

The role of the national ESP Resource Centre

A state of the art paper, July 1983.

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1.0 Purpose of the paper

This paper is written for all those interested in the Brazilian national ESP project and its organization. It aims to examine in particular the role of the resource centre in providing a system of access to teaching materials in ESP, and a centre for the storage and circulation of these materials. In particular this paper is written for practising ESP teachers in Brazil, who are already familiar with the national ESP project and who will rely on the help of the resource centre in the future provision of materials or feedback on materials which have been sent to the resource centre. It is also written, however, for anyone interested in the setting up of a similar type of resource centre, in order to raise some of our problems and demonstrate some of our solutions in the hope that some kind of exchange between similar organizations may take place.

This paper then, is divided into the following sections:

- A sketch of the role of the national ESP resource centre within the project as a whole.
- The nature of the system of access and the procedure for the storage, retrieval and requesting of materials.
- A short sketch of potential approaches for a system of access.
- Approaches developed in the project.
- An outline of our own classification system for texts and for exercises.
- An appendix with some materials in the form in which they will be stored with indications as to how they can be used.

It should be emphasized that in this paper we are only going to discuss the storage of teaching materials, - i.e. materials already prepared in the participant universities. We already have an archive of published materials both teaching materials and reference materials for those doing research in ESP. This system is already operating and catalogued.

2.0 The role of a national resource centre

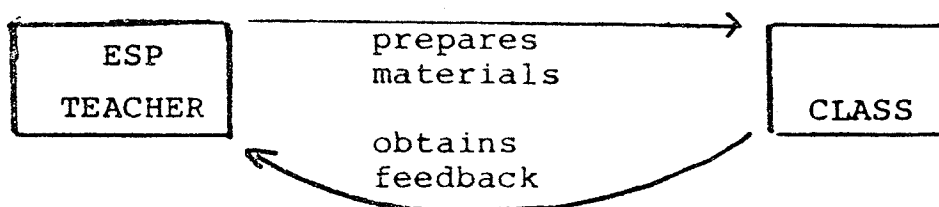
One important feature of the Brazilian national ESP project is the range of courses which are offered, and the different ways in which ESP is organised in different universities. This wide range of interests often makes the exchange of ideas between universities very difficult, particularly when we take into account the vast distances even in one region. For example, we may have universities where postgraduate courses in agronomy need ESP, such as in Viçosa and Santa Maria or English Departments which offer "extensão" courses to the local community such as Fortaleza, PUC-SP and Manaus. Then we have the more general interests, such as the widespread requirement for an English course at the "básico" level, in the first year at university. Again, these courses may vary in nature, both in the duration and the number of hours. Thus, the materials produced in each university may meet needs which are very different. This has accounted for, in the past, the disappointing amount of materials exchanged, since materials are produced for a specific need, which may, apparently have little relevance in meeting other needs.

The purpose of a resource centre is first to aid and stimulate this process of exchange. Thus, the classification of materials must reflect common factors rather than specific needs. Otherwise how can a teacher looking for materials to teach, say, the role of cohesive devices in English know that there are useful exercises in a set of materials with the title "English for electrical engineers"?

And how can a teacher who needs to prepare a course for a group of postgraduate medics know what to ask for? These questions have important implications for the setting up and running of a resource centre in the context of the national project.

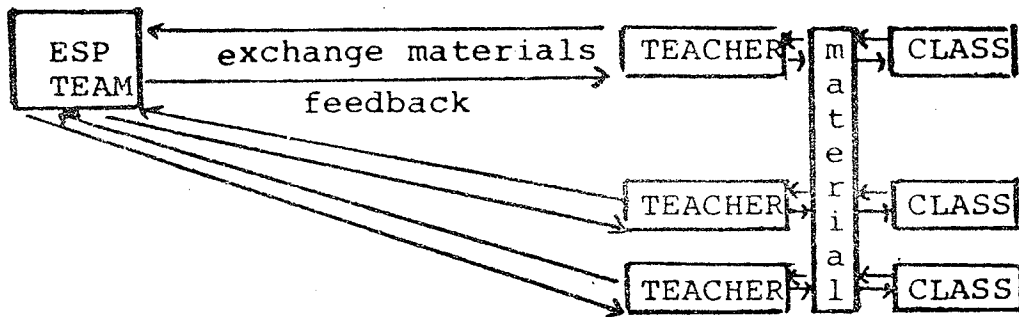
Another important question is the exact nature of the relationship which we expect will develop between local ESP teams, the national resource centre and any regional resource centres that may be set up. Let's look at this in terms of a diagram.

First we have the ESP teacher traditionally isolated, preparing materials for his class, and re-designing them if he is lucky enough to teach the same course for two years running.



(Fig. 1)

This circuit is a productive one, and results in a steady improvement in the quality of materials. It can be improved if we have two or more teachers working together, since even if the area they are working in varies, there is still a lot of common ground. For example, the project has consistently emphasised the teaching and practice of reading strategies, as something applicable to the vast majority of Brazilian ESP courses. Also we have tried to concentrate on that common core of language, - the fact that when an engineer and a psychologist read material in English their problems are English problems and not engineering or psychology problems. So, when two or more teachers get together, they are able to exchange ideas, and we can call them a team, whether or not they are always 100% in agreement! This is the basic unit of the project at a local level. The diagram now looks like this:



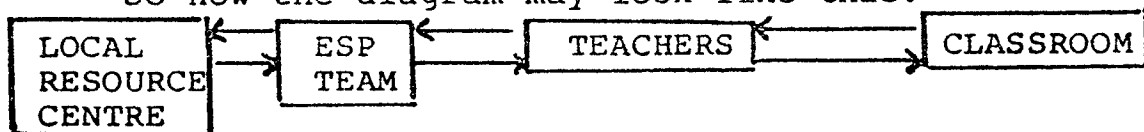
(Fig. 2)

This is the ideal organization for a local group. The team meets regularly, and exchanges ideas on a formal or informal basis. The team also needs somewhere to store materials and so a "resource centre" arises, almost naturally. In some places it is a cupboard with piles of texts more or less organised, in others there are neat files of materials, including both texts and exercises, and sometimes even teachers' notes. But the most important feature of this kind of local resource centre is that people are cooperating.

