Communication in the Classroom

Edited by **KEITH JOHNSON** and **KEITH MORROW**

Communication in the Classroom
Applications and Methods for a Communicative Approach

Edited by Keith Johnson
Centre for Applied Language Studies, University of Reading

and Keith Morrow
Bell Educational Trust

Longman

for Kate and Tanya

Preface

Recent years have seen many exciting developments in language teaching. Some have been at the level of syllabus design and are associated with the concepts of 'notional' and 'functional' syllabuses. Others are concerned with methodology and we are today seeing the growth of interesting new procedures and techniques, many of which challenge our traditional views of what should happen in the classroom.

It is true that these various developments relate to different stages in the teaching operation; it is also true that they have not yet come together to produce what can justifiably be called a coherent new approach to language teaching. Yet there does exist behind them a common set of assumptions, and it is the existence of this shared background which gives us the justification for referring to the new developments under the single label of 'communicative language teaching'.

Many articles and books have already been written on the subject of communicative language teaching. But most have been theoretical in nature and may well leave the practising language teacher wondering how the new ideas can actually be applied to the classroom. The aim of this volume is to answer precisely this question. The contributors have been chosen because of their practical experience as materials producers or teachers. They have written for the classroom teacher in an attempt to point out some of the implications – and some of the problems – associated with 'being communicative' in the classroom. The book will also be useful for trainee teachers or those following in-service training courses – in fact for anyone interested in knowing what communicative language teaching means in practical terms.

The book is divided into two main parts, preceded by an introductory paper which sketches some of the background to communicative language teaching and attempts definitions of crucial terms (like 'notional' and 'functional', as well as the term 'communicative' itself).

Part A deals primarily (though not exclusively) with syllabus and course design, and nearly all of its contributors have had direct experience in the production of communicatively-orientated materials. One of the aims of this Part is purely descriptive – we wanted the contributors to describe how they faced the problems posed by the production of communicative materials for various types of student. But the Part also contains an element of polemic. It was not our intention here to provide a unified view – on the contrary we wanted to provide a series of disputes

'forum sections' reflecting a variety of approaches and opinions relating to questions of course design. Thus although there are considerable areas of agreement among the contributors, there are also differences and one of the aims of this Part was to draw attention to these.

There are certain groups of students for which the application of a communicative approach poses particular problems. Among these are the various types of beginner (adult, primary and 'false'), and the 'general', non-ESP student whose communicative needs may be difficult to specify. It is on these 'problematic' areas that Part A concentrates: Section One on adult beginners; Section Two on primary and false beginners; Section Three on the 'general' student.

Part B is mainly concerned with methodology. The introductory paper sets the scene by attempting to draw together some of the strands that might make up a communicative methodology. As this paper makes clear, we are not yet at the point where we may speak of an overall and coherent method. However, it establishes five principles which might stimulate thought in this direction.

The remaining papers are divided into two sections. Section One re-examines the traditional 'four skills' from a communicative point of view and considers some of the implications of this re-appraisal. Section Two is the most directly practical of the book. It looks at the classroom possibilities offered by a variety of communicatively-orientated activities.

All the papers in this volume have been specially written, and none has yet appeared elsewhere. We felt it necessary to commission papers in this way to provide the kind of coverage of the subject which we thought the practising teacher would want. We hope that this has resulted in a book which, while expressing many different standpoints, provides a coherent overview of what a communicative approach to language teaching might involve.

KJ
KM
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Introduction

KEITH JOHNSON Some background, some key
terms and some definitions

1 Introduction

This book is about communicative language teaching, and in its pages
(as in the pages of many books and articles written nowadays) certain
key terms recur time and time again. Predominant among these are
'notion(al)', 'function(al)', 'communicative' and 'syllabus'. In fact, the
use of the first three of these terms is by now so widespread that they
are often used – quite wrongly – as synonyms. Because of the impor-
tance of these terms and the frequent confusion in their use, it seems
appropriate that the first paper in this collection should attempt to pro-
vide definitions. At the same time the paper will sketch, in broad out-
line, the background essential to an understanding of the current trends
in language teaching which are the subject of this book.

