**When it’s not what you do, but the way that you do it: How research into second language acquisition can help teachers to make the most of their classroom materials.**

**Pauline Foster and Ann-Marie Hunter**

**St. Mary’s University**

**Introduction**

The links between what research may reveal about second language acquisition (SLA) and the uses a language teacher or classroom materials writer may make of it all are, alas, neither neat nor straightforward. This state of affairs is probably inevitable for a variety of reasons: the researcher is constrained by limited resources of time and money, as well the need to control variables (age, proficiency, language background) which might influence results or render them suspect; the teacher meanwhile is constrained by the curriculum, and by management or student preferences; and lastly the materials writer is constrained by what the market place and publishers will tolerate. It’s also probably true to say that a certain amount of suspicion of research outcomes exists in the pedagogic world, partly because these may arise from an environment very unlike a classroom and from materials whose design may suit a volunteer group of language ‘guineas pigs’ but not an authentic group of students. Certainly, it was not uncommon in the earlier days of language classroom research for the leap from lab findings to classroom applications to be promoted without sufficient regard to their generalizability or practical implications. A nice example of this is the work on comprehensible input and the negotiation of meaning in the 1970s, 80s and 90s as Krashen’s (1985) Input Hypothesis was re-shaped into Long’s Interaction Hypothesis (1996) and the pedagogical implications had to be re-shaped as well. From the opposite camp, the situation is not helped by expecting research to be the handmaiden of pedagogy (Sheen 2006) for whom the *raison d’etre* of an SLA study is that of provider of classroom improvements. This is a limitation that few SLA researchers would agree to.

Focussing more narrowly on the design of language teaching materials, it is not hard to see why the impact of research findings might be slow to take hold here. While research studies can have a rather restricted currency (a couple of publications or conference presentations and then perhaps oblivion), teaching materials hang on for years. They are expensive to produce and expensive to buy. A school which has invested in the latest set of books is not going to throw these out and replace them, even if research has shown that their assumptions about SLA are not really justified. Every language school surely has shelves of dog-eared materials still doing the rounds. This is not necessarily a bad thing because teachers are not necessarily slavish followers of the material writer’s designs. Classroom experience makes them able to judge what goes down well and what does not, what is feasible and what is not, what is too long or too short, too difficult or too easy for particular groups of learners. Materials are chopped, tweaked, re-worded and re-arranged to fit them better to particular pedagogic circumstances. It should be noted however that inexperienced teachers, or those set in their ways, or those compelled by massive workloads to follow a prescribed book, are likely to lack the ability, energy or opportunity to put their own stamp on materials.

This chapter will argue that evolving SLA theory or recent empirical observations do not necessarily require different classroom materials, but can instead suggest different implementations of existing materials. We will look specifically at three lines of research that are promising in this regard-- pre-task planning time, post-task transcriptions and task repetition-- and their impact on learners’ spoken fluency, complexity and accuracy. To do this, we start with a consideration of how a model of speaking in a second language (L2) is helpful in conceptualising speaking and laying the foundations for research into it.

**Speaking in a second language**

For many years now, Levelt’s (1989) model of speech production has been the most important reference point for SLA researchers interested in L2 oral performance. In brief, the model posits three main stages in speech production. Speakers *conceptualise* the pre-verbal message that they would like to communicate, they draw on their linguistic knowledge to *formulate* this message, and they *articulate* it in spoken language. This model is supported by a self-monitoring mechanism which allows the speaker to make online adjustments at any of these stages. In a first language (L1) this three-part model works speedily and efficiently due in large part to the speaker’s automatic processing at the formulation and articulation stages, and parallel processing at all stages. That is to say, while a speaker is articulating a message, she is at the same time formulating next one and conceptualising the one after that.

L2 speakers, on the other hand, do not have similar linguistic knowledge, or indeed automatic processing in formulation and articulation, and they require more time to deliver messages. Real-time communication however affords no extra time for processing, and as a result the slower L2 production appears laboured. According to Wang, (2014) L2 instruction should therefore seek:

“to provide learners with opportunities to overcome time pressure, access their linguistic knowledge as effectively as possible, practice these forms and functions, proceduralise them in long term memory, and ultimately improve L2 speaking proficiency” (pp 32).

