening and speaking which go beyond the step by step methods of teaching words, idioms, structures and grammar.

These materials are filed as individual sheets of paper so that they can be copied easily when they are needed. We can utilize them according to the students' actual level of ability for the purpose of strengthening their weak points or stimulating their interests. Only materials judged to be good through real use by the teachers should be kept. Filed as separate pages, they are easy to choose and to discard — easy to substitute and to alter.

We can expect to obtain good materials by exchanging information and opinions among teachers, and by cooperating and experimenting in the creation of such materials. Most teachers must surely have their own good ideas and materials. If these are brought together and arranged systematically, a convenient series of materials will be available to every teacher.

If such materials are systematized according to levels within a curriculum including beginners, intermediate and advanced learners, it will be of inestimable benefit to us.

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TEACHING CONTENTS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

APPENDIX 1

PROVERBS

A.

1. Look before you leap.
2. After rain comes fair weather.
3. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
4. A friend in need is a friend indeed.
5. Birds of a feather flock together.
6. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.
7. Heaven helps those who help themselves.
8. It never rains but it pours.
9. Love me, love my dog.
10. It is no use crying over spilt milk.
11. Nothing venture, nothing have.
12. Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.
13. Talk of the devil, and he is sure to appear.
14. Necessity is the mother of invention.
15. Out of sight, out of mind.
16. Seeing is believing.
17. Spare the rod, and spoil the child.
18. Rome was not built in a day.
19. Speech is silver, silence is gold.
20. Strike while the iron is hot.
21. There is no accounting for tastes.
22. Time and tide wait for no man.
23. The early bird catches the worm.
24. Well begun is half done.
25. Where there's a will, there's a way.

B.

- ア. さい先よければなかば成功
- イ. 百聞は一見にしかず
- ウ. 雨降って土固まる
- エ. よく学びよく遊べ
- オ. 早起きは三文の得
- カ. 泣きつらにはち
- キ. 自力更生
- ク. 覆水盆に返らず
- ケ. きょうできることをあすに延ばすな
- コ. 去るものは日々にうとし
- サ. 精神一到何事か成らざらん
- シ. 歳月人を待たず
- ス. ローマは一日にしてならず
- セ. 念には念を入れよ
- ソ. 類は友を呼ぶ
- タ. あすの百よりきょうの五十
- チ. 坊主にくけりゃけさまでにくい
- ツ. 好機逸すべからず
- テ. まさかの友が真の友
- ト. かわいい子には旅をさせよ
- ナ. 虎穴にいらずんば虎児を得ず
- ニ. 必要は発明の母
- ヌ. 雄弁は銀、沈黙は金
- ネ. たで食う虫も好きずき
- ノ. うわさをすれば影がさす

Aの英語のことわざはBの日本語のことわざのどれにあたるか、記号で答えなさい。

1. \_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_ 6. \_\_\_ 7. \_\_\_ 8. \_\_\_ 9. \_\_\_ 10. \_\_\_ 11. \_\_\_ 12. \_\_\_ 13. \_\_\_  
 14. \_\_\_ 15. \_\_\_ 16. \_\_\_ 17. \_\_\_ 18. \_\_\_ 19. \_\_\_ 20. \_\_\_ 21. \_\_\_ 22. \_\_\_ 23. \_\_\_ 24. \_\_\_ 25. \_\_\_

CLASS \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ NAME \_\_\_\_\_

(mainly adapted from New Handbook of English)

Reading Advertisements

Characteristics of Advertisements

say a great deal in a few words

short sentences

use vivid language

many informal, popular expressions appeal to all of the senses.

Reading Advertisements

look for the hidden message (to influence readers' opinions and attitudes)

read between the lines by looking for meanings which are only implied rather than clearly stated

only a few, carefully chosen words (appeal to the eye and the ear)

the source of their appeal to all of the senses

Collect some attractive advertisements from popular magazines or newspapers.

1. What is the purpose of each one?
2. Does the advertisement try to sell a product?
3. Does the advertisement try to influence opinions?
4. What other functions does the ad perform?
5. Is there a hidden message?
6. What is the theme of the advertisement?
7. Who is the advertiser?
8. What is the advertiser trying to sell?
9. Why is this an effective ad?
10. What senses does the photo appeal to? (taste, touch, smell, sight...)