The aim of such a resource centre might be as follows:

- (a) To store materials produced and used locally.
- (b) To pilot materials and to report on their use, for future changes and improvements.
- (c) To act as a centre for exchanging materials between colleagues.

So now the diagram may look like this:



Those who believe in diagrams and think in terms of them will probably ask: "Where have the materials gone now?" To answer that we might ask: "In a circuit diagram, where is the electricity?" or "In a diagram of the circulatory system, where is the blood?" The answer in other words, is that the materials are the lifeblood of the system, they fill the resource centre, they flow

between teachers and they flow from teacher to student. Not necessarily perfectly produced materials, of course, sometimes only in the form of ideas, or texts, but the important point in this diagram is that a dynamic process takes place, there is interchange.

What should be the role of a national resource centre? First, let's list some of the differences between a local and national centre.

(a) A national centre is a centre for research as well as an archive of materials. For this reason there is a collection of reference material, and teaching material are also used as a focus for research, in an "academic" sense. In other words, at a local level materials can be piloted, feedback can be obtained, and improvements can be suggested. The research associated with a national resource centre might be more theoretical in nature, and would certainly take into consideration issues of a national scale. For example, many of the M.A. theses in ESP have been associated with the national resource centre.

(b) The national resource centre would have a stock of materials produced all over Brazil. For this reason it would not have materials produced on the spot for a course taking place in the same institution. This means that we have a problem of material use. In the absence of teachers' notes, or the presence of the author to explain the rationale behind the materials, it often happens that the national resource centre accumulates "dead" materials. Accordingly, a national resource centre has to somehow make these materials usable. This means that the centre is not a passive depository but must build up a system of access which other teachers will find useful and relevant.

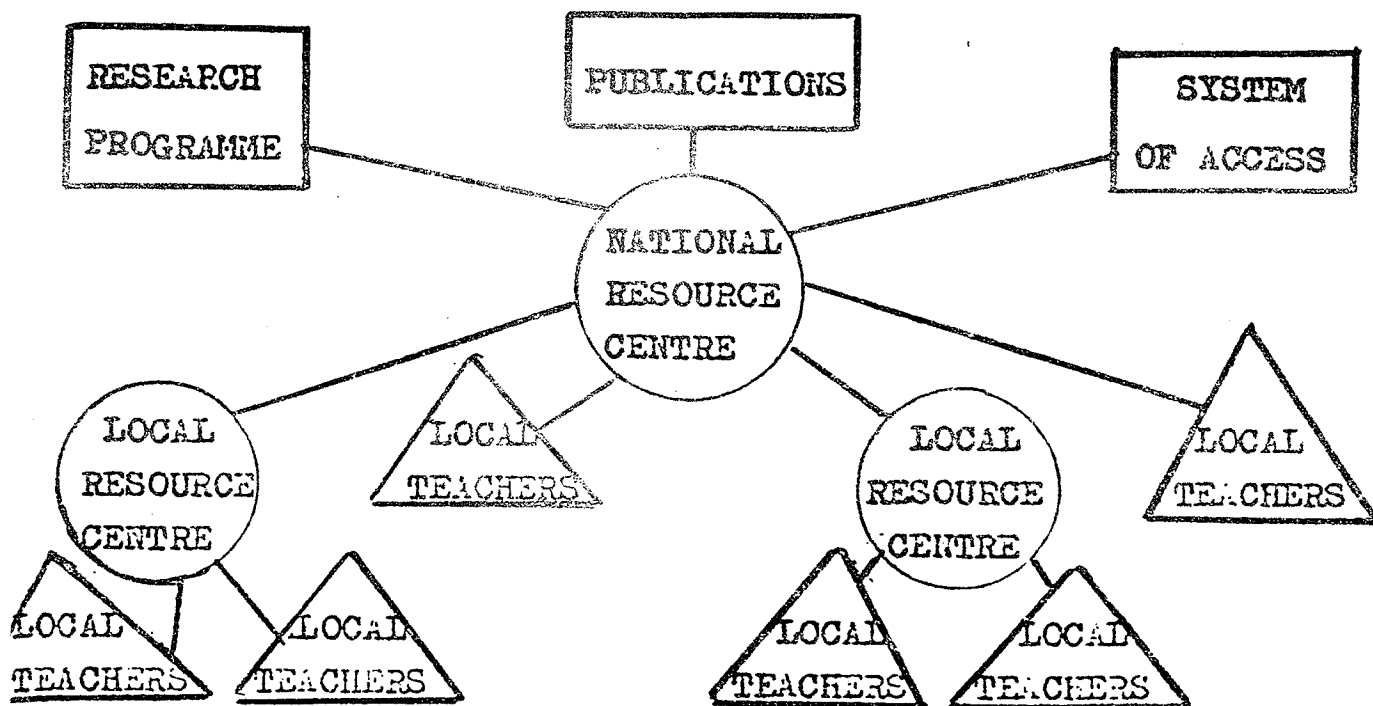
(c) The national resource centre, with a wider view than local teams, will be able to initiate materials production in certain areas, if these are important and necessary. If it cannot make local teams to produce materials to

order, it can at least stimulate and encourage certain types of materials, especially by putting local teams into contact with each other. Thus, while a local resource centre deals with its own priorities, the national resource centre deals with priorities on a national scale.

(d) When a need arises, at the local level, for new materials, the national resource centre attempts to supply this need. It is necessary, then, for the national resource centre to develop a system for the storage and retrieval of materials. This is, as well as a focus for research, a feature which may also be of help to local resource centres. In the main, however, a local resource centre need not necessarily set up a very complex storage and retrieval system. For the national resource centre an adequate system of access is necessary.

