The article discusses the methodological concepts of medium- and message oriented communication and applies them to both the conventional foreign language classroom and the bilingual content classroom where school subjects are taught in the medium of a foreign language. It is based on personal classroom observations, mostly in German grammar schools, and makes use of some 200 autobiographical reports, collected over the past few years, in which German university students of English analysed their own language learning at school. The findings are supported by empirical studies where classroom communication was analysed in a more systematic way. It is argued that the interplay between message- and medium-orientation is an important feature of the successful foreign language classroom as well as the bilingual classroom. The article provides two checklists for the analysis of fluctuations between communicative levels in the classrooms. They may be used for teachers' self-observations, but may also be used as tools in further research.

Medium-oriented versus message-oriented communication

We distinguish two main levels of communication in the classroom, which are both necessary. In medium-oriented communication the focus is on form rather than on content. The underlying speech intention is for the teacher to give the pupil an opportunity to build sentences, to show how he can handle the language, to demonstrate his verbal skills, to display his linguistic wares. Pupils imitate sentences modelled by the teacher, fill in word gaps, put sentences in a different tense or give answers which the teacher knows already. Here the medium is the only message. However, when the speakers involved satisfy immediate non-linguistic needs and really mean what they say, for instance:

"How can we prepare for the test tomorrow?"
or
"In my view the British electoral system is undemocratic."

They transmit real messages, which is why we call it. Message-orientation. Do I take my utterance to be a warning, a praise or promise, a real request for necessary information or are these functions merely incidental to the utterance? Is my real purpose merely to elicit a grammatical structure, to supply just another occasion for the learner to practise, in sum, to produce structural competence rather than communicate? In the foreign language classroom it cannot be avoided that the medium is often itself the message, rather than a means to an end. School is by definition an artificial environment in as much as it separates children from the real life of hatches, matches and dispatches, where people have to work hard in order to make a living and raise a family. Schools are meant as a temporary protection from, and a preparation for this life. We cannot duplicate a foreign language community in the classroom.

To sum up: All utterances which primarily serve to practise a piece of language are called medium-oriented. All other utterances where language is used as a tool to satisfy different needs, physical needs, social needs, needs for specific information etc. are seen as message-oriented.

Interlocutors at cross purposes

The distinction is perhaps clearest when people misunderstand each other because they operate on different levels of communication as the professor and the guide in the Ogden Nash poem and as in these classroom jokes:

The Purist

I give you now Professor Twist
A conscientious scientist.
Trustees exclaimed: "He never bungles"
And sent him off to distant jungles.
Camped on a tropic riverside,
one day he missed his loving bride.
She had, the guide informed him later,
been eaten by an alligator.
Professor Twist could not but smile.
"You mean", he said, "a crocodile"
(Ogden Nash)
Johnny: "Miss, I ain't got a pencil."
Teacher: "No Johnny, not ain't. I haven't got a pencil! You haven't got a pencil! They haven't got a pencil!"
Johnny: "Gosh, what happened to all the pencils?"

The teacher does not react to Johnny's real problem but changes her level of orientation. Johnny either does not notice this or deliberately ignores this change.

A little girl kept writing "I gone home" instead of "I went home". So the teacher told the girl to write "I went home" fifty times after school. When the girl had finished, she left a note for the teacher, "I done my lines and gone home".

What is drilled is not automatically available for communication. Medium-oriented communication cannot always be readily turned into message-oriented communication.

**Between medium and message**

The same utterance may serve a variety of functions. Therefore many speech acts in language lessons are not clearly medium- or message-oriented. Instead there is a mixture of intentions and we have to assess which of the two functions dominates in a given case. Dictation, imitation, pronunciation and grammar-drills as well as language corrections of all sorts are usually unequivocal medium-oriented acts. On the other hand all classroom management is purely message-oriented: Collecting money, distributing books, voting for a class-representative, re-organising the seating arrangement, calling for attention, cleaning the blackboard, giving homework, apologising for something, defending oneself etc. That is why methodologists have pointed out the importance of dealing with "classroom-management" as quickly and as completely as possible in the foreign language.