2 Some background

In language teaching, as in other fields, new movements often begin as
reactions to old ones. Their origins, that is, lie in a discontent with an
existing state of affairs. We might begin our consideration of com-
municative language teaching, therefore, by looking at the discontent
which teachers and applied linguists in the 1960s felt towards the kind
of language teaching then predominant. This discontent is vividly express-
ed by Newmark (1966) who speaks of the 'structurally competent'
student – the one, that is, who has developed the ability to produce
grammatically correct sentences – yet who is unable to perform a simple
communicative task. His example of such a task is 'asking for a light
from a stranger'. Our structurally competent student might perform this
task in a perfectly grammatical way by saying 'have you fire?' or 'do
you have illumination?' or 'are you a match's owner?' (Newmark's
examples). Yet none of these ways – however grammatical they may be
– would be used by the native speaker.

Most of us are familiar with this phenomenon of the structurally
competent but communicatively incompetent student, and he bears strik-
ing witness to the truth of the one insight which, perhaps more than any
other, has shaped recent trends in language teaching. This is the insight

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that ability to manipulate the structures of the language correctly is only a part of what is involved in learning a language. There is a 'something else' that needs to be learned, and this 'something else' involves the ability to be appropriate, to know the right thing to say at the right time. 'There are', in Hymes's (1970) words, 'rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless'.

It is not difficult to see how this phenomenon of the structurally competent but grammatically incompetent student came about. It is to a large extent the result of the kind of language teaching which, influenced heavily by the audio-lingual tradition, places strong emphasis on what Newmark and Reibel (1968) call 'mastery of language structure'. In this kind of language teaching the predominant (though it would be an exaggeration to say exclusive) emphasis is on teaching the students how to 'form' correctly; how, that is, to manipulate the structures of the language easily and without error. The result of this emphasis has been – in the best of cases – students who know their grammar but lack the 'something else'.

The emphasis on mastery of structure manifested itself at every stage of the teaching operation, not least at the stage of syllabus design. A syllabus is in general terms a 'list of items we wish to teach', and if we see our main aim as being the teaching of structures then it is entirely natural that our syllabuses, as 'lists of items to teach', should be lists of structures. This is more or less what, until recent times, syllabuses have been.

How can the situation be changed? How, in other words, can we provide the student with the 'something else' essential to communicative ability? We can approach one possible answer to these questions by returning to Newmark's example of the student who does not know how to ask for a light from a stranger. It may well be, we could argue, that the student is unable to perform this communicative task simply because we have never considered items like 'asking for a light from a stranger' (or, in more general terms, 'requesting services') as part of our teaching content. Once, we might say, we are prepared to accept that we have actually to give lessons teaching things like 'requesting services', the battle will be half won.

The implications in this line of argument for syllabus design are clear. If a syllabus is a 'list of items we wish to teach' and if we are prepared to see language learning as a question of mastering not only structures but also 'meanings' or 'uses', then our syllabuses must list items of 'meaning' or 'use' as well as items of structure. Suddenly the traditional view of the syllabus as a list of structures becomes inadequate.

But how do you list 'meanings' or 'uses'? This is one of the problems which a team of experts convened by the Council of Europe in 1971 set out to answer. The brief of this team was to work towards the

development of a language teaching system suitable for teaching all the languages used in the Council's member countries. One member of that team, D A Wilkins, had the particular task of developing a system of categories by means of which it would be possible to specify the communicative needs of the adult learner working within a European context. It is at this point that 'notions' and 'functions' enter the scene.

3 Notions and functions: definitions

In 1972, as part of the Council of Europe's work, Wilkins wrote a paper proposing that two categories of 'meaning' and 'use' might be suitable for the purposes of syllabus design. The first category he calls 'semantico-grammatical' and this is composed of items akin to what in everyday speech we call 'concepts'. Examples of these categories, taken from Wilkins's list are: *frequency*, *duration*, *location* and *quantity*. They are 'semantic' categories because they are items of meaning. But Wilkins includes the word 'grammatical' in his label to recognise the fact that, in most European languages at least, these categories relate fairly directly to grammatical categories. Consider, for example, how we express the concept of *frequency* in English. There are a fairly restricted set of grammatical means for doing this involving, among other things, choice of tense (the simple tenses usually being used to express habitual action), and certain frequency adverbials.

