Annotated Bibliography of Research in Writing in a Nonnative Language

■ Until recently, the importance of writing has not been acknowledged, and literacy has tended to be construed as reading. Thus, research on writing and the writing processes of native speakers has lagged behind research on reading, and research on the writing of nonnative speakers has been even slower to emerge and is still in its infancy. We wished to establish a database that researchers and practitioners could use according to their professional interests and the special needs of their students. We hope to create a synthesis of the research which will contribute toward building a definable field of inquiry and a coherent research agenda for the 90s.

In establishing our corpus, we sought data-based pieces. Thus, articles describing (or prescribing) pedagogical approaches or curriculum were not included. Nor were those devoted exclusively to advocating a particular political or philosophical stance. We also decided to exclude pieces written primarily for the purpose of constructing evaluative measures. Finally, we excluded studies dealing exclusively with nonstandard dialects.

In compiling pieces for review, we utilized four sources: Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts, ERIC, Dissertation Abstracts International, and bibliographies of pieces reviewed. For each entry, the database includes keywords for: age level of writer(s); native language of writer(s); target language; research methodology; genre of the writing studied; and the context in which writing was produced.

Text Features

Error Analyses of Syntax and Mechanics

Bardovi-Harlig, K., & Bofman, T. (1989). Attainment of syntactic and morphological accuracy by advanced language learners. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 11*(1), 17-34.

Writing had similar syntactic and morphological features across language groups. Syntactic proficiency was markedly stronger than morphological proficiency.

Barnwell, D. (1987). *Syntactic and morphological errors of English speakers on the Spanish past tenses.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 281 369).

Subjects confused verbs which resembled each other and overgeneralized the first person form.

Laing, D., & van den Hoven, A. (1986). *A comparative study of the syntactic maturity and surface control of grade 8 Francophones writing in English.* Paper presented at the International Conference on the Teaching of English, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 285 409).

Errors were most frequent in article use, word choice, verb use, and syntax.

Obeidat, H. A. (1986). An investigation of syntactic and semantic errors in the written composition of Arab EFL learners. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois, 1986). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 47,* 3415A.

Evidence was found for L1 interference errors and interlanguage or learner system errors.

Cross-cultural Comparisons

Dicker, S. J. (1986). Abstracting in writing: A study of four ESL college students. (Doctoral dissertation, Columbia University Teachers College, 1986). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 47,* 4007A.

Cultural differences were found to account for variation in genre, voice, content, and transitions used in abstracting.

Harley, B., & King, M. L. (1989). Verb lexis in the written compositions of young L2 learners. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 11*(4), 415-439.

Native Francophone writers displayed more lexical variety and used more infrequent verbs than English L1