In order to attempt to address how this might be done, researchers have needed to find a way of measuring speaking ability which links to Levelt’s model (1989). The result has been a three-dimensional profile that describes high-proficiency speech as being relatively free from error, lexically and structurally rich and delivered in a smooth and effortless manner (Skehan 1998) , in other words, the three dimensions of complexity, accuracy and fluency (henceforth, CAF). According to Housen and Kuiken (2009), CAF measures are now common performance descriptors for L2 proficiency tests, as well as general measures to track progress in second language learning.

In an L1, the three dimensions of performance and the three parts of Levelt’s model do not compete for attentional resources, but this is not true in low to intermediate L2 proficiency. At these levels, the normal human characteristic of limited attention and limited working memory means that focussing on one area of CAF may mean that another suffers. This notion has been described by Skehan’s ‘trade-off hypothesis’ (1998) which suggests that in L2 accuracy may be at odds with fluency, and both of these with complexity. However, Skehan further suggests certain task types and task conditions might relieve the pressure on a learner’s attention and even influence where it is directed.

Research into what task types and implementation conditions can predictably affect CAF has been an active SLA field for some time. Our space to explore the details of this research is rather too short to go into detail but we can report some generalised observations: tasks based on concrete or familiar information advantage accuracy and fluency; tasks with a clear structure advantage accuracy and fluency; interactive tasks advantage accuracy and complexity; tasks requiring information manipulation lead to higher complexity; narrative tasks elicit higher complexity but lower accuracy and fluency; personal information tasks encourage higher accuracy and fluency. Research has also pointed to the CAF benefits of certain teacher interventions: task repetition increases fluency; pre-task planning is associated with greater fluency and complexity; post-task activities (or even the anticipation of a post-task activity) is related to greater accuracy, as is giving learners time to plan whilst carrying out the task. Housen et al. (2012) have a good overview of this rich literature.

Findings like these have two practical implications for pedagogy: 1) materials could be created which include the specific types of tasks identified as beneficial to CAF development; and 2) teachers could be aware of how to implement tasks to get the most from them. In other words, it is not always *what* materials teachers use that can manipulate CAF, but rather *how* they are organised. The rest of this chapter will be devoted to the three specific procedures found to influence CAF and which could be exploited in a wide range of contexts with learners of any level of proficiency. This chapter will, we hope, suggest to teachers some powerful, multi-purpose, empirically-supported strings to their bows.

**1. Pre-task Planning**

Starting with exploratory studies by Rod Ellis (1987) and Graham Crookes (1989) , there is now a considerable body of research into the impact of planning time on a learner’s spoken language (e.g. Foster & Skehan, 1996, 1999; Mehnert, 1998; Ortega,1999; Skehan & Foster, 1997; Wigglesworth 1997; Yuan & Ellis 2003). These studies compared the spoken language of learners who had been given time to plan a task (varying from 1 minute to 10 minutes) to the spoken language of learners who had had to extemporize. The results across these studies are broadly similar; pre-task planning is consistently associated with greater syntactic complexity, greater fluency, and sometimes with greater accuracy. These effects are relatively short-lived, being greatest during the first five minutes and weakening thereafter.

To fill in with a bit more detail, we can take the 1996 study by Foster and Skehan on the impact of planning time on the spoken performance of low-intermediate level L2 English learners doing three kinds of task: personal information exchange, narrative and decision-making. These represented rising degrees of cognitive complexity, with the progressively less familiar and less predictable content of the narrative and decision-making tasks requiring more of the learners’ attention than the highly predictable and familiar content of the personal information exchange task. Learners were recorded doing these three tasks in pairs, in their usual classes, either with or without time to plan. The results showed that pre-task planning time impacted most dramatically on their pausing. The mean number of pauses greater than 0.5 seconds (which are very noticeable in speech) was significantly higher for the non-planners compared to the planners across all three tasks. The mean total silence during a 5 minute performance –arrived at by adding all the pauses together--- was even more significantly higher for the non-planners. The figures show that students without time to plan had to resort to pausing for (astonishingly) up to 30 seconds while they mustered their linguistic resources to complete, or even initiate, an utterance. Those with planning time were able to get through these tasks without such yawning gaps.