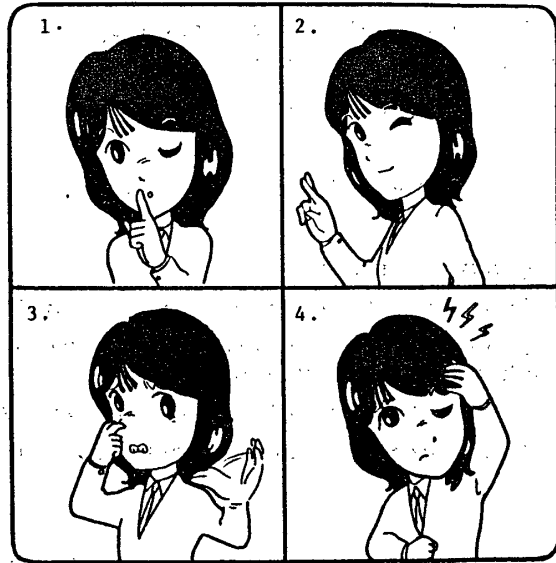
APPENDIX 2

Gestures are a means of communication as well as words.

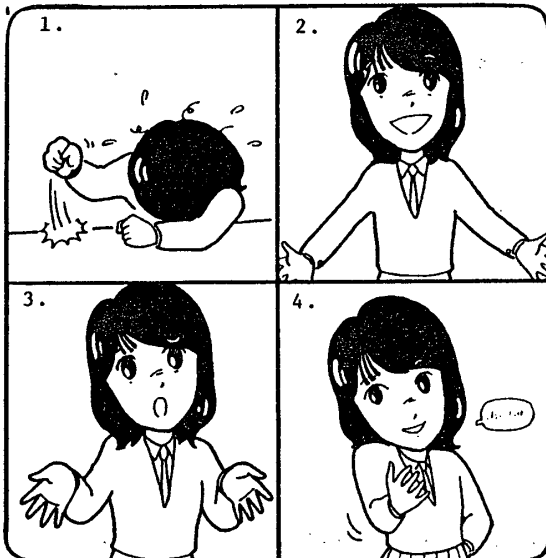
Native speakers of English express much of their feeling and what they want to say through gestures.

Let's learn some such gestures.

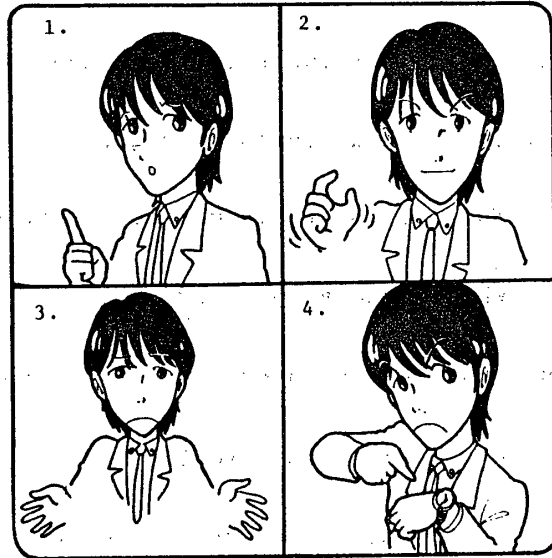
Please match the cartoons with the words beneath them.



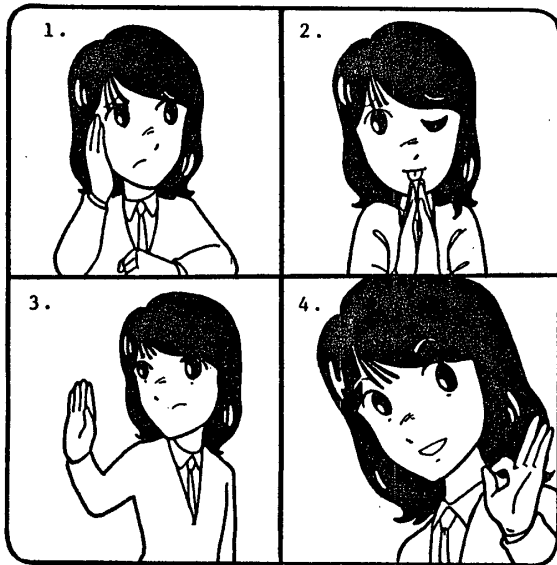
- A. We hope for good luck.
- B. I have a headache.
- C. What a smell!
- D. Hush!