(e) The national resource centre, with its objective of keeping the whole project moving in roughly the same direction, would continue to publish the working papers and the "ESpecialist". The contributions would come, as they have in the past, from the local ESP teachers as well as any visiting specialists. The topics dealt with in these publications would help to maintain the cohesion of the project. The work of editing and preparing these materials for publications presupposes permanent secretarial assistance, as does item (b) which envisages the work of editing incoming materials or the preparation of teachers' notes.

Let's try to sum up the relationship between the national and local resource centre in the following diagram:



The diagram illustrates the resource centre as a means of communication between the local resource centres, where they exist, and local groups of ESP teachers, where a resource centre does not exist. To sum up this difference in roles, the local resource centres, basically concerned with the materials which satisfy their own needs, will use the national resource centre when they need to fill any gaps, or when they need to set up new courses. Local teachers doing research will naturally use the national centre to orient their work and to supply materials. Local centres will be in touch with other centres via the exchange of teaching materials, through the system of access, and the publications of the project.

The national resource centre will have to solve several important problems if it is to perform the role we have indicated. It must develop a system for the storage, retrieval and requesting of materials, as well as coordinate research on a national scale, and help local centres or ESP teachers when they request assistance. It needs to be organised in a much more sophisticated way than the local centres, since it requires the following:

(a) Space. In most universities space is at a premium, and a large resource centre takes up the room that might be

occupied by two or three members of staff. Consequently it needs to be well-organised, and well-administered in order to deserve a space allocation! Thus, most local centres will be restricted to fairly cramped quarters, and will store the minimum useful amount.

(b) Secretarial assistance. In most universities, materials are typed out onto stencil and then run-off, or sometimes photocopied directly. In general this secretarial help is not over competent, and the materials are full of mistakes, both teacher and typist-generated. This is bearable at a local level, and indeed unavoidable. Also, when materials are sent to the national centre, they are usually nth-copies, whose faintness is increased when the n+1-th copy is sent to another university. Therefore, competent and permanent secretarial assistance is needed to re-type and edit materials when they are received.

(c) ESP expertise. Finally, in order to make materials re-usable, the preparation of teachers' notes may often have to be carried out at the national centre. This will have to be done by teachers with practical experience in the teaching of ESP and the work of the project.

3.0 A system of access: the storage, retrieval and requesting of materials

The setting up of a reference resource centre was a relatively easy task, since we modelled it on the classification systems of ordinary libraries. We classified the materials, we cross-referenced where necessary, and set up categories which were useful for the majority of users. We did not change the size of the units, we classified books as books, and articles as articles, since this is the normal way in which materials are kept. The system of storage and retrieval and request were essentially the same. In other words, if we received an article about reading strategies, we stored it under the category "reading strategies." When someone wanted

an article on reading strategies they would find the article in question. We also stored the materials by name of author as well.

This may sound simplistic, the only obvious way in which to store materials. But it does not work for teaching materials in ESP, for the simple reason that materials are prepared to satisfy specific needs. Thus, although a set of materials may contain exercises or texts useful for a wide variety of courses or classes, the set of materials as a whole, has only limited applicability. This is one of the reasons for the failure of most published ESP materials to sell as well as "general" materials. The teacher who is looking for materials for a group of electrical engineers, will not look twice at a textbook on chemical engineering, and neither will the students, This gives us similar problems, since if we classify materials as they are produced, we shall limit their applicability in the same way.

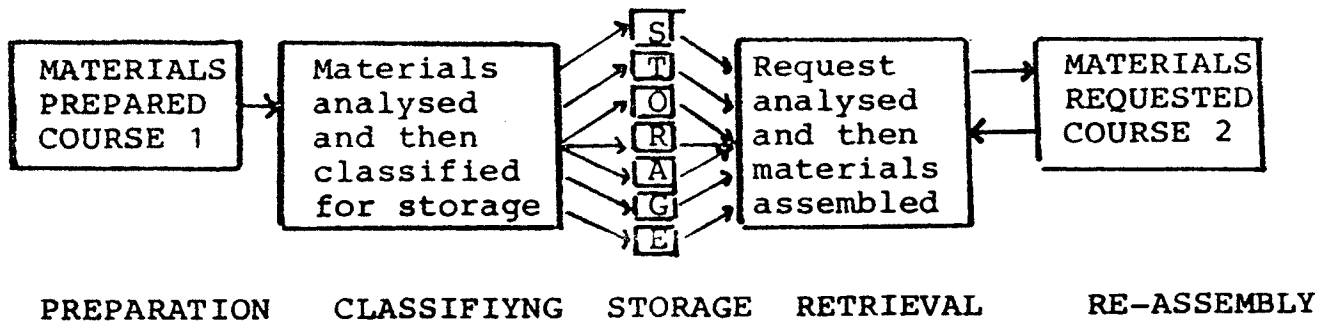
Another part of the functioning of a resource centre is the way in which materials are requested. Thus, using the same approach as in the previous paragraph, the ESP teacher identifies a need for "materials for my psychology group." In other words, the specific purpose is again to label used. To use an analogy taken from the functioning of the digestive system, this is like the oldswives' tale that eating brains makes you brainy, or that eating liver is good for your liver. It would be grotesque indeed if our bodies were built up in such a way. What happens of course in the digestive system is that what we eat is broken down into the smallest, most versatile and useful units. These molecules of protein or carbohydrate are then used by the body to satisfy the needs of the moment. Thus, molecules of protein which come from eating liver may end up as energy, or muscle, or fat.

This rather strange analogy may illustrate how a

national resource centre will basically function. The materials that we receive will have to be broken down into more useful units in order to make them more widely available. Not only will they have to be broken down, but a system for requesting materials must fit in with this. In other words, the materials arriving in the centre must be split up and reclassified in useful units such as texts, exercises, language items, activities related to strategies. The teacher who wants to make use of such materials will have to request materials in the same way. Instead of saying: "I want a course for my social psychology group," - which is what happens at the moment, the teacher will have to specify the type of texts and exercises in more detail.