The impact of planning time on syntactic complexity was similar (time to plan results in more complex language) but it was more layered because the interplay with cognitive demands of the task were more evident, so we will deal with this outcome in more detail. Syntactic complexity was measured by an index of subordination, i.e. the ratio of the number of independent grammatical propositions to the number of clauses. Thus the simplest language has a subordination ratio of one clause to one proposition: *I like coffee*. *He makes it. It is bad*. Subordinated language has ratio of more than one clause to one proposition: *Because I am a coffee snob, I don’t like the way he makes it*. As noted, Foster and Skehan’s study revealed that the time to plan beforehand significantly increased syntactic complexity across all three tasks used, with this difference increasing in line with the increasing cognitive demands of the tasks. The least demanding task (the personal information exchange) resulted in the lowest level of syntactic subordination in the unplanned condition (a ratio of 1 : 1.1), and the smallest increase in the planned condition(1 : 1.22). The most cognitively demanding task (the narrative) resulted in the highest level of syntactic subordination in the unplanned condition (1 : 22), and the greatest increase in the planned condition (1: 1.55). In other words, the least taxing task done without time to plan resulted in language that was almost as simple as language can be, while the most taxing task done with time to plan resulted in language in which over half the propositions involved a subordinate clause.

This cross-sectional snapshot of language performance does not, of course, prove anything in terms of language development. It does demonstrate though that learners are capable of putting together more fluent and more complex language when they are not thrown straight into a task. With pre-task planning time they are able to absorb the details of the task, reflect upon what is required of them to transact it, and allow themselves attentional space to retrieve grammatical and lexical items from memory. Without pre-task planning time, the demands of understanding the task instructions *and* the task content compete for limited attentional resources, resulting in the speaker’s need to resort to simple propositions, and/or lapse into silence. All this fits well with the research finding of Van Patten (1990), who showed that listeners cannot easily or naturally attend to both language form and meaning at the same time. Given a choice, learners opt for meaning over form, an instinct which plays into pidginisation and eventual fossilization (Schumann, 1978; Selinker, 1972).

From a teaching perspective, it’s important that learners engaged in an interactive classroom task do not follow an instinct to prioritise form over meaning and thereby risk lapsing into pidginised or formulaic language. The point is more to get them to speak at the ‘top of their game’, as it were, so that the ‘top of their game’ becomes easier to achieve. Pre-task planning time, even as short as one minute, has been shown to support this, by reducing the need to pause and enabling learners to engage their cutting edge interlanguage through more complex propositions. Task type also plays a role here. Setting learners cognitively undemanding tasks gives little scope for complex propositions, and little scope for a planning time effect. This may be fine for lower-level learners with limited L2 resources, but for those with greater resources, the challenge of a more demanding task coupled with the time to access and display newer lexical and syntactic knowledge can be argued as more supportive of L2 development.

The pedagogic message from SLA research into planning time is therefore twofold. Firstly, rather than requiring learners to get going on a task as soon as you blow the whistle, allow them some minutes to think about it. Secondly, be aware of the cognitive demands of the task—whether it requires only well-known and oft- rehearsed subject matter, or the transfer of new information which neither speaker not listener has encountered before, or the need to weigh up alternatives and justify a choice against opposing views. This combination of implementation conditions is predicted to support learners in producing a more fluent, more ambitious and more developed spoken performance.

All this can be incorporated into any classroom plan that involves interactive task materials. If the task is a balloon debate, for example, where learners are assigned a character to defend against being thrown out of the balloon, the planning time can be a solitary pondering of what to say and how to say it, or done in a group where all learners with the same assigned character pool their ideas, using the L2 At the end of the planning time, let’s say ten minutes, all notes are taken away, balloon groups are formed with one learner for each character, and they commence their debate. This is a cognitively and linguistically demanding task for which complex propositions are useful in persuading the others in the group not to throw you out. The planning time, together with the cognitive demands of the debate, can supply an environment with the greatest chance of learners being able to speak to the best of their current ability, and this in turn provides necessary practice at complex argument through complex and fluent language.

There is one caveat: the Foster and Skehan results detected a trade-off between accuracy and complexity. The most ambitious scores in terms of propositional complexity were related to a decline in accuracy. This inverse relationship did not show up in other planning studies, where accuracy and complexity increased in parallel. So while the overall message is that pre-task planning time changes learner language in ways that are supportive of both these aspects of SLA, there is possibly a limit beyond which across-the-boards benefits give way to competition between them.

**2. Post-Task Activities**

 The idea behind the effectiveness of a post-task activity is that learners will perform with greater attention to their language, and therefore greater accuracy, if they know that it leads into a following task, such as public performance or a transcription activity. This idea is much less researched than pre-task planning, but one recent study has thrown up some intriguing results.

