1973

Paradigms for pedagogical purposes

Jannette Forster
SIL-UND

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://commons.und.edu/sil-work-papers>

Part of the [Linguistics Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Forster, Jannette (1973) "Paradigms for pedagogical purposes," *Work Papers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of North Dakota Session*: Vol. 17, Article 5.

DOI: 10.31356/silwp.vol17.05

Available at: <https://commons.und.edu/sil-work-papers/vol17/iss1/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by UND Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Work Papers of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, University of North Dakota Session by an authorized editor of UND Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact und.commonson@library.und.edu.

PARADIGMS FOR PEDAGOGICAL PURPOSES

(From a letter from Jan Forster, Aug. 5, 1965)

The following is a run-down on the pedagogical stuff that Mike and I are currently playing with. I've tried to keep it simple, but theory keeps creeping in--maybe you can suggest a way of keeping it out! Also, even though Mike and I are convinced that this system will work, it hasn't been tried 'in the field' yet . . .

In an effort to make systematic use of our analysis to increase our fluency in Dibabawon, Mike and I have set up some preliminary pedagogical materials patterned on David Thomas' 'Transformational Paradigms from Clause Roots' (Anth. Ling. Jan. 1964). In planning these materials we have drawn upon a fairly comprehensive knowledge of Dibabawon clause structure and also of verb stem classes. Presumably similar exercises could be set up at a somewhat earlier stage of one's analysis, or they could be set up for a closely related dialect (i.e. a dialect closely related to one in which considerable analysis has already been done) at a very early stage of analysis.

Thomas' clause root is a unit in the lexical hierarchy,¹ its slots are *Dramatis Personae* or situational roles rather than grammatical functions.² The clause root underlies grammatical constructions, but it is not an actually occurring kernel clause from which other clauses are considered to be derived. The clause root underlies actually occurring constructions, and the grammatical constructions based on a given clause root constitute a set of transforms, or a transformational paradigm. The transforms in a transformational paradigm occur at various levels in the grammatical hierarchy, manifesting clauses, sentences, and phrases. Thus the grammatical slots differ in different members of the paradigm, while the situational roles remain constant.³

Thomas illustrates the use of clause root and transformational paradigm with the English clause root /Mary-as-actor, see-as-action, the house-as-goal/, formularized as /Actor-1, Action-2, Goal-3/. Some of the transforms listed in his paradigm (which is itself incomplete) are:

1. (active)	/1,2-t,3/ ⁴	Mary saw the house.
2. (passive)	/3,be-t,2ed,by,1/	The house was seen by Mary.
3. (negative)	/1,do-t,not,2,3/	Mary did not see the house.
4. (nomin. of 2)	/1's,2ing, of,3/	Mary's seeing of the house.
5. (question)	/do-t,1,2,3/	Did Mary see the house?

Thomas uses a single column of transforms, both for the English and for the Mansaka examples later in the paper. For a fuller paradigm, a multiple-column display would show more clearly the transformations that apply to more than one member of the paradigm. So for English, it would be helpful to have separate columns for active and passive constructions: e.g.

A. Active	B. Passive
1. /1,2-t,3/ Mary saw the house.	1. /3,be-t,2-ed,by,1/ The house was seen by Mary.
2. /1,do-t,not,2,3/ Mary did not see the house.	2. /3,be-t,not,2-ed,by,1/ The house was not seen by Mary.
3. /1's,2-ing,of,3/ Mary's seeing of the house...	3. /3's,be-ing,2-ed,by,1/ The house's being seen by Mary...
4. /do-t,1,2,3/ Did Mary see the house?	4. /be-t,3,2-ed,by,1/ Was the house seen by Mary?

Here A and B are subsets of the transformational paradigm built on the clause root /Mary-as-actor, see-as-action, the house-as-goal/. Each of the transforms in subset A is in the active voice, each of the transforms in subset B is in the passive voice, and each of the transforms in subset A is in the same proportion to the other members of its subset as the corresponding transform in subset B is to the other members of its subset. That is, for example, A1:A2::B1:B2, and this correspondence could be stated by a transformational rule. For pedagogical purposes the form of the rule is not relevant, but the use of a consistent proportion is extremely relevant since it greatly reduces the memory load in learning the paradigms.

