

八十五學年度 語言學研究 系(所) _____ 組碩士班研究生入學考試

科目 英文 科號 4405 共 3 頁第 1 頁 *請在試卷【答案卷】內作答

I. Write a Summary: Read the following passage and write a summary of 200 words. (20%)

The rapid increase in the quantity of SLA [second language acquisition] research in the late 1960s and early 1970s took place during a generally conservative era in language teaching. In most quarters, teaching materials and classroom methodology were still based largely on a combination of structuralist contrastive analyses of the L1 [first language] and L2 [second language] and neo-behaviourist learning theory. Mentalism was in the ascendent in linguistics, however, inspired by Chomsky's strong claims for innate, universal linguistic properties of the mind. Hence, it was perhaps not surprising that since many early SLA researchers were trained in linguistics departments dominated by Chomsky's ideas, most began by looking for, finding, and stressing some of the inescapable similarities between naturalistic and instructed SLA. Not infrequently, they went on to claim that, therefore, teaching could have little or no effect on the acquisition process- a logical possibility, given the findings, but not necessarily true, as will become apparent.

An example of this type of research and argumentation is the work of some North American investigators who, in the 1970s, produced evidence that the order in which accurate suppliance of certain grammatical morphemes in obligatory contexts attained criterion (80 or 90 per cent) was similar across learners from different first language backgrounds (see Krashen 1977 and Burt and Dulay 1980 for review), and in naturalistic and instructed learner groups (see, e.g., Krashen, Sferlazza, Feldman and Fathman 1976). The first finding was interpreted by Dulay and Burt (1977) as evidence of a common underlying acquisition process, creative construction. Because it seemed that this process would operate automatically in child SL [second language] learners if they were exposed to natural samples of the target language, Dulay and Burt (1973) concluded that children should not be taught syntax.

Krashen (1982a and elsewhere), too, claimed that the similarities reflected a common underlying process, which he called acquisition, responsible for the bulk of SLA in any context, including the classroom. Krashen also claimed that unconscious, 'acquired' knowledge of the TL [target language] was responsible for normal SL performance. Conscious knowledge of simple TL grammar rules, learning, was rarely accessible in natural communication, when the language user is focused on meaning, not form. Further, it could not later become acquisition (Krashen and Scarcella 1978). Hence, the instruction which produced learning was also relatively unimportant. Most of an SL cannot be taught, Krashen claimed; it must be acquired.

Some related claims were made by European researchers. Felix and Simmet (1981) studied the acquisition of English pronouns by German high-school students over an eleven-month period. The researchers showed that the children (ages ten to twelve) acquired ESL [English-as-a-second-language] pronominalization in a highly systematic manner, with the

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errors resulting from substitutions of one pronoun for another falling into only eight of a mathematically far larger number of potential error types. The children followed a process of gradually adding grammatical and semantic features (person, possession, number, gender, etc.) to their interim pronoun grammars. Needless to say, this was not the way their instructors were attempting to teach them English pronouns. Rather, new pronouns were being presented and drilled as distinct morphemes, with unanalysed clusters of features 'ready packaged', as it were. The acquisition strategies observed paralleled those noted in naturalistic acquirers, leading Felix and Simmet to conclude that:

the students' instruction-independent learning strategies demonstrate . . . that the learning process can only be manipulated within narrow limits and that the principles and regularities of natural language acquisition must also be considered in foreign language instruction. (Felix and Simmet 1981, p. 26)

II. Interpret and Comment: (a) Interpret and explain what happened as described in the following passage in one paragraph and then (b) comment on the point in your second paragraph (each paragraph contains about 100 words). In your comment, you may agree or disagree to the author's point-of-view. (20%)

Title: Only the vocabulary of evil could explain what happened at Dunblane, England.

The search for an explanation is always touching, and painful in a sort of secondary, aftermath way—morally and intellectually heartbreaking. There must be a reason. Find the reason, and the thing becomes easier to bear.

So after the man slaughtered the children in Dunblane, Scotland, and used his last shot to obliterate Exhibit A, which was his own brain, people ransacked whatever evidence remained. They looked in the man's past for telltale shreds, for that tracery of cause and effect that lets the mind begin to make peace with such events. The horror needs to be processed in words, to be identified as scientifically as possible and thereby locked, uneasily, in the confines of explanatory language.

We seem to think a monstrous effect must arise from a monstrous cause. But not much evidence turned up to make the eruption plausible. An isolated, unwholesome smudge of a life: Thomas Hamilton, unmarried, 43, a thwarted scoutmaster with an obsessive interest in guns and a habit of photographing young boys naked from the waist up. It seemed a familiar but dislocated story, the kind usually set in dreary rooming houses across the Atlantic.

Sometimes a crime as disturbing as Dunblane calls forth a line of universalizing nonsense. It billows forth like aerosol from Nietzsche's melodramatic thought that "there are secret gardens in all of us. Which is another way of saying that we are all of us volcanoes that will have their hour of eruption." This produces the in-a-sense-we-are-all-guilty fallacy.

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Actually, we're not. This fallacy began its career in late November 1963, just after the assassination of John Kennedy. We were all Lee Harvey Oswald, some editorial writers wanted to believe. Of course, anyone who does not know the difference between a person who kills and one who does not kill has failed to grasp civilization's first house rule. That everyone is capable of murder, at least theoretically, but that most refrain from committing it is the start of social order. But the nonsense of universal guilt—a sneaky bravado posing as self-accusation—has yet to show up in the wake of the slaughter in Scotland. What happened there was so surprising and so awful that it was almost impossible to react dishonestly to it. The mind simply filled with pain and disgust, and pure incomprehension.

The world may be less shockable than it was once, but Dunblane made the universe tremble a little. The killings needed to be set in a darker, more absolute context.

Almost any definition of evil stipulates that crimes against children are uniquely satanic. The 20th century has also learned to recognize evil in the violent eruptions of nonentities: an absolutely insignificant man bursts out of a rented room into sudden, violent, gaudy world prominence. Tiny cause, titanic effect—this is the social equivalent of splitting the atom. When Nonentity massacres innocence, an especially horrible fission occurs.

The Dunblane murders suggest a split that D. H. Lawrence discussed in his famous meditation on American literature: "Destroy! Destroy! Destroy! huns the unconscious." The killer of children wishes to annihilate the contrary impulse that Lawrence wrote of, the upper consciousness that urges, "Love and produce! Love and produce!"

III. Translate the following paragraph into Chinese (10%)

Over the next decade—or two or three—China will be at the top rung of American foreign-policy challenges. As a rising nation like others before it, China is demanding respect in proportion to its strength. That would be reason enough for increased concern in the U.S.—and Asian countries—but Washington has a wider range of interests at stake where China is concerned.