Foster and Skehan (2013) conceptualised a post-task condition as a transcription activity. Twenty-three pairs of low-intermediate students of English were recorded doing a narrative and decision-making task, one week apart, during their normal class times. Half of these students were given an audio file of their task performance to take home to transcribe, the other half were not. The students were therefore in one of two implementation conditions; the experimental group did task one, then transcribed their performance, then one week later did task two, and then again transcribed that performance. The control group also did tasks one and two a week apart, but was not given any recordings and did not do any transcriptions. The order of the two tasks was counterbalanced across the weeks to avoid a task effect, and for simplicity’s sake we report here on the outcomes of the first week only. The analysis is therefore of the first task performance, *before* any transcription is done. The students in the post-task condition differ from those in the non-post-task condition only in that they knew they would be taking a recording home and transcribing it.

A reliable accuracy quotient is a tricky thing to capture in research of this nature; there are many ways to do it, all with their own weak spots. Accordingly, Foster and Skehan chose to use two. The first was a straightforward measure which expresses error-free clauses (EFC) as a percentage of overall clauses. The second was more nuanced; short clauses are disproportionately likely to be error-free compared to longer ones, so all clauses were categorized according to their number of words and then the longest clause length at which a learner was at least 70% accurate could be calculated. Results showed that for both these measures the post-task condition was associated with higher accuracy. For the narrative task, the mean EFC score for the non-post task group was 47%, compared to 56% for the post-task group; for the decision-making task, the mean EFC score for the non-post task group was 59%, compared to 70% for the post-task group. The other measure showed heightened accuracy in the post-task condition. In the narrative, the longest clause which they could manage with 70% accuracy was only 1.73 words, rising to 3.50 words for the post-task group. For the decision-making task, the longest clause which the non-post-task group could manage with70% accuracy was 2.64 words, rising to 5.10 words for the post-task group.

In sum, the addition of a post –task requirement was associated with significantly higher accuracy on both tasks, on both measures. This suggests that a learner’s attention to language form can be influenced by the anticipation of an additional activity that will follow the task itself. Fundamentally, the post-task condition reminds participants that a task is not an end in itself, but is an integral part of something connecting to wider pedagogic concerns. The post-taskers’ heightened attention to form, revealed by their more accurate language, was achieved without the guidance of a teacher but simply by the fore-knowledge that the task extended into another activity in which their previous performance would be under their own scrutiny. They appear to have been induced by the task implementation condition to process language in a way that encourages interlanguage development. And interestingly, this heightened focus-on-form was achieved without any loss of fluency or complexity; in other words, there was no trade-off.

With the advent of cheap and ubiquitous recording devices (in the developed world at least) it has become possible for students to make, store and retrieve audio-files of their real-time L2 performance. In contrast to even the very recent past, when recording equipment was bulky, expensive and intrusive, classroom interactions can be captured discretely and securely downloaded to a laptop by technophiles and technophobes alike. Free software, such as Soundscriber, has made transcription a very much faster job. It would therefore be a relatively simple matter for teachers to encourage students to record themselves, and then produce a transcript. While collecting the data for their study, Foster and Skehan found that students were enthusiastic about listening to themselves speaking English, enjoyed the transcription exercise, and were fascinated by locating their mistakes. So, given that this kind of post-task activity has been demonstrated to raise levels of accuracy though a heightened attention to form, and is likely to be enjoyable, it seems like an excellent idea to exploit pedagogically. It can attach itself to any materials where students are interacting with the teacher or fellow students.

**3) Task repetition**

Task repetition requires learners to repeat the same, or a slightly modified task (Bygate & Samuda, 2005). Although, the word ‘repetition’ may conjure up images of behaviourist drills, it is important to note that what we refer to as ‘task repetition’ or ‘task rehearsal’ does not mean verbatim repetition. Instead, it means the repetition of a communicative task, in the full knowledge that the exact language used in each iteration of the task will vary (Pinter, 2007). We illustrate with an example from everyday life. A student is having problems running particular software on her new laptop which was paid for by the department. It’s a complex problem and she is not an expert in computers so she approaches the head of the department for advice. The head asks her a number of questions but is too busy to take the issue further so gives the student the number of the IT department. The student calls the IT department and explains the whole thing again. The IT technician asks a few different questions and comes to the conclusion that she should contact the service centre for the laptop manufacturer. She does this and explains the problem once again. The service centre employee transfers her to another colleague…. and so on. Clearly, the student does not repeat exactly the same speech with each of her three interlocutors, nor have the words the words written down, but responds to the particular questions. We might imagine that the quality of the student’s third explanation is different from the first; this is a complicated problem, she isn’t confident with computer lingo so the first time, she may struggle a little, hesitate, and search for particular words. However, by the time she is talking to the laptop service centre, she has overcome some of these difficulties, and using quicker, more efficient and detailed speech.