Wilkins's second category is the 'communicative function'. Communicative functions are, in broad terms, the *uses* to which we put language. Examples taken from his paper are: *requesting information, expressing disapproval, greeting* and *inviting*. His list also includes *requesting services,* under which Newmark's 'asking for a light from a stranger' might fall. These categories of communicative function have come to be known, for the sake of brevity, as 'functions'. They do not, unlike the semantico-grammatical categories, relate directly to grammatical categories. Thus if we consider a function like *inviting* we find various, quite grammatically distinct ways of performing the function. Examples might be 'would you like to + INF', 'how about + ING', 'why not + INF', 'do + IMPERATIVE'.

Wilkins's proposal is, then, that we should use his semantico-grammatical and functional categories as the means of listing concepts and uses in our syllabus. He uses the term 'notional syllabus' (the title of his 1976 book) to describe a syllabus containing such lists. In this phrase he is using the word 'notional' as an umbrella term to refer to his two categories, thereby expressing the fact that they are indeed categories of meaning (though as we have seen, the semantico-grammatical categories do relate significantly to structural categories). This terminology suggests the diagram on the next page:
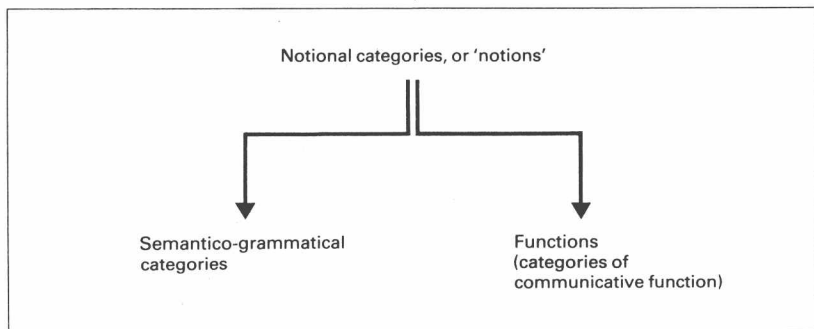
```
            Notional categories, or 'notions'
                        ┌──┐
                        │  │
              ┌─────────┘  └─────────┐
              │                      │
              ▼                      ▼
   Semantico-grammatical      Functions
   categories                 (categories of
                              communicative function)
```

Figure 1

Whereas the term 'categories of communicative function' can be succinctly abbreviated to 'functions', no similar abbreviation is unfortunately readily available for the term 'semantico-grammatical categories'. It may be that this simple and banal fact is responsible for the considerable confusion that has grown up over the use of the word 'notional'. For it is as an abbreviation for 'semantico-grammatical category' that the word 'notion' has come to be used. Van Ek (1975) uses the word in this way, and it is a usage that can be justified. If 'concept' is a rough synonym for Wilkins's 'semantico-grammatical category', then is not 'notion' a rough synonym for 'concept'? This second terminology can be expressed by the following diagram:

```
                        ?
                      ┌──┐
                      │  │
            ┌─────────┘  └─────────┐
            │                      │
            ▼                      ▼
   Notions                   Functions
   (Semantico-grammatical    (categories of
   categories)               communicative function)
```
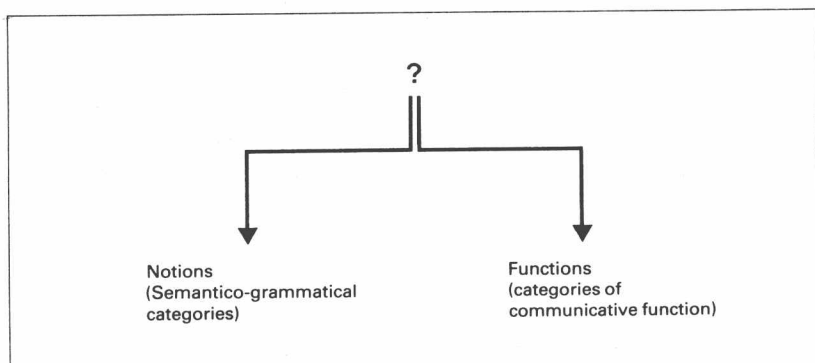
Figure 2