This may be a disadvantage, since ESP teachers are not used to making such detailed specifications at such an early stage in their course planning. On the other hand, since we believe in needs analysis and the importance of course design, it is essential that teachers should specify their objectives, and note down what strategies, language items and text types they hope to deal with in their course. In this way a request system will fit in with a classification system, and materials we receive will have a much wider use than the original groups for which they were intended.

Let's try to sum this up in a diagram:



This gives a rough idea of the processes that take place in this kind of resource centre, when new materials

are prepared for course 1 and sent to the resource centre, and when a request for materials for course 2 is received. The two processes are mirror-images. First of all, the course 1 materials are analysed (if the local ESP teacher hasn't already done this!). This means sorting out the materials according to the objectives, the type of students, the type of texts, etc. These criteria comprise the classification system of the centre. The materials are then stored, along with other materials from other local groups. Meanwhile, in another part of the country, a teacher needs to set up course 2. After specifying the objectives of the course, and perhaps some more detailed features, such as types of texts, and exercises, this request is received by the resource centre. The request system must also reflect the classification system, since this will help the retrieval of materials from storage. The centre can then assemble a set of materials according to the specifications of the teacher, even though the objectives of course 2 may be very different from those of the materials as originally prepared. Naturally, the more materials are received the wider will be the range of objectives which we shall be able to cater to.

So, what is still needed, apart from the obvious lack of a body of materials to start working on? Mainly we need a classification system which will be the backbone of our storage system and which will help us in the process of analysing incoming material and preparing forms for requesting materials.

4. Developing a classification for a system of access

By this time, (July 1983) we have had plenty of time to think about the characteristics of our own system of access. But first it may be interesting to look at how this problem has been solved, or approached by other similar institutions. The main surprise is that there are so few

other institutions in a similar position. In many cases "resource centres" are collections of materials produced in one institution and used there. In this way, like the local resource centres in the project they have the advantage of closely shared needs so that the problem of teachers' notes is not an acute one, and in many cases objectives are so similar that whole units or even sections of units might be transferable from one course to another.

One system of access which may illustrate some of the potential problems and solutions is that developed by the British Council in Hong Kong, principally the Mary Northmore. The language teaching operation there is enormous, with over 12,000 students and 100 teachers employed. The materials prepared by the teachers include hundreds of overhead transparencies and materials for "communicative activities" as well as published materials such as class sets of books, and audio and video tapes. There were so many separate items that without a classification system it would take months for a teacher to find out what was available.

The solution adopted was based on several specifications, which mostly stem from those criteria set up by Munby (1976), i.e.:

- (a) Target audience, - language ability, type of student.
- (b) Linguistic specification, in terms of:
 - Skills, - reading, writing prose, intonation, etc.
 - Functions, - apologising, asking for information, etc.
 - Interaction, - register, social relations of interlocutors.
 - Topic, - e.g. personal identification, illness, shopping.
 - Authenticity.
 - Grammar items.
- (c) Bibliographical specifications, - the title, source, data, etc.

Each new item entered into the resources is then accompanied by a form on which the items above are entered into a code. This code will specify, then, about 8 items, plus the bibliographical information. The code numbers are also based on Munby, and permit a detailed specification of the text. For example, they can specify the following types of detail:

I have only cited a few examples of the sub-categories, simply to illustrate the type of information which might be covered.

Target language skills

- 4.9 - distinguishing main point from supporting details in discourse (spoken or written)

Functions

- 2.10 - expressing whether something is considered possible or impossible

Interaction

- 1.22 - Buyer- seller (assymetrical)

Topics

- 2.2.2.4 - Transport (further subdivided)

Grammar

- 14.13 - Subject-operator inversion (using the paragraph numbers from Leech and Svartvik)

In this way, as can be seen, we have a very powerful classification tool, and which has been used in setting up similar centres in other countries. From the point of view of the project, it is useful to point out the advantages and disadvantages of this type of classification system.

Advantages

(a) It is extensive. It is wide-ranging, covering all the possibilities that we have encountered, in the project. It also allows for us to extend, if necessary into hitherto unknown areas.

(b) It is detailed. By using the system we can describe

and specify materials with a high degree of precision.

(c) It is based upon a theoretical framework. Thus, the rationale can be explained by reference to the sources, and this system is not ad hoc, but is based on some current concepts in EFL methodology.

Disadvantages

(a) The complexity of the system is not overwhelming, but it is much more difficult to understand it if one is working in another institution which is more distant, and where circumstances are different. More importantly, the complexity of the system, described in a 15-page booklet, may be daunting for the ESP teacher who has to take time to study it, and then work through the eight different coded criteria in order to get an idea about the content of a particular set of material.

(b) It is difficult to use this system for requesting materials, since requests must be made with similar precision. A Thesaurus of terms must be used so that, for example if some materials are classified by topic "Street" it is no good looking for "Road", because the term is not used. In categories such as "expressing and finding out about intellectual attitudes", if the teacher specifies narrowly he may be lucky and hit on, say, "Expresssing agreement or disagreement" if that was what he was looking for. If he attempts to use the larger category in requesting he will also receive a lot of unwanted material such as "offering to do something" or "accepting an offer or invitation," which may not be necessary.

(c) The theoretical background to the materials, based on Munby and the communicative grammar of Leech and Svartvik, does not reflect our own methodological priorities. Our own theoretical interests are in areas such as reading strategies and text analysis. The plethora of categories which Munby uses is superfluous for us, since our own common ground can be fairly

readily identified in terms of objectives. See, for example, the report on Mike Scott's workshops on course design, which indicate a wide consensus. The extensive categories of Leech and Svatvick are useful in order to identify the objectives of some exercises, as Mike Scott's Exercise typology (1983) shows, but these categories are not the priorities for classifying materials.

On the whole, then, it may be possible to work out another approach to storage and retrieval which reflects more closely the methodology which we have built up and the common ground which all ESP teachers within the project seem to share. This will concern us in the next section.