What this example describes is real-life L1 task repetition. Classroom-based (L2) task repetition works in much the same way. When learners are asked to perform a task, they typically first focus on the message content, scanning their memory for appropriate language to cope with it. This takes time and the resulting utterance may be slow and hesitant. This initial performance, however, establishes familiarity with the semantic content of the message and the linguistic demands of the task. If learners are then given the chance to repeat the task, this familiarity allows them to move their attention away from message content to the selection and monitoring of suitable language. Therefore, through task repetition, learners may be helped to integrate the competing demands of being fluent, accurate and suitably complex (Ellis, 2009).

Research into task repetition has reported an impact on oral complexity (Ahmadian & Tavakoli, 2011; Ahangari & Birjandi, 2010); on accuracy (Bygate, 1996; Lynch & Maclean, 2000, 2001; Wang, 2014); and on fluency (Ahangari & Birjandi, 2010; Wang, 2014). A number of studies have found that all three areas were affected by task repetition simultaneously (See Wang, 2014 for a recent example). In addition, task repetition may also facilitate improvements in discursive complexity (Bygate & Samuda, 2005), morphosyntax (Gass et al., 1999) and pronunciation (Lynch & Maclean, 2000, 2001). More recently, it has been suggested that task repetition, as it provides students with the opportunity to perform at higher-than-usual levels of fluency, may result in the proceduralisation of language and *long-term* fluency development (de Jong & Perfetti, 2011).

The fluency-enhancing potential of task repetition is particularly intriguing because, while many language learners aspire to become fluent in an L2, it is a source of frustration that while their knowledge of the target language increases, they are not able to access it quickly and efficiently in real-time communication. Research has thrown up a number of possibilities for this. It has been argued that massive amounts of interactive experience – such as is gained in immersion or study-abroad settings--- may be necessary to proceduralise L2 linguistic knowledge and therefore to increase fluency (Dekeyser, 2007). However, Dekeyser also notes that even in study-abroad contexts, fluency often fails to develop as students may not interact sufficiently with native speakers round them. Furthermore, as not all students around the world are able or willing to travel to the target language country, an alternative needs to be offered by more formal, classroom-based instruction. Rossiter et al. (2010) discovered however that many of the existing materials currently available to teachers are insufficient for promoting oral fluency; task repetition might, therefore, fill the gap.

While task repetition may be seen as a good all-rounder in terms of CAF and, with growing empirical support, may even be the key to unlocking long-term fluency development, when Hunter (in prep) surveyed 54 language teachers, she found that although they conceded repetition could be beneficial to SLA, they feared that it would appear contrived and be boring to boot. But, as we showed in the illustration of the student asking about her laptop problems, rehearsal is an entirely natural (though not always entirely welcome) part of our lives (Bygate & Samuda, 2005). We rehearse before formal interviews and presentations, and informal explanations and apologies; we tell the same anecdote many times; we go through our symptoms over and over again with different members of the medical profession. There is nothing contrived about this. As for boring the students (suggested by Plough & Gass, 1993, and also by Gass et al., 1999), Lynch and Maclean (2000, 2001) found that students actually valued the opportunity to repeat the task, and Pinter (2007) reported that her two young subjects mentioned feeling more relaxed and confident in their third performance. She also noted that the children ‘clearly enjoyed the task and seeing the improvements between the performances gave them a real sense of satisfaction’ (Pinter, 2007: 200). In the same vein, a recent study (Hunter, in prep), which used a poster-carousel task (see below), found the response from follow-up focus groups to be generally positive with many students expressing gratitude for having the opportunity to repeat the task, and some even seemed to be aware of the potential CAF benefits: “the more we repeat the same subject, the more we use phrase (sic) that we would like to use…[the second and third times] we add different phrases… we add our comments… we get used to the story so we become more confident about it.”