Figures 1 and 2 show the ambiguity with which the terms 'notion' and 'notional syllabus' are used. In the first terminology a 'notional syllabus' would be one which listed functional as well as semantico-grammatical categories; in the second terminology it would be one which listed semantico-grammatical categories only.

Figure 2 lacks an umbrella term. The aim of this paper is to record how terms *are* used, not to suggest how they *should be* used. But perhaps an umbrella term like 'semantic categories' would be appropriate. We could then use 'notion' as in Figure 2, and could speak of 'semantic syllabuses' and 'notional syllabuses' without fear of ambiguity. This terminology will be followed for the rest of this paper.[1]

4 Notions and functions: the difference

The question is sometimes asked: what is the difference between a notion and a function? The distinction is certainly a difficult one to express in precise terms, and the use of rather vague words like 'concepts' and 'uses' to distinguish the two often simply leads to further confusion. For if we say that a function is a 'use to which we put language', we are open to the response that *expressing frequency* (*frequency* being one of Wilkins's semantico-grammatical categories) is a 'use to which we put language'. Similarly it is difficult to define a sense in which *frequency* can be said to be a concept, while *sympathy* (a function in Wilkins) is not.

A full answer to the question would be concerned with levels of analysis. Just as grammatical analysis operates on different levels – the morpheme, the phrase, the clause etc – so too must the analysis of 'meaning'. Indeed, we do not have to go far into the analysis of extended stretches of language to realise that the two terms 'notion' and 'function' are paltry tools for analysis and need considerable enrichment.[2] But the question of levels of analysis would take us far beyond our immediate concerns, and as a loose rule of thumb we might say that we can identify the *function* of a spoken utterance by asking the question: 'what was the speaker's intention in saying it?'. The answer, depending on the utterance and its context, might be 'to greet', 'to invite', 'to express sympathy'; these, we would say, are the utterances' functions.

Once we become accustomed to asking this question about speaker intention we soon find that the same 'sentence' can function in different ways, according to context. Take, for example, the sentence 'you will come tomorrow' said by a father to his child. This may be intended to function as a *command* – meaning roughly 'you just make sure you come tomorrow'. It might, on the other hand, be intended as a *promise*, paraphrased by 'Don't worry. Whatever happens I'll make sure you're allowed to come tomorrow'. We would probably need information about the utterance's context before being able to decide its function.

We can analyse the same sentence – 'you will come tomorrow' – at a different level, to discover what 'concepts' or 'notions' it conveys. One such concept is that of 'a person present, other than the speaker', conveyed by the word 'you'. There is also the concept of futurity, expressed by the use of 'will'. Notice that a 'notional' analysis of this kind

will *not* reveal the speaker's intention (and hence the utterance's func-
tion). An analysis of the concepts expressed in a sentence will not tell
us why that sentence was said.

The above discussion may reveal one important point about 'notional'
and 'functional' analysis – that sentences express *both* notions *and* func-
tions. So the question 'does this sentence express notions or functions?'
is a meaningless one. It is like asking whether a sentence contains
words or clauses or whether a car has wheels or brakes!

5 The analysis of language needs

Wilkins's work provides a framework for listing 'meanings' for the pur-
poses of syllabus design. The next problem which the Council of
Europe team faced was how to decide *which meanings* to teach. The
problem is to a large extent a new one for syllabus designers and to
understand in what sense it is new, consider the process by which tradi-
tional 'structural' syllabuses are developed. The structural syllabus
designer would know what grammar points his students had already
learned, and he would select from the remainder of the structures of the
language those which he felt his students should acquire next. This
selection would constitute his syllabus.