5.0 Approaches developed in the project

What do we want from a system of access? What should the categories be that will make up our classification system? A few of the criteria might be as follows:

(a) The classification system must not be too obviously complicated. Remember that it will be used by many people who will have had no experience of such systems, who might be sceptical of its usefulness and who might be short of time and patience to go through a long list of categories, an explanatory guide and a thesaurus of terms. Also they may never have seen the resource centre, - all the information, - as well as details of the classification system, - must be kept fairly short, clear and interesting.

(b) The system must reflect our own theoretical concerns, as they have emerged in the project. In particular, I am thinking of the following topics:

(i) Reading strategies

(ii) The view of the text as discourse

(iii) Approaches to developing an exercise typology.

(iv) Text analysis, the development of text typology.

Thus, these would be obvious categories to include. It would help, for example, if in the retrieval process, teachers could request materials by specifying the objectives of their course in terms similar to the above categories. This will be explained later, in the next section (6.0).

(c) The classifying process, once carried out, should help to save others the maximum of time and trouble. Thus, if we classify texts according to a topic type, this should have important consequences for classroom use. For example, we have already seen how classifying a text as a "Process" type could lead the teacher to practice certain important language items, such as the adverbials which indicate a sequence of events, or the role of verb tenses, as well as "extension" or "application activities" which are also common to this type of text.

This means, then, that the system is more than a way of putting materials into an archive. It sorts out materials for their potential use and the materials, once retrieved, also carry suggestions or indications for use in class.

Let's try to put this into practise, and indicate some approaches to the system.

6.0 A classification system for texts and exercises

6.1 The key criteria

In any classification system we should start out with the most important criteria and build the rest of the system around them. In the same way, a car driver following a new route will start out with an idea of the general direction and the main landmarks, which is sufficient for him to reach his destination. Later on he may start to note the less important features, which may help him in showing him danger spots, or short cuts, but these features only serve as extra indicators, - he can reach

his destination without them. In the project, then, we should try to identify the "key criteria" which will be the basis for our classification system. After several months of discussion at local and national seminars, and in the resource centre, we might identify these key criteria as follows:

TEXTS: Subject area, level of difficulty, topic type.

EXERCISES: Objective ("topic"), level of difficulty, text-dependence.

To amplify these a little, the sub-categories might be as follows:

TEXTS

Subject area: This is still an important factor, in spite of our emphasis on general academic texts, and it is an important detail in the later stages of most ESP courses. Accordingly we should indicate the specificity of a text, whether it is Advanced Physics, or General Medical, etc. In practice, most of our texts are "general-specialist." In other words, they were written for the general reader, but they may belong to a specialist area, and use a little of what we consider to be "specialist" vocabulary. Knowing the area would help the teacher to vary course content in planning for a mixed group, or to concentrate on the specialism of a less varied group.

Level of difficulty: This means the intrinsic level of difficulty of a text. Of course, the teacher can vary this by using the text in the classroom in a certain way, such as asking for a certain level of comprehension so that students can use a "difficult" text at an early stage in the course, at a general level of comprehension. But there are certain criteria which make some texts more easy to read and understand than others. These criteria are: the percentage of cognates, in the content words of the text; the text organization which may be simple, or may reflect certain ways of organization which we already know quite well, - e.g. the Hoey Winter "Problem/Solution"

organization, or the Text types that Davies and Greene call "Frames."

Topic type: This brings us to the most complex part of the classification of texts, because in real life texts do not divide themselves into neat categories, in the way they do in textbooks. We have looked at various ways of identifying text types, and the main tactic seems to be to find as small a number of categories as possible, since this fits in with our simplicity criterion and also avoids difficult and fundamentally unnecessary decisions over "borderline" texts. This is one of the basic criteria and is discussed in more detail in 6.2.

EXERCISES

Objective: The course designer sets up his objectives, and prepares exercises to meet these objectives. Mike Scott calls these "topics" of exercises, - in other words, what the exercise is about. This can include:
Strategies: Skimming, scanning, main points comprehension, etc.

Language: Functions, cohesion, grammar, vocabulary.

Mental operations: Analysing, completing, matching, etc.

These will be discussed further in 6.3, since they are the backbone of our exercises classification system.

Level of difficulty: This is a necessary but difficult to define category dependent on the text with which the exercise is used. Fortunately, this can be determined by two important factors: the level of comprehension demanded by an exercise or the type of language item. In the case of level of comprehension this gives a hierarchy of strategies in terms of difficulty, - skimming being "easier" than note-taking for main points comprehension for example. As for grammatical items most teachers feel reasonably secure about what items are more difficult than others especially since the project has emphasised the use of learning strategies in arriving at the meaning

of grammatical structures or vocabulary items. See the report on the workshops on language items, Holmes 1983. Text-dependence: Vital for course-planning, text-dependence tells us whether we can use an exercise on its own, or only with a specific text. Thus reading comprehension exercises are always text-dependent. Exercises practising reading strategies are usually text-dependent, apart from examples such as the "Exercício padrão." In our workshop on language items we tried to classify exercises into various types, so that "Focus" and "Meaning-centred" exercises were text-dependent, whilst "Item-centred" exercises were free of any particular text. It does not mean that a text-dependent exercise is restricted in its use, it can still give a teacher ideas, and be adapted.

These categories then, are the main ones which will serve as the framework for our system of access. In the main, two criteria seem to be of crucial importance: in the case of texts, identifying the text type, and with exercises identifying the objective. Let's look at this in more detail.

6.2 Text type

It is common to classify texts as either "expository", - i.e. seeking to convey information, and "argumentative", seeking to persuade with ideas or beliefs. This seems an useful beginning, since we can begin setting up an order of difficulty straight away, - expository texts are easier to understand. Also we can more easily apply Hoey and Winter's text analysis procedure to these texts. The different structures which Hoey and Winter identified in informative texts have been a useful starting point for work on language items such as verb tenses, cohesive devices, vocabulary, etc. Thus, our text type classification could fulfill one of the criteria we suggested earlier, - that the text type classification would indicate the classroom use.