The clause roots that we are using in our initial exercises for Dibabawon are based on the seven stem classes of regular verbs that Mike described in her verb morphology paper. Each stem class requires a different selection of four nuclear situational slots (actor, goal, concomitant, site) in addition to the verb (action slot). The particular nuclear situational slots that occur in a given clause root determine the focuses in which the verb can occur.

We divided the transformational paradigm of each clause root into subsets based on verb focus, and put each subset on a separate slip of paper (or 3x5 card). We drastically limited the number of transforms selected from the possible paradigm, trying to choose those with high frequency of occurrence and those which show the structurally contrastive features. To some extent the selection is a matter of trial and error, but as a start we divided each subset into verbal clauses, substantive phrase axes, and identificational clauses. For the clause root /ko-on (eat)-as-action, Maria (Mary)-as-actor, kindi (candy)-as-goal/ which could be formularized as /Action-1, Actor-2, Goal-3/, we have set up the following transformational paradigm, with two subsets: (condensed)

Subject Focus	Object Focus
Ala. ogko-on si Maria to kindi	Ala. ogko-on ni Maria to kindi
b. nigko-on si Maria to kindi	b. pigko-on ni Maria to kindi
c. ⁵	c. ...
Bla.	Bla.
b.	b.
Cla.	Cla.
b.	b.
c. ...	c.

The transforms under A in each subset are verbal clauses. Those under B are substantive phrases. Those under C are identificational clauses. Ala - Alc are affirmative verbal sentences, differing in tense; A2a and A2b are negative sentences. Bla is a substantivized comment, B1b is an ampli-

fied noun phrase. Cla is a question based on an identificational clause, Clb and Clc are responses to the question. Actually Clc is borrowed from another paradigm, the one based on a nonverbal identificational clause, where it would be a straight negative transformation.

In reviewing the paradigms, we have found it works best to go through them out loud, preferably together. Pronouns can be substituted for personal nouns, to give practice in different word order. Other substitutions of lexical items can be made, including different verbs from the same class. Our hope is that with repetition and review we will learn what slots are permitted with what verbs, and that we will develop an automatic response that will both recognize (when listening) and supply (when speaking) the right topic for a given focus, and the right focus for a given topic. We figure that if we can get this basic part of the structure into our central nervous system we can then pay attention to the 'little things' that make the difference between stilted and idiomatic Dibabawon!

The exercises with which we have begun are all in the active voice, intensive mode. Causative voice will require different clause roots, since it adds the situational role of causer. Various secondary situational roles which we recognize for Dibabawon--beneficiary, objective, instrument, etc.--are not included in these initial clause roots, and their addition will also change the roots and consequently the paradigms. Non-intensive mode may require separate clause roots or may merely define new subsets of the existing paradigms. The exercises can be written, in any case, on the basis of examples that occur in language data, once the principle of (grammatical) transformations based on (lexical) clause roots is understood.

FOOTNOTES

¹Thomas does not say so in his article, but in comparing his TPCR with Longacre's 'Prolegomena to Lexical Structure' (Linguistics 5 .5-24, 1964), there are too many features in common between clause roots and L-syntagmemes (Longacre's term) for them to be different concepts. In a letter, Thomas agrees that he would consider 'actor' to be a slot in the lexical hierarchy (June 14, 1965).

²Thomas' fn.2 'The paradigms...take into account the dramatis personae of the action.' Also in K.L. Pike's 'Discourse Analysis and Tagmeme Matrices' (Oceanic Ling. Vol. 3, 1965) fn.12, 'David Thomas has suggested ...the setting up of situational hierarchies as different from grammatical ones.'

³Pike makes this distinction in his DATM. Compare Harris (1957) '...transforms seem to hold invariant what might be interpreted as the information content.'

⁴t is the symbol for tense. The numbers refer to the situational slots which have the corresponding numbers in the clause root formula.

⁵The imperative transform permits only a 2nd person Actor, so in the paradigm Mary is changed to you in the imperative transform.