In this process the designer's ultimate aim is clear – to teach all the
structures of the language, working through them in 'graded' fashion.
But the situation becomes more complex when we deal with categories
of meaning. Consider functions for example (though what is said below
could apply equally well to notions). It is clear that the uses to which a
language may be put are very many; we cannot teach all the functions
of English in the same way we might teach all the structures. Some
criterion of selection is needed which will identify those functions which
a particular group of students will find especially useful. Once
identified, these can be taught to the exclusion of other, less necessary,
ones.

How can the particularly useful functions (and notions) be identified?
The Council of Europe team, particularly Richterich (1973), attempted
to do this by looking closely at the 'language needs' of groups of learn-
ers. Language needs are, in Richterich's (1973) words, 'the require-
ments which arise from the use of language in the multitude of situa-
tions which may arise in the social lives of individuals and groups'. A
key word in this quotation is 'situation'. It is by looking at the situa-
tions in which our students will want to use English that we shall be
able to decide which functions and notions (and which language forms
associated with each) it will be most useful to teach.

But what is a 'situation'? One dictionary[3] defines it as a 'set of cir-
cumstances' and van Ek (thinking of situations specifically in relation to
language use) talks of 'the complex of extra linguistic conditions which
determines the nature of the language-act' (1973). The words 'set' and

'complex' are important here because they convey the idea that the factors which go to make up a situation (and hence 'determine the nature of the language-act') are numerous. What exactly these factors are cannot be considered here, but three central ones may be mentioned in passing. These are *setting* (where the speakers are – at the airport, in a shop etc); *role* (what the relationship between the speakers is – friend/ friend, customer/shop assistant etc) and *topic* (what the speakers are talking about – pastimes, business etc).

The process of analysing language needs which has here been outlined is, then, one which begins with the question 'in what situations will my students want to use English?' It looks at the various factors involved in the concept of situation, identifies important notions/ functions and the language forms associated with each. It is a process which is nowadays widespread and various models based on this general paradigm have been developed. Predominant among these is Munby's (1978) model. The obvious advantage of this approach is that it enables us to develop syllabuses sensitive to the needs of different groups of learners. But this advantage brings with it a problem. In the case of an ESP group (a group of secretaries or lawyers for example) the identification of a common set of language needs is a feasible proposition. But what about the 'general' group which contains lawyers, secretaries, doctors, mechanics, and a selection of students who are learning English for rather vague purposes – 'just to talk to people', for example, though they may not be sure exactly to whom? And what about children, whose eventual needs for English (if indeed they are to have any) cannot be predicted – and even if they could would almost certainly differ from pupil to pupil?

Part A of this book contains articles by contributors who have struggled with these problems and who offer suggestions for solving them. But one particular solution, the Council of Europe's, may be mentioned here. Their team encountered the problem in an extreme form since their brief was to develop a framework for the most general and vague of audiences – the average adult European, living in any of a number of countries, wishing to learn any of a number of languages for any of a number of purposes. The chief prerequisite for such a framework is clearly flexibility and for this reason the team developed what they call a 'unit/credit' system. In this system areas of language use are divided into 'units'. Since different areas of use will be relevant to the needs of different groups of learners, students are guided as to which units to cover. Credits are given for units completed and when a number of credits have been gained, a qualification is given.

The aspect of this system most relevant to the present discussion is the concept of the 'common core'. The team recognised that there will be areas of interest common to all students whatever their situations and specialisations. There will be a common core of functions (for example) relevant to secretary as much as engineer, doctor as much as mechanic.

Each learning level in the Council of Europe's system will thus have a common core of units alongside those specialised ones which students select according to needs.

Much of the above discussion has concerned the Council of Europe's work. In a paper discussing the aims of this team, Trim (1973) notes that it is 'common practice' to recognise five levels of language proficiency, the lowest of which he calls *The Threshold Level*. One member of the team, van Ek, was given the task of providing a syllabus specification for this level. This appears in two forms – van Ek (1975) for the adult learner and van Ek (1978) for the secondary school student. Initially *The Threshold Level* was conceived of as 'a minimum level of foreign language competence ... below which no further levels can be usefully distinguished' (van Ek, 1973). Later, however, a specification for a level below *Threshold* was considered necessary. This specification was produced under the title of *Waystage* (van Ek and Alexander, 1977).