We decided to use a system put forward by Beaugrande

and Dressler (1981) and suggested by Gimenez. This is based on only three major text types:

DESCRIPTIVE }
 NARRATIVE } Both are types of expository texts
 ARGUMENTATIVE

There are subdivisions, of course, but these three main types can be applied to almost all texts we have so far come across. Furthermore, there are specific language items associated with each of these types. Application or extension activities are also associated with some types more than others, thus offering the teacher some valuable hints as to how to evaluate comprehension.

Let's examine this in a diagram.

TEXT TYPE	SUB-TYPES	LANGUAGE ITEMS	APPLICATION
DESCRIPTIVE (About objects or situations)	STRUCTURE SITUATION COMPARISON CLASSIFYING	Dimensions, location, prepositions, properties, appearance, comparison, p. simple verbs	Diagrams Labelling Examples
NARRATIVE (Actions or events in a sequence)	PROCESS INSTRUCTIONS DEVELOPMENT RESULT REPORTS	Sequencing, adverbials and tenses comparisons, cause and effect.	Re-ordering Extrapolating Tabulating results, graphs, etc.
ARGUMEN - TATIVE (Promoting ideas or beliefs)	LAW + EFFECTS ANALOGIES/ METAPHOR GENERAL - ISING SPECULAT- ING	Cause and effect Reason Hypothesising Modals, - uncertainty	Examples Exceptions Proof Criticism

Thus, to take an example, the text "Timely Turn-off" in appendix 1 illustrates what is, primarily a narrative text, or to be even more specific a process text. Once classified as a process text, the teacher knows that one of the characteristics of such texts is the description

of a sequence of events. Accordingly, in devising comprehension exercises for such texts this idea of sequencing will be very important. Exercises to evaluate comprehension could consist of re-ordering sentences, or focus on the connectives such as "while", "as soon as...", "each time", "when it is about to...", etc. Thus, by classifying our text we automatically indicate how it could be used in class.

Furthermore, the classification system of Davies and Greene, which is behind a lot of this particular system indicates further relations between the text and its sub-components, the "frame" and its component "slots". These are useful for generating further exercises, such as supplying missing "slots" or explaining why they are missing. Also they are the starting point for "DARTs", the directed activities related to the text, which consist of text-based activities analysing or synthesising the components of the text. We have already begun work showing how DARTs can be used as a part of the teachers own battery of techniques for dealing with texts. Naturally there is still a long way to go, since the Davies and Greene classification only holds for relatively simple texts such as those found in secondary school textbooks.

During the coming cycle of regional seminars (August-Nov. 1983) we hope to submit this classification system for discussion and for alteration. In the meantime it stands as appendix 2, which shows the form which will accompany texts when they are stored, and explains how this would be filled in, using "Timely turn-off" as an example.

When we have reached a consensus working paper n^o 10, related to the classification of texts and the elaboration of a text typology will attempt to sum up what has been achieved and decided.

6.3 Exercise type: preparing and requesting

When we came to the subject of exercise types we found

ourselves in some difficulty as to where to begin in our classification system. Although not as well-researched as the topic of text analysis, there is already a considerable body of background research related to exercise types, including some very valuable and extensive work done by Mike Scott, our colleague. Among the categories that he defines we have found out which were the "most important", i.e. the first criteria which a teacher would adopt in preparing an exercise or requesting one from the resource centre.

This led us to design the request form first, since this helped us to concentrate on what information would be most easily available. The request form is given in appendix 3. It may seem somewhat detailed but what we are asking a teacher to do before asking for materials is to plan his course. This is something which any teacher must do; this form not only helps in that process but also helps in giving us information about the types of ESP courses which are being set up.

The most important criterion, as can be seen from our request form, is the objective, or what Scott calls the topic of the exercise. By classifying exercises according to topic, first and foremost, and by requesting materials by specifying the topic, we are able to bridge the retrieval and storage systems. Other categories, such as the mental operation involved we found to be difficult to identify. In practice we have instead included a category called the activity, which describes the physical process involved, - e.g. completing, matching, labelling, identifying, etc. This helps the teacher to vary the types of materials he uses, - particularly important for the stages of a spiral syllabus or revision exercises. However, this information is not the first item which the teacher looks for from an exercise.

One very important characteristic which must be included is whether the exercise is text dependent, or as

we have called it, whether it is bound or free in relation to the text. Some exercises, such as most comprehension questions, are bound to the text and cannot be used apart from it. Others are free, and can be used in any unit, since they are not specifically tied to one text. The classic example in the work of the project is the "exercício padrão" which has been used in the self-access project in Florianópolis. The types of language item exercises which we called "item-centred" also belong to this category. It is obviously important to indicate this in classifying materials. In addition, we also include the subject area and the level of difficulty, since they are also some of the first questions that teachers ask when preparing materials. This exercise classification is exemplified in appendix 4.

7.0 Conclusion

This is a "state of the art" paper, and merely describes some of the paths we have followed during the past few months. During the next series of regional seminars we hope to trim these provisional solutions according to the reactions of ESP teachers throughout the country. Local seminars will also offer regular feedback so that the system can be refined. There will, however, come a point when we shall have to freeze the system and then put it into full operation, because the resource centre, on a national scale will have to decide on the definitive system for the requesting, classification, and retrieval of materials.

Other problems which have not been examined in detail are those related to the editing of materials received at the resource centre, and in particular the preparation of teachers' notes. This is a topic I have already dealt with at local seminars and which will be an important topic in the future series of local encounters. Another gap is the lack of two working papers: one dealing with

the problem of text types, another dealing with that of exercise types. This will be a supplement to the classification system and will also explain how teachers can make the most of the categories set up in the system we have adopted.