Language-learning games are mostly mixed forms, partly medium-oriented, partly message-oriented. On the one hand the game may have a clear grammatical objective. On the other hand, however, the idea of competition can dominate. The students get so involved in the game that they forget the drill aspect ("the forgetting principle", according to Krashen and Terrell 1983) In the following excerpt the authors show how the focus can be shifted so that the activity moves in the direction of message-orientation:

"The teacher places a number of pencils etc. in various places on his desk. He asks a learner, for example "Where is the red pencil?" As the red pencil is obviously on the book, the learner understands the question as "What sentence in English describes the position of the pen?" However, if the teacher says "Look carefully at the pens, pencils etc. Now turn round. Where’s the red pen? Can you remember?" in this case the learner's powers of memory are challenged and he or she is motivated to think or speak. And most importantly, he or she understands the question in the same way as a native speaker."
(Wright, Betteridge and Buckby 1984)

The task has been turned into a contest and presents a challenge to the participants, who are now players rather than language pupils. It is no longer a question of "Do I have to do this?" but rather of "I wonder how good I am at this?" Think of activities where pupils put jumbled sentences or a series of pictures in the right order. The more such activities are seen as intellectually stimulating, the closer they come to message-orientation. Some utterances lie in the middle of a continuum where medium-orientation grades into message orientation.

**Terminological aspects**

The concept of the two levels of communication was first developed by C. J. Dodson in the sixties. Butzkamm and Dodson coined the terms used here. Other researchers have used other terms for what is basically the same distinction: focus on form versus focus on message (Dulay/Burt 1978), rehearse language versus performance language (Hawkins 1981), analytic versus experiential use of the language (Stern 1983), language of the test tube versus extrinsic language (Donmall 1990). Ellis (1988) uses the terms medium-oriented, message-oriented and activity-oriented.

However, the same point was already made by Tacke (1923). For him, the essential strategy, to ensure effective learning, was "Ablenkung vom Wort als Selbstzweck (diverting attention from the word as an end in itself), "so daß stets ein Ausdruckswille beim Erlernen fremdsprachlicher Ausdrücke suggeriert wird, sonst haften die fremden Ausdrücke nicht" (a will to mean must always underlie the learning of expressions in the foreign language, otherwise the foreign expressions do not stick; see Hawkins 1988, 7).

**Message-orientation means linguistically enriched communication.**

"Each ESL session we videotaped also included less structured segments, where interaction was characterised primarily by the need for a real exchange of information, such as the teacher’s asking the whereabouts of absent children before the structured lesson began, or the explanation and implementation of an art project or game following the structured lesson. It was only in this semi-directed type of event throughout the year that the students’ communicative production regularly included the functional categories of requests, descriptions and statements, and it was only in this type of event that they went beyond memorised patterns as they struggled to obtain needed information or to express themselves to the teacher and other children. The results were often ungrammatical, but it is interesting to note that grammar was never corrected when real communication was at stake" (Saville-Troike, 1984).
It has also been observed that when pupils say things which grow out of their immediate needs, they use more prosodic, paralinguistic and non-verbal futures to support their meaning. These features usually do not come into play when students are merely manipulating sentences.

Classroom Reality: A content vacuum

Both anecdotal and statistical evidence have been accumulating to show that message-oriented communication is often conspicuously absent in the foreign language classroom. Personal observations as well as essays in which university students were asked to analyse their foreign language lessons at secondary schools revealed that pupils and teachers alike tend to resolve to the mother tongue when it comes to situations in which they have to deal with important matters. It certainly amounts to a devaluation of the currency of the foreign language if the teacher consistently switches to the mother tongue when she's got to announce the time and place of a special meeting, to introduce a new pupil, to cancel lessons, etc.

Here are some comments from students, mostly negative:

"He spoke a lot on private matters but he did not communicate real messages in English unfortunately. He was a gourmet and he could have given his recipes in English (fried bananas)."