If it is going to work in the classroom, there is obviously a need for task repetition to be embraced as beneficial by teachers and learners alike. Recording, transcription and reflection on the differences between first and subsequent performances may be one way to win support for this task repetition. Feedback from the teacher may also maintain students’ interest and increase their confidence in the procedure. Sheppard (2006) reports that if feedback is given to support task repetition, gains in CAF (notably accuracy) are magnified and may transfer to other tasks. Feedback was identified by a number of students in Hunter (in prep) as something which would make the procedure more worthwhile for them. Feedback could come from the teacher, other students, or (as noted above) the students could record their first performance and listen to it before subsequent performances. Along similar lines, Hawkes (2012) reports that task repetition could be used to highlight problematic areas for students and a focus-on-form stage. A further way to maintain students’ involvement would be to consider adding time pressure, having students perform their repetitions in decreasing amounts of time (also known as the 4/3/2 technique, see Nation, 1989). Using non-identical tasks of the same type is another suggestion; Takimoto (2012) showed that while bigger CAF gains are seen in exact task repetition, improvements are also observed when the *type* of task is repeated. This would mean that teachers could have students present, for example, three *different* narratives or have interviews for three different jobs. Finally, there is the *carousel* presentation, which maintains the ecological validity or authenticity of repetition in the classroom by allowing students to repeat a task with a different interlocutor each time. Genuine communication is preserved as the performance is novel for each listener, and the speaker has a new audience with each repetition. Below are three practical examples of tasks typical of many current text books which could be rejigged as carousel repetitions.

a) Interview carousel:

Many language textbooks include job interview tasks. This will typically involve listening to an extract from a successful interview, discussing appropriate behaviour and language for an interview and then taking part in an interview role play. In order to include an element of task repetition, the teacher could tweak the role-play stage to enable each student to take part in four or five interviews instead of one. This could be seen as interview stages for the same job or it could be for a number of different jobs. To set this up the teacher would give out the job descriptions as normal, split the class into As and Bs. The As prepare the questions they would like to ask their candidates and the Bs prepare to fit their real-life experience to the job description (or invent a profile for themselves). When they are ready, the interviewees are assigned an interviewer and the interview begins. After five minutes the interviewees thank the interviewers and move in a clockwise direction to the next available interviewer. The process repeats itself until the interviewers have seen each of the candidates. At this point the candidates can leave the room while the interviewers get their heads together and choose the best candidate.

b) Poster/powerpoint carousel:

This is adapted from Lynch and Maclean (2000, 2001). Presentations and presentation skills are another popular classroom task type, usually involving the learners listening to a presentation, identifying useful language and then making a presentation to the whole class (presenting a new product, marketing strategy etc). This could easily be manipulated to include task repetition. The teacher asks pairs of students to prepare presentations, in the form of powerpoint slides (if a language lab is available) or using posters (if not). Then, rather than have the students present to the whole class, the teacher divides the pairs into As and Bs. The As stay with their poster/powerpoint while the Bs move in a clockwise direction to the next poster/powerpoint. The As make their presentation using the poster/powerpoint as a guide and answer the Bs’ questions. When they have finished, the Bs move in a clockwise direction to the next poster/powerpoint. The As now have to present for a second time to a new interlocutor. The process repeats until the Bs have returned to their original partner. At this point, the As and Bs swap over and the Bs make the presentation while the As go visiting the other presentations.

b) Comic strip Carousel:

Another familiar task type in language textbooks is narration. The formats are various , but involve some example of storytelling in the form of a listening text followed by language work which might, in turn, be followed by a speaking activity in which students tell a partner another narrative. In this example, pairs of students are presented with an authentic written narrative. (A good source for these is [www.theguardian.co.uk/experience](http://www.theguardian.co.uk/experience) ). Each pair in the class works with a different text. The students are given time to sort out the key moments in the narrative, and are able to look up vocabulary they are unsure of. They reduce the story to six key moments. Students are then asked to create a six-frame comic strip with each of these six moments taking up one frame. The process then follows that of the poster carousel above, with pairs being split into As and Bs and each presenting the story to multiple visitors who could, for example, be playing the role of a journalist.

Conclusion

As noted in the introduction, materials developers cannot be expected to keep up with changing tides in SLA research, and language schools cannot be expected to throw out materials every year or so. This chapter has argued that for developments in SLA to make an impact on teaching, new material is not necessarily required. We have given examples of how current understandings of CAF can be applied to existing materials without too much effort. We have also argued that experienced teachers are accustomed to adapting materials that might have become old-fashioned or are unpopular for whatever reason. Therefore, advising teachers to adapt their materials in ways which research has shown to promote students’ language development would seem entirely feasible, affordable and beneficial. What is not to like about that?

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