The theoretical problems we have confronted have been very different to the way in which academic problems are normally dealt with. Usually one takes some broad categories and then analyses them into more minute divisions; this is what many of us are accustomed to. In the setting up of this system of access the problem is the reverse, - attempting to look at a wealth of categories and sub - divisions and try to locate that which is most important or relevant for those circumstances. This has certainly led to some interesting questions, and may be a source of inspiration for future research, into topics such as text organization and text "difficulty" for example, - research with a strictly practical rationale and with the results tested by their usefulness in practice. All this indicates how the resource centre has immense potential, not merely as the archive of material, but as the living and growing centre of the work of the national project.

Appendix 1

A. Text as stored at national resource centre.

<p><u>PATENTS</u> NEW SCIENTIST 10 February 1983.</p>	<p>Timely turn-off</p> <p>ROBERT FRANKLIN of Los Gatos, California, has come up with a neat way of ensuring that electric gadgets such as irons and hair curlers turn themselves off when left unattended. This would save energy and cut down the risk of fires.</p> <p>PCT application 82/03520 explains how an automatic shut-off unit can either be built into a domestic appliance or installed as an add-on unit to existing equipment.</p> <p>The user pre-sets the timer to put a limit on how long an appliance may stay on while not in use. A sensor in the appliance detects motion or touch, and starts the timer as soon as the appliance is put down. It re-sets the timer each time the appliance is picked up. The timer sounds an audible alarm when it is about to run out, and switch off. If the user wants to keep the appliance switched on, he touches it to trigger the sensor and re-set the timer. If the alarm gets no response, the timer goes ahead and switches off in the interest of safety and economy.</p> <p>[]</p>
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The text is in this form so that it is possible for the teacher to directly copy it and use it in class. If necessary, associated exercises can be combined with it, by means of a "cut-and-paste" job. On the following page we give teachers' notes on the text as they were prepared in one local seminar.

It can be noted that this set of notes concentrates on language items in part three, but also uses the problem-solution analysis of Winter and Hoey in making the first divisions of the text into parts. This would help the teacher in devising comprehension questions. For example the situation is not made explicit, (using electric irons and leaving them switched on can lead to

fires or can waste energy). This would give the teacher an opportunity to establish what was assumed as known by the writer. This could then be checked with the advantages as they appear in the short "evaluation" section.

Text analysis for materials preparation: an example

Part One

Situation and problem
which is solved
in text.

Note pres. perf.
has come up with

Part three
Solving the
problem:
description of
a process.

Note:
to of purpose
to put a limit
to trigger
sequence of
events in process

while not in use
as soon as X is
put down.....
each time X is
picked up.....
when it is about
to run out
If indicating
alternatives in
process
If the user wants
to
If the alarm gets
no response

Timely turn-off
ROBERT FRANKLIN of Los
Gatos, California, has
come up with a neat way
of ensuring that electric
gadgets such as irons
and hair curlers turn
themselves off when left
unattended. This would
save energy and cut down
the risk of fires.

PCT application 82/03520
explains how an automatic
shut-off unit can either
be built into a domestic
appliance or installed
as an add-on unit to
existing equipment.
The user pre-sets the
timer to put a limit on
how long an appliance may
stay on while not in use.
A sensor in the appliance
detects motion or touch,
and starts the timer as
soon as the appliance is
put down. It re-sets the
timer each time the
appliance is picked up.
The timer sounds an audi-
ble alarm when it is
about to run out, and
switch off. If the user
wants to keep the
appliance switched on, he
touches it to trigger
the sensor and re-set the
timer. If the alarm gets
no response, the timer
goes ahead and switches
off in the interest of
safety and economy. []

Part two

Evaluation of the
invention, point-
ing out advantages:
saving energy, less
risk of fire.

Note would save.

SOME GENERAL
POINTS

Tenses:

Note diff. tense
forms for three
sections.

These occur in
many similar
text types.

Sequence:

Third section
has some very
typical
adverbials.

(Text taken from NEW SCIENTIST, 10th Feb. 1983, p. 381).

PRINCIPAL FEATURES	Subject GEN	Level of difficulty M. Diff.	Text type N/d (process)
ESSENTIAL DATA	Title: Timely turn-off		
	Author, source and date	Anon. New Scientist 10.2.83	
	Length (no. of words) 180	Appearance: (original or typed) Typed	
	Non-linear info. (no. of diagrams, etc) -		
	Selected by: PUC/SP		
TEXT TYPE	Original intended readership: Ed. layman		Potential ESP readership: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Und. <input type="checkbox"/> Postg.
	% of cognate vocabulary : 20%		text organisation: simple
	writer's intention: Describe invention and how it functions.		
	Important components of text Description of process, adverbial describing sequence of events.		
	Text extension: Evaluate usefulness in Brazil. Suggest other domestic appliances.		
	Further details:		

Text classification

This is an example of how the file cards might look, accompanying the texts in the resource centre. As can be seen, the teachers' notes accompanying the text are reflected in the content of this file card, in an abbreviated form. This is because, if there are no teachers' notes available the file card will still offer some useful suggestions for the use of the text.

The three principal features will be codified and this will appear as a file number for storage. For example, the "subject" could be entered as "GN" for "general" or "MD" for "medical" or "GNMD" if it is medical in subject matter, but generally interesting and understandable for the majority of students. The level of difficulty will also be coded, so that 1 = very easy, and 5 = very difficult. The three text types can also be codified, and they will probably occur together in most texts, - the order is important, so that the text we give is mostly a process (i.e. narrative) text. So it will be classified as ND, first of all narrative, but also with some descriptive element. The further details would have to be looked for on the card itself.

This text, then, might be classified as:

GN/4/ND

In other words, a general text, fairly difficult, dealing with narration and description.

The other details would help the teacher identify more precisely the nature of the text and whether or not it would be suitable for a particular course. The details of the text type would offer the teacher ideas for comprehension, such as in following the "writer's intention" while the activities suggested in "text extension" point to how the text could be used for creative reading. The text organisation is characterised as either "complex" or "simple", - the complex texts being those difficult to characterize or with no clear stages. This is a criterion which is under research !

