

ARTICLES

English as a Bridge Between Cultures:

Scotland, Carolina, and California.....5

Patricia C. Nichols

This paper examines the function of holy texts in unifying diverse societies. Scotland and South Carolina, usually considered to be monolingual and homogeneous societies, are compared with contemporary multicultural California. How Scotland and South Carolina used specific written texts to unify peoples speaking many languages is discussed, with implications for California. The established church and school in Scotland, the competing churches and schools in Carolina, and the public school system in California are examined as agents in social and language change. The texts that might serve as unifying ones for a society like that of contemporary California are discussed, as well as the central role of educators in choosing texts that express shared social and spiritual values.

Cambodian Refugees: Factors Affecting Their Assimilation

and English Language Acquisition..... 17

Usha Welaratna

In the U.S. today, there are approximately 140,000 Cambodian (Khmer) refugees who were forced to flee their country to escape the excessively traumatic rule of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge. The vast majority of Khmer refugees came from an overwhelmingly rural, nonwestern background and many have not been successful in learning English, and in mainstreaming with the larger American public. This paper has two aims: (a) to present some of the connections among the history, worldview, social behaviors, and sociolinguistic patterns of the Khmer people, and, (b) to demonstrate how these features as well as the social and cultural setting of America affect their assimilation and language acquisition. Findings are based on ethnographic research currently being conducted by the author which include: teaching of ESL to adult refugees in their homes while learning the Khmer language herself, participant observation, extensive family interviews, and community service activities.

The “Process Approach” to Writing Instruction:

An Examination of Issues..... 29

Christine Pearson Casanave

A process approach to writing instruction is intended to create a humanistic, nonevaluative classroom atmosphere in which students learn discovery-oriented composing strategies. Numerous assumptions are embedded in this perspective—for example, that expert writers compose in similar ways and that novice writers can become better writers by behaving like experts. These and other assumptions need to be questioned and explored within a broader social context than that provided us by cognitive process research. These social issues include purposes for writing, the role of evaluation in school writing, and the communicative nature of the writing act. A process approach can thus be viewed as a set of instructional techniques appropriate for some purposes and some writing tasks, rather than as a theoretically based research program.

Changing Models for Writing Instruction:

Helping ESL Writers Develop a Sense of Audience..... 41

Alice M. Roy and Sandra Mano

This article reviews the history of the popularity of the modes of discourse (narration, description, and so on) and shows the change in focus in composition from the modes to the rhetorical situation, with an emphasis on audience. Letter writing is a pedagogical strategy that draws students’ attention to the need for consideration of audience. Letter writing activities in writing classes at California State University, Los Angeles; University of California, Los Angeles; and the University of Southern California informally illustrate the benefits of this rich communicative activity for both native and nonnative students of writing. This approach is suggested, not as an alternative to academic writing, but as an entrance into the rhetorical situation of academic discourse.

Comprehensible Textbooks in Science for the Non-Native

English Speaker: Evidence from Discourse Analysis.....49

Alice A. Addison

This paper develops practical applications of the author's 1983 work, which used discourse analysis to compare textbooks providing practical scientific knowledge for ninth grade general science. The author collected data on the reading comprehension of 72 subjects (30 nonnative and 42 native English-speaking students) on the same passages. Her research considered readability of textbooks on three planes: (1) usage, (2) use, and (3) interaction. The main implication derived from the study is that both nonnative and native English readers will greatly benefit from instructional materials and teaching strategies that provide multiple access to science information. This supports the research findings of Cummins (1981, 1982), Krashen (1981,1982), Widdowson (1978,1979), Long (1982,1985), and Long and Sati (1983) on sheltering (contextualizing), higher level questioning, authentic language, and interaction for second language acquisition. Implications for textbook writers and selectors and content area and ESL teachers are given, along with suggestions for sheltering the English of science textbooks.

Demographic Trends and Student Progress

in the San Jose City College ESL Program, 1982-1987.....67

Alice Gosak

In the past 10 years immigrant ESL students have become a growing presence on community college campuses throughout California. Because the need for ESL was at first regarded as temporary and because its growth has been so rapid, there has been little opportunity to assess the progress and prospects of students and programs. This study follows 1,000 students entering a credit ESL program over 10 semesters—from fall, 1982 to spring, 1987. It also examines the overall demographic trends of the program. Finally, it makes recommendations primarily to ensure equity in issues affecting ESL programs.

Postsecondary ESL Programs in California: A Profile.....77

Karen L. Fox and Terrence G. Wiley

This article reports the results of a survey of postsecondary English as a second language programs conducted in spring, 1985 under the auspices of the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA), Region XII. Student demographics, preparation and compensation of faculty, staffing levels, placement testing procedures, number of levels and contact hours offered, and other programmatic data are compared for programs serving primarily nonimmigrant (visa) international students versus those serving permanent residents, refugees and other nonnative English speakers. Also discussed are administrative concerns such as academic credit, needs and priorities, program longevity, and budget control.

Where Vocabulary Meets Grammar:

Verb Subcategorization Errors in ESL Writers.....89

Philip Hubbard and Donna Hix

Learners of English as a second language at intermediate and advanced stages have often mastered the majority of the major syntactic constructions in English. Yet, many grammatical errors persist in their writing. A high percentage of these errors, though labeled grammatical, do not in fact represent problems with pure syntax but rather mistakes in using given lexical items in constructions they do not belong in. By utilizing concepts from modern transformational-generative theories, the authors trace such errors to incorrect or incomplete lexical subcategorization. The nature of these errors is discussed from both a theoretical and pragmatic perspective, and the major classes of subcategorization errors for English verbs are identified. The article argues that ESL teachers, particularly writing teachers of students beyond the beginner's level, need to be aware of the source of these errors so that they can distinguish them from other types of grammatical errors and more effectively help their students to overcome them.

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