- A. Wonderful!
- B. Oh!
- C. It's a long time since we met!
- D. Oh, that makes me mad!



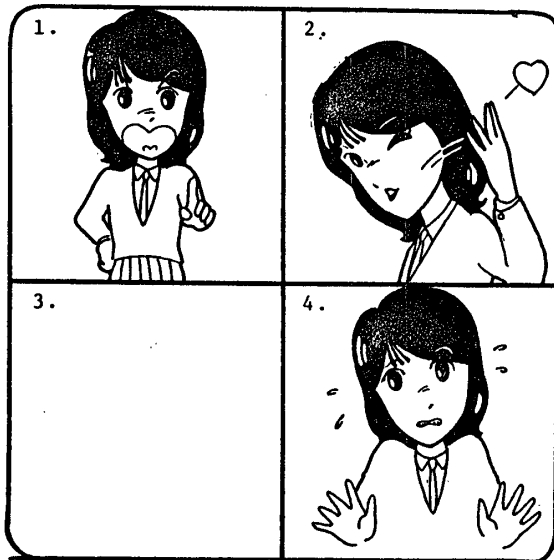
- A. That's bad.
- B. Hey, it's time to go.
- C. I don't know.
- D. Let's have a drink!



- A. Please forgive me!
- B. What shall I do?
- C. Perfect!
- D. Wait a moment.

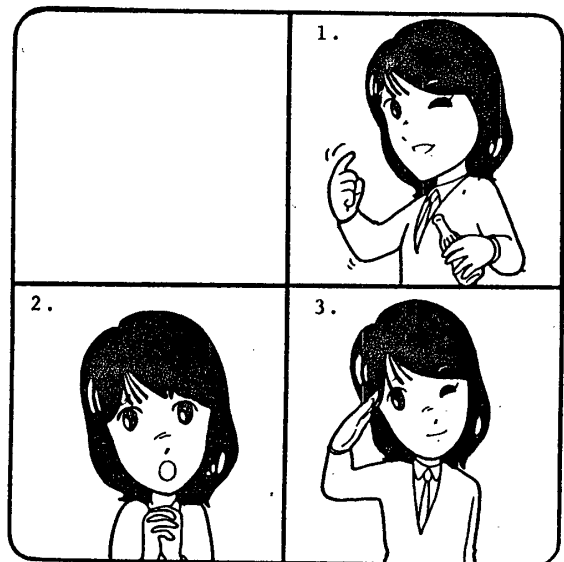


- A. I'm ashamed.
- B. Charge! (Let's go!)
- C. Damn it! (Ah, heck!)
- D. Step out!



- A. Don't touch!
- B. I love you.
- C. You are a liar.  
(There's the culprit.)

(adapted from another teacher's drawn by Yoshihito Yamaguchi)



- A. Salute!
- B. Help me!
- C. Come on.  
(Come here.)



APPENDIX 3

Expressions Used in Signs

Library

HOLDS & RENEWALS

Books must be signed out at least 15 minutes before library closes

NO BEVERAGES IN THE LIBRARY PLEASE

Return Sedgewick Books Only

- 1 week loans
- 1 day loans
- 2 hour loans

Silence

Book Return

Recent Publications

Reading Room

1. ONE WEEK LOAN.
2. PRINT NAME, DATE, TELEPHONE AND YOUR PROFESSOR'S NAME ON CARD.
3. RETURN BOOK(S) AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Buildings

Staff Only

Fire Exit

Please

Keep Door Closed

WELCOME TO STUDENT PROGRAMS OFFICE INFORMATION

U.B.C. CAMPUS MAIL SERVICE

Box Cleared At

9:45 A.M. & 3:00 P.M.

Sorry  
No Change

Picnic Area

CAUTION  
DEEP WATER

PED  
XING

KEEP ON THIS  
SIDE OF THE  
FENCE

CAUTION  
STEEP WALKWAY

BUS

EMERGENCY EXIT  
LIFT THIS BAR  
PUSH WINDOW OPEN

Watch Your Step

DRINKING INTOXICANTS  
ON COACH PROHIBITED

THIS COACH IS  
RESTROOM EQUIPPED  
FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE

NO SMOKING  
IN FIRST SEVEN ROWS.  
CIGARRETTE SMOKING ONLY  
IN REAR SEATS.

Your Operator

Safe-Reliable-Courteous

(compiled by the writer)