"Once he showed us an endless series of slides from numerous summer holidays in France. I mean, that was not really boring but I will never understand why he decided to give all his explanations and anecdotes concerning the slides in German! How can any pupil possibly acquire conversational skills in French if he or she is only allowed to speak French in manipulative drills?"

"The lessons were almost always medium-oriented until the eleventh grade. Then we left the textbooks behind us and began to read literature, for example "Huis clos" by Sartre. That was the first time the lessons became message-oriented."

"I had the impression that there was no time for spontaneous conversations about up-to-date topics. When questioned about that the teachers told us that they would love to do more conversation but that they had to stick to the syllabus and that we were running out of time."

"Both in English and in French - which I took as my third language in class 9 the teachers only wanted us to use the known vocabulary in our essays. We had to express ourselves using these words which we had already learned. But often I felt a real urge to say something which I could only express with a new word which I then looked up in a German-English dictionary. I still remember the negative reaction when I used these new words in my essays. I considered this to be rather ridiculous, as it merely extended my vocabulary - so why was it so objected to?"

"Our English lessons centred completely around the book and there was no apparent need for communication. Indeed, I began to come to the conclusion after all my years of learning English, that this language was not for communication at all as our teacher had simply reduced it to a kind of mathematical abstraction. Nevertheless, I still decided to choose the English 'Leistungskurs' in the 'Oberstufe'."

"From the very beginning we learned a certain basic vocabulary with which we could express our personal needs. Thus we were asked to pose all kinds of organisational questions or points for discussion as far as possible in French. We always had enough time for message-oriented communication. Our teacher took every opportunity to make us use the foreign language. What I liked best was the fact that the lessons with this teacher were so varied."

In a Scottish study where 17 French teachers were observed in 147 lessons Mitchell et al. (1981, 66) found that "a content vacuum was apparent in many lessons". A report of the Council of Europe (Bergentoft 1986) states: "it is difficult to assess the extent to which classroom practice is now in accordance with communicative principles. In fact, there is evidence that even where communicative methods have energetically been promoted over a period of years, the results are patchy".

Methods come and go, teachers however usually remain in service for 40 years and do not readily change their ways. In a recent study, five lessons of highly qualified teachers "knowledgeable about and committed to communicative language teaching" were analysed. The author concludes, after quoting other studies supporting his own findings: "There is increasing evidence that in communicative classes interactions may, in fact, not be very communicative at all (Nunan 1987:1441). Similarly disappointing results were obtained by Long and Sato (1983), Solmecke (1984), Dinsmore (1985), Sajavaara (1989)."

Overemphasis on accuracy

One reason for the scarcity of message-oriented communication in the classroom could be the many mistakes learners make whenever they leave the security of well-trained exercises and risk using the foreign language for self-expression and problem-solving.

Here is an example:

Teacher: How could you get on with the story? - (pupils arrange a picture-series on the blackboard)
Teacher: Okay, thank you. Now, Thomas, you don't agree with that.
Thomas: No
Teacher: Could you please explain how you would do it?
Thomas: Hm. Because there seemed a man must do the washing up and then he has an idea.
The following excerpts from university student's essays nicely illustrate the problem:

*interpretation and discussion of meaning, the definitely human considerations.*

We are experts at relative clauses or the passive voice. We should equally be experts in foreign life and institutions. We sometimes need a change of attitude. Too often do we language teachers see ourselves as grammarians or linguists.

Message orientation means a psychological re-orientation for the language teacher.

Failure to exploit

Another reason is lack of flexibility and inability to fully exploit situations which suddenly present themselves. The following examples come from a lesson (12-year-olds, second year English) in which the teacher tried hard to put the foreign language to immediate use and yet did not fully exploit the possibilities of classroom life. At the very beginning of the lesson a girl stood up and explained in the mother tongue that a classmate had to go home after the second lesson because her allergy had become so unbearable! The teacher simply nodded. However, such unforeseeable moments are the icing on the cake for a foreign language teacher. These are moments that would probably cause a delay when teaching mathematics but which a language teacher could make full use of: A possible reaction could have been along the following lines: "I know she's got this allergy (writes "allergy" on the black board). She's had this before. Terrible, isn't it? My brother has got an allergy too. It's a different type of allergy. You know, he can't eat peaches ("can" and "can't" was the grammatical focus of the lesson) He is allergic to peaches. (writes "allergic to" on board). Can you eat everything?"