6 Syllabus inventories and syllabuses

Before beginning any teaching operation we list the items we wish our students to learn. If our syllabus is structural we might as a first stage list the grammatical items under such headings as 'verb constructions', 'noun phrase constructions' and so on. This initial list would not be ordered for teaching purposes. Thus the fact that 'verb constructions' might appear on our list before 'noun phrase constructions' would not imply that we teach the former before the latter. The essential job of grading and combining the structures into sequences for teaching would constitute the second stage of our operation. Only when this has been done can we say that we have a fully-fledged syllabus. We might distinguish the initial unordered list from the final ordered one by calling the former a 'syllabus inventory' and the latter a 'syllabus'.[4] The distinction applies as much to semantic syllabus design as to structural syllabus design and according to this terminology specifications like *The Threshold Level* are syllabus inventories. As it happens, van Ek (1975) lists notions before functions; as it also happens, the function of *narrating* is listed before the function of *greeting*. This ordering is about as significant as the order of names in a telephone directory; the implication is neither that notions should be taught before functions, nor *narrating* before *greeting*.

But when we consider semantic as opposed to structural syllabus design one further step is required to convert a syllabus inventory into a syllabus. This is because semantic syllabus inventories contain not one, but many lists – not just structures but notions, functions, settings, topics, roles (and often other types of category) as well. We clearly cannot devise a programme to teach language associated with each of these lists in turn – for example covering notions in Year 1, functions in

Year 2, settings in Year 3 and so on. We must select one of these types of item as our 'unit of organisation'. We might for example decide that each teaching unit of our course should cover one function. The result would be, in the terminology used in this paper, a 'functional syllabus' Such a syllabus would of course not *ignore* the other types of list on the inventory. We would have to ensure that the language presented under the various functional headings took account of the settings, topics, notions etc on our inventory. But we will have selected the function as our 'unit of organisation' for the syllabus.

The question of 'unit of organisation' is important for two reasons. Firstly it leads us to realise that a *syllabus inventory* of the *Threshold Level* type can lead to *syllabuses* of different orientations. Thus instead of selecting the function as our unit of organisation we might equally well have chosen the notion (with lessons on *frequency, location* etc), the setting (at the airport, in a shop etc), the topic (pastimes, education etc) and so on. The result would then be notional, setting-based or topic-based syllabuses. The question of how we decide which type of item to choose as the basis for syllabus organisation according to characteristics of our learners has not received much theoretical attention, but Part A of this book contains some interesting practical discussion on the issue.

The second reason why the question of 'unit of organisation' is important is that it opens up the possibility for syllabuses with varying units of organisation. Above it was said that we must select one type of item as our organising principle. This is not of course strictly true, and as long as we do not confuse the student by changing the orientation of the course too often, there is no reason why we should not vary the unit of organisation within the course. In many teaching situations, for example, an attractive possibility is to follow a series of functional units in which a variety of grammatical items is met, with structural units which focus attention on these items and relate them to the grammatical system as a whole. Similarly, there may be good pedagogic reasons for concentrating in some parts of a course on the language appropriate to chosen settings, and on others in language in relation to functions.[5] We might dub this type of syllabus 'multidimensional' to distinguish it from the 'unidimensional syllabus' in which the unit of organisation does not change at all. Indeed, we might see as one of the greatest attractions of *Threshold Level* type inventories, the fact that they can lead to multidimensional syllabuses in which the focus of attention is allowed to change as a course develops.[6]

7 The term 'communicative'

In the Introduction to this paper we spoke of the insight which has shaped recent trends in language teaching – that 'being structurally correct' is only a part of what is involved in language ability. It is no acci-

dent that this insight should have occurred when it did, for it reflects a shift in emphasis which took place within language studies as a whole. A writer who characterises this shift clearly is the sociolinguist Hymes. He takes issue with Chomsky and the transformational grammarians whose view of language competence is very much a grammatical one – it is knowledge of the language system. To define language competence in such terms is, Hymes (1970) says, a somewhat 'Garden of Eden' view for those (like the language teacher) who are concerned with language as a living thing used by individuals and societies. Hymes uses the term 'communicative competence' to refer to the more general sort of knowledge and ability native speakers possess. This *includes* knowledge of grammaticality and ability to be grammatical. But it involves more besides, and Hymes lists several other factors including the factor of appropriateness mentioned earlier in this paper.