Appendix 3

REQUEST FORM FOR MATERIALS FROM THE NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTRE.

UNIVERSITY	Name of teacher		
Name of course			
Semester:		Students:	Undergr. [] Post []
Beginning		Ending	
Total n° of classes		Each class is 1 hour (50 minut)	
Classes per week		N° of students	
Composition of class			
Speciality of students:			
Numbers (aprox)			
<u>Aims of course:</u>			
Immediate aims	_____		
Deferred aims	_____		
<u>Observations</u>			
e.g. motivation, experience, timing, etc.			
<u>OBJECTIVES OF COURSE</u>			
Please indicate those objectives which you consider important and which can be attained in the time given.			
<u>A. Strategies</u>		<u>B. Text organization</u>	
1. Awareness of reading strats. (including predict)	2. Strats. for skimming	8. Functions	9. Cohesion (ref. items, conjunctions)
3. Strats. for main points	4. Strats. for intensive comp	10. Markers	11. Text structure
5. Note-taking	6. Critical reading	<u>C. Language items</u>	
7. Others (specify) <input type="text"/>		12. Verb phrases	13. Nominal groups
		14. Sentence structure	15. Vocabulary
<u>D. Other objectives</u>			
Please include any further comments on the back of this form.			

Comments on the request form

The first feature to be noted is the brevity of the form. We are aiming at getting the whole form on one side of paper. In this way it will not be too daunting for teachers to fill in and we will not find ourselves swamped with fine details which prove impossible to match as we are unable to see the wood for trees. The main drawback is that teachers may fill in all the slots marked "objective", as being all highly desirable. In this case we may need a guide to describe more carefully the categories and what alternatives are open to the teacher. For example "vocabulary" is important for every course, but it should be more useful if this were specified in more detail as "specialised" or "general", or "strategies for guessing vocabulary" by using text organisation or semantic fields.

This form uses the well-known distinction between deferred and immediate aims, in order to situate the course within a wider perspective. It also uses the distinction between aims, the wider goals of the course, and objectives, the immediate goals of the units which comprises the course. Thus the specification of objectives will help us to know what each unit of the course will be about.

In terms of parts B and C, the main difference is that B deals with language above the level of the sentence. We have tried to find a suitable name for this category, but "text organisation" is the best we could find. Part C deals with traditional grammatical categories, and only lists some of the more common ones we have so far encountered in Brazilian ESP courses.

Appendix 4

Exercise classification form

Each exercise in the archive will be accompanied by the following classification card:

Principal features	Text Free []	Topic		Area	Difficulty
	Bound []	T			
		E			
Activity		T's notes?		Prepared by:	
Classification of associated text:					

The first criterion is whether the exercise is free of, or bound to a text. If is bound to a text, then other categories must be completed, such as the area, - the subject specialism, and the classification of the associated text. The Topic is specified according to the objectives in the request form, preceded by T (teaching) or E (evaluating). Again, difficulty is a number assigned by the teacher who has prepared or used the exercise. The activity refers to the operations the student is required to perform. These include:

- Completing (cloze tests, comprehension questions, etc.)
- Matching (two columns, either comparing or joining)
- Identifying (underlining certain features in the text)
- Re-ordering (changing the order of words, phrases, paragraphs, etc.)
- Translating (translating from one language to another)
- Transcoding (changing from linear to non-linear representation, or vice-versa)
- Labelling (identifying items in non-linear text)
- Criticising (giving personal reactions or opinions in class)

We have kept this form fairly brief because there may be up to five or six exercises in each unit of work, all

of which will have to be classified separately in most cases. In addition, the units of work as prepared by the course writers will be kept intact, filed separately as they are as present. Some examples of exercise classification might be as follows:

(a) Cloze test:

Text bound; Topic: E/ Detailed comprehension; Area:?
Difficulty: ?

Activity: Completing (cloze)

Its classification number could be: B/E/DC/GN4 if it was related to a general text and was fairly difficult.

(b) Hell's briefcase text

This short text and some exercises are included simply to illustrate the classification system:

New Scientist

10 February 1983

Hell's briefcase

TAKESHI IMAI, of São Paulo Brazil, has filed a European application in German on a unique form of personal transport. Application 64 141 describes a miniature motor cycle which folds down into a briefcase.

The driver lets the train take the strain for the main journey.

On arrival, he opens up the briefcase to reveal his personal transport. It looks rather like a motorised version of a child's two-wheeled scooter, with upright handlebars. But instead of scooting, the rider stands on two side plates, while a small petrol engine drives the rear wheel. []

2.2 Main points

Numere as sentenças de acordo com a ordem em que elas aparecem no texto:

- () Descreve o funcionamento da invenção
- () Descreve a invenção
- () Descreve o processo da viagem

2.4 Language items

Observe os exemplos:

Menina bonita.

Beautiful girl.

Como você pode observar a ordem do adjetivo em português é diferente da ordem em inglês, isto é, o adjetivo vem antes do substantivo.

FMI

IMF

Fundo Monetário Internacional

International Monetary
Fund.

No texto temos:

A European application

----- uma aplicação européia

Procure outros grupos de palavras que tenham a mesma construção.

The principal features of this text are probably categorised as follows: GN/3/D

General text, fairly easy (because short!, and mainly description).

We can then characterize exercise 2.2 as follows:

Text bound; E/ Main points; Area: General;

Difficulty: moderate; Activity: Re-ordering

Thus, we could classify it as: B/E/MP/GN/3

Exercise 2.4 is somewhat different. It could be classified as text free, since it could be used with any text, with the slight alteration of a single exemple. It could be classified as follows:

Text free; T/ Nominal groups; Area: General;

Difficulty: F. easy; Activity: Identifying.

Classification code: F/T/NG/GN/2

It is important to stress, in this classification, the general use that can be made of text-bound exercises as a source of ideas. This is specially true since the large majority of exercises are definitely text-bound, and may not turn up in a search if a teacher is looking for exercises on a specific topic to use with a text which he has already found.