In the same lesson a birthday cake was passed round and a birthday card was signed by the classmates. This situation was indeed exploited: "Well then, let's cut the cake. Oh, some are eating already. Now, it's nice and quiet here because everybody is eating". However, one could have exploited this authentic situation even further: "Now look at this wonderful cake. It's nicely cut up, and I think there is a slice for everyone. (To the girl who brought the cake) So when you pass it round you may say: "Take just one slice please" or "Here is your slice", or "Here you are". And the others, of course, say "thank you"! Or: "Can you all put down your name here and sign the birthday card?"

Here is a third incident from the same lesson. When suddenly bad air wafted into the classroom, the teacher simply turned to a pupil and said: "Could you shut the window please?". She could have added "There is an awful smell coming from outside. You know "smell" means "Geruch". Yes, it smells, it stinks, doesn't it? Wonder where it comes from? Have you got any ideas". Words such as "smell" and "allergy" which are incidentally introduced can be collected in a special vocabulary book. After all, they might matter more to this class than much of what the textbook offers.

We must welcome situations which arise naturally. We do not need to produce them artificially, they are there and all we have to do is to seize the opportunity. Teachers must be willing to take communicative risks and, in turn, encourage students to be adventurous in a communicative way and thus to experience again and again the strains and comforts of real language use. From the autobiographical reports mentioned above it is clear that there are teachers who teach effectively and provide this language bath for their pupils. Unfortunately, the following observation is also typical of German classrooms: "Our teacher spoke English using standard phrases like "Open your books at page X". But he spoke German when he entertained us with stories from World War II, in which he had been a soldier ..."

Teachers probably flinch from these utterances by pupils. They think of the rest of the class listening to this faulty English. Also, it is not always easy to follow the pupils' ideas, take up their words and rephrase them into acceptable English: "So what you want to say is ..."

We should not forget, however, that for many of us, normal speech is full of false starts, often ungrammatical and repetitive. But if we resort to even more medium-oriented activities in order to adequately prepare students for the free use of language, we may be postponing message-oriented communication to a day that will never come.

Sometimes a change of attitude is needed. Too often do we language teachers see ourselves as grammarians or linguists. We should above all be communicators. This might help to shift our focus away from language to persons and ideas, and to emphasise, instead of ignoring, the private domains of intelligent interest and stimulus, of content motivation, of cultural interpretation and discussion of meaning, the definitely human considerations.

The following excerpts from university student's essays nicely illustrate the problem:

*With great patience our teacher chose subjects for discussions everyone could say something about. But she was never able to create the feeling that one's personal opinion was important and that the aim was real communication. Everyone knew that the discussion served the purpose of getting marks for fluency, number of mistakes and proper use of words. The result was that hardly any pupil had the courage to say more than one or two sentences."

*"When our teacher told us to write something about ourselves and our families and someone asked for a particular word, she always told us to use the vocabulary which we already knew. After a while we just invented something because we knew that she was not at all interested in what we wrote but just in the grammatical correctness. In my*
I am reminded of a passage in a novel by Monika Sperr (1987:7). A fifteen year old boy attending in his English-lesson and thinks to himself: “English with Ms Hagedorn. So boring it always makes you fall asleep. 'Tell me something about your family, please ...' as if she really wanted to know.”

**The case for medium-orientation as a natural activity**

Thus, one of the main tasks of teacher trainers consists in showing their trainee teachers the ways and means of how to change medium-oriented practice into message-oriented communication. However, while it is true to say that there must be ample opportunities to use the language in true acts of communication, this is far from maintaining that all we have to do is involve pupils in message-oriented communication. There is a place for medium-orientation, even in the acquisition and use of the mother tongue as can be seen in infants’ pre-sleep monologues first collected by Weir (1962). In other words, it is a mistake to assume that medium-orientation is “artificial” and can only be accepted as a necessary evil because of the restrictions of the conventional foreign-language classroom as opposed to natural, informal acquisition situations.