In the most general terms we may say that a 'communicative language teaching' is one which recognises the teaching of 'communicative competence' as its aim. It is on this level of *aim* that such a language teaching distinguishes itself from more traditional approaches where the emphasis is heavily on teaching structural competence. We may thus see the revision of aims as an *enrichment* – an acceptance that there are further dimensions of language which need teaching.

We have already seen that one answer to the question of how this revision and enrichment of aims actually affects the teaching operation is on the level of syllabus design — the level at which we state our teaching content. Many, indeed, would use the term 'communicative' as a synonym for 'notional/functional', to refer to language teaching following a semantic syllabus based on an analysis of students' language needs. This usage of the term reflects the view discussed earlier in this paper, that once we are prepared to include items like 'how to ask for a light' as part of our teaching content, we have half won the battle against communicative incompetence.

The way we state our teaching content may be half the battle, but the other half remains to be fought. There is a considerable difference between *stating* that we wish to teach the student 'asking for a light' and *actually enabling* him to do so in a real communicative situation. We may begin our teaching operation with a semantic syllabus carefully and scientifically drawn up to cover the student's communicative needs, yet utterly fail to teach him how to communicate. If, in other words, we are to meet our communicative aims, we must give attention to questions of methodology as well as syllabus design.

The search for a communicative methodology begins with the question 'what does communicative skill involve?'. This issue is given detailed attention in Part B of this book,[7] but a central point may be made here. It is that just as at the level of syllabus design the desire to be communicative has led to an *enrichment* – with more complex syllabus inventories specifying language needs along many dimensions –

there is likely to be a similar effect on the level of methodology. We now see communication as a highly complex skill, involving far more than the sub-skill of 'being grammatical'. Consider for example what is involved in producing a conversational utterance. Apart from being grammatical, the utterance must also be appropriate on very many levels at the same time; it must conform to the speaker's aim, to the role relationships between the interactants, to the setting, topic, linguistic context etc. The speaker must also produce his utterance within severe constraints; he does not know in advance what will be said to him (and hence what his utterance will be a response to) yet, if the conversation is not to flag, he must respond extremely quickly. The rapid formulation of utterances which are simultaneously 'right' on several levels is central to the (spoken) communicative skill. Once we begin to view communication in these terms (rather than simply as the production of structurally correct utterances), then we are posing ourselves exciting methodological problems which it will take new techniques to solve. A communicative methodology will differ significantly from traditional methodology.

8 Conclusion

How, then, do the concepts of 'notional', 'functional' on the one hand and 'communicative' on the other relate to each other? It is the relationship of means to end. Our aim is to teach communicative ability, and this may lead us at the syllabus design level to specify and organise our teaching content in a semantic way. Semantic syllabuses are (like all syllabuses) a means to an end – a vehicle for arriving at a destination. But it is also only one means to an end, and we judge a course communicative or otherwise not only (nor even, we might argue, predominantly) in terms of how it is organised, but also in terms of its methodology.

Viewed in this light it is certainly possible to imagine a notional/functional course which, because of its methodology, we would not wish to call communicative. Likewise we may find a structurally-organised course whose methodology practises important aspects of the communicative skill and is thus more worthy of the title 'communicative'. We may certainly argue convincingly that it is easier to reach communicative aims within the framework of a semantic rather than structural syllabus. But the concepts are distinct, and a healthy starting point is to accept that one may 'be notional/functional' without 'being communicative', and even 'be communicative' without 'being notional/functional'.

Notes

1 Not all contributors to this volume use 'semantic syllabus' as their umbrella term.