Occasional medium-orientation is part and parcel of the natural use of any language. In situations where we feel we ought to be above all accurate and correct, we tend to focus partially on form. Before an important interview for instance, one would often prepare particular expressions in one’s mind and even practice them as a sort of rehearsal before the performance.

“Arriving in Madrid I took the plunge and asked my hosts some questions that I had formulated in my mind before. They must have been understandable, but I could not grasp the replies completely,” wrote a student. And another one wrote:

> „Being abroad and being forced to listen to and speak a foreign language is no guarantee for becoming a good speaker if you are an adult. The progress one makes depends to a high degree on one’s own attitude, initiative and readiness to work. It is not enough to simply hear people talking in the foreign language and to understand what they say. It is necessary to listen very carefully to how they express themselves and to the words they use in a given context. In my opinion, awareness is a central condition in the learning of languages.”

In the following cartoon Tarzan's dilemma is that change to message-orientation is not automatic.

In letter writing where there is time to formulate and reformulate one’s ideas, there is an element of medium-orientation. We think that communicative competence in any language cannot develop properly without medium-oriented communication. Both message- and medium-oriented activities are necessary, neither is sufficient by itself. Ellis (1988, 130) comes to the same conclusion when he claims that "uninhibited practice" where language is used without communicative intent is an important condition for natural language acquisition as well as for classroom learning.

On the basis of observations and proficiency tests in monolingual and bilingual schools in Wales Dodson concludes: “Both types of communication should occur right from the beginning of the course, with teachers and pupils trying to communicate for constantly lengthening periods at message oriented levels as the weeks and months progress.

On the other hand, teachers should not fall into the trap of forcing message-oriented communication onto pupils who are not yet ready for this type of interaction for a given topic because they lack the practice at medium-oriented levels, which should have preceded each switching to message-oriented levels in every lesson or lesson cycle. The process should be one of constant fluctuation between the two main levels, with both teacher and pupils trying to communicate whenever appropriate at the higher levels. (Dodson 1985, 162f.)

Successful teachers seemed to follow the maxim: As much medium-oriented communication as necessary; as much message-oriented communication as possible. In other words: Learn as you use, use as you learn. Not: Learn now, use later.

**Bilingual subject-matter teaching as an ideal setting for message-oriented communication**

There is a clear focus on message-e when content subjects are taught through the medium of a second or foreign language. “The emphasis in this syllabus is on topics, on information - not on language as such. One of the most readily available ways of doing this is to offer a subject other than the language itself in French or to draw on the other subjects of the school curriculum, in this way the language is used as a means of communication for something e . else. This has been of course the 'secret' of the immersion story” (Stern 1983, 240)

It seems that the two main reasons for the success of bilingual schools are both the quantity and quality of communication:

(1) there is an increased amount of foreign language input:

(2) this input is mainly message-oriented. In content subjects it is more likely that language will be experienced as communication similar to that found outside the classroom.
However, it would be an error to assume that content teachers could simply ignore the fact that they are teaching through the medium of a foreign language. For the learners, a bilingual -geography or history lesson is, to some extent at least, also a language lesson. Teachers are therefore-advised to watch out for language problems and occasionally switch to medium-oriented practice and then back to their "real" job. The geography lesson can be turned into a language lesson - but only for brief "side-sequences". For instance, for a few moments the spotlight could be on pronunciation, when the teacher models difficult words such as hydrogen, combustion, or metabolism and elicits chorus responses from the class. This overt practice is apt to give pupils confidence in actively using the words and need not interfere with the main business of the lesson. After all, as Paracelsus put it: "Allein die Dosis macht, daß ein Ding kein Gift sey". Natural science teachers with many years of experience in German medium schools in foreign countries call for "Spracharbeit im Fachunterricht" (Leisen 1991; Vögeding 1995).

Evidence from Australian French immersion classes

Students sometimes help themselves by practising expressions silently. These phenomena were noted in a study which investigated the processes involved in the acquisition of French in late immersion programmes in Australia: "One of the ways in which the students make sense of their situation is by the use of internalised and egocentric speech in the foreign language. In order to operate in the second language they need to internalise their means of expressing in the second language. This is not just practising or manipulating form, but being in another language. This use of private speech was first noted in the classroom observations in May, the third month of the study. Up until then, observations had concentrated on what was said out loud. When the focus was shifted away from what could be heard to what could be seen, the classroom took on a different aspect.

What had previously seemed (to the ear) to be rows of students listening attentively but passively to what the teacher was saying was transformed into a group of students participating actively, but silently, in the lesson. This is what often happens when the teacher asks a question:

Year 9 Science, May 23

Teacher: ... avec un front froid et une pression basse, quel temps?
Stud. 1: [to self] - Il fait froid.
Stud. 2: [to self] - nuages ... poussent

When one student answers one of the teacher's questions out loud in French, there- are at least two others answering privately in French. Some students also practice silently in French before they give their answer out loud, like this:

Student: [to self] cent quatre-vingt divise par trois (then she gave her answer out loud)

These are some reasons given by the students for using private speech in this way:

Alex, year 8: You say it in your mind because you're afraid to say it out loud because it might be wrong.

Year 8 students

Researcher: And why do you do that? [Say it in your head?]
Kerry: Just to get practice.
D. J. to understand what the question says
Kerry: Like, if you get it right, and someone else has answered it right, and you've already said that in your mind you think, "oh gee, I'm good!"

Researcher: So when you say it to yourself rather than out loud, why do you do that?
Roger: So that. I'm not doing it for the teacher, I'm doing it for myself, so I'm learning.

To summarise, there are four main reasons for answering silently rather than answering out loud:

1. for positive reinforcement of one's own answer
2. to avoid losing face by calling out a potentially wrong answer
3. to make sense of the question itself
4. to get more practice in using the language

Teachers are not often aware that students are answering to themselves, and can wrongly accuse students of not participating (De Courcy 1993, 176f). De Courcy goes on to point out that this sort of rehearsal is also a non-threatening way of producing output.

These observations corroborate our hypothesis that effective classrooms - regular foreign language classrooms as well as bilingual content classrooms - are those where a delicate interplay of message- and medium-orientation is obtained. Both types of classrooms should provide a dual focus on ideas and content as well as on language.

Possible methodological weaknesses in the immersion approach

It has been made sufficiently clear that the conventional classroom all too often gets stuck in medium-oriented practice. Too few are the occasions where students get a chance to live the language. Conversely, the bilingual content teacher could err on the other side and overlook the linguistic needs of his students. If they do not get a chance to practise, students might choose to remain silent. As a consequence, the teacher might concentrate on providing comprehensible input and turn the classroom into a lecture hall. These are of course mere speculations. since a sufficient number of lesson transcripts from immersion classrooms have not yet been made available. Therefore, the questions remain: Do students get enough opportunities to speak and write? Or is comprehensible input emphasised to the detriment of productive skills?

If opportunities for speaking (and writing) are missing and the students are not actively engaged with the language, the teacher has no way of assess in how accurately students can use the language. This might pave the way for the fossilisations that were found in the speech of French Canadian immersion students as well as pupils in Welsh medium schools.

"After nearly seven years of French immersion, students avoided difficult constructions ... the common pronoun en was absent from their speech. Most of their errors involved verbs, prepositions, and gender ... Although the students managed to communicate nearly all of their ideas, they did so in Frenglish, not in French. Frenglish is not a language, nor a dialect, but an embarrassment" (Hammerly 1989, 14).

Likewise, in some Welsh schools pupils were found to speak a fossilised interlanguage which might first have developed as a joke among them, but then became engrained through lack of correction and other medium-oriented techniques (C. J. Dodson, personal communication).

Towards further research: checklists

We will know more if we analyse classroom discourse based on lesson transcripts. Research in the past has concentrated on learning outcomes. This was necessary because the major questions that were asked by the parents and the general public concerned the results of different programmes. The time has now come to look at the learning processes involved. The following checklists are suggested for teachers' self-observation and must be refined in order to function as research tools.

Consider also the following definition used by R. Mitchell (1988, 4) in her empirical study:

"Any instance of FL use, productive or receptive, will be considered 'communicative' if it appears that the people involved in producing / attending to the discourse have another purpose / intention additional to the general purpose of modelling / practising / displaying competence in formal aspects of the target FL."

Checklist for shifts from medium to message in foreign language classrooms

1. What are the underlying speech intentions?

Clear instances of message-orientation occur when classroom management is concerned:

"Could you speak a little bit louder, please?"
"I couldn't do my homework, I was ill."

Conversely, linguistic corrections are unequivocal instances of medium-orientation:

Student: Could you explain us the election procedure again, please? (message)
Teacher: Explain to us, please (medium).

The following criteria could indicate shifts between medium- and message-orientation:

2. Is there an information gap between the communicants? Or are the meanings communicated by the learner already known to the other interlocutors?

3. Where do the ideas come from? Does the student use his own ideas or does he- take them from the textbook?

4. Where do the words come from? Are the students allowed to choose their own words? Are they improvising? Are their words predetermined by teacher or textbook (when imitating a sentence, picking out the answer from a text, filling in gaps in sentences etc.)?

(Points 3 and 4 refer to the unpredictability of "real" communication and to what Ellis (1988, 129) calls the "independent control
5. Who initiates utterance sequences or nominates the topics to be talked about? If this is done by the students and not by the teacher, chances are that the utterances are message-orientated. Do students spontaneously initiate utterances and not just react to the teacher's stimulus? "Only if the learner has the chance to initiate as well as to respond in communicative exchanges, will he be able to perform a full range of illocutionary meanings" (Ellis 1988, 129).

Example: The bell has gone, but the teacher continues talking. A pupil says "The lesson is over."

6. Is an utterance directed to someone in particular - apart from the teacher? Do speakers and listeners have eye-contact?

7. Are the lower levels of speech production well automated so that the speaker can fully concentrate on his message?

8. Are intonation, mimes and gestures well or weakly developed? Paralinguistic and non-verbal features support meaning. So if students and teacher really mean what they say, their speech will have these natural characteristics.

9. Are the things mentioned really present? (Example: "Pass the songsheets to the front" vs. "pass the butter, please").

It is hoped that with these criteria in mind, teachers will be better able to judge whether they succeed again and again in going from medium to message.

Checklist for shifts in the communicative quality of instruction in bilingual content-classrooms

1. Is the real aim and intention of the lesson (both in the eyes of teachers and pupils) the content, for example, the laws of physics, the energy supply of a particular region, the implications of a political coup etc.?

2. At which point does a change from content-related to language-related work (or vice-versa) occur? Are there typical occurrences which trigger this off? Are these potential triggering points acted upon or ignored?

3. When do language related moments squeezed into the lesson break up concentration on the content, cause the threads of the argument to be lost and become counterproductive?

4. How well is the correction of linguistic mistakes handled? Does a brief switch to a focus on language accuracy succeed? Are the pupils able to consciously absorb and process the correction?

5. When and how are new language elements used by teacher or textbook taken up by the pupils? When do students build that into their productive repertoire? Does this happen more quickly when these language elements are practised at the right moment?

6. How much does the teacher dominate in the lesson? Does this dominance on the part of the teacher arise from the subject matter (from the particular aim of the lesson), or is it conditioned by the linguistic difficulties encountered by the pupils?

7. Does the teacher know both the factual as well as the linguistic requirements of the lessons topic? Does he take into consideration the linguistic progression of his pupils? Does he know which expressions are available to them and which are not?

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With the onset of the communicative movement a greater awareness of the need to develop students' skills for the real world has meant that teachers endeavour to simulate this world in the classroom. One way of doing this has been to use authentic materials as defined by Little et al. above, in the expectation that exposing students to the language of the real world will help them acquire an effective receptive competence in the target language. In other words, the use of authentic texts, embracing both the written and spoken word, is helping to bridge the gap between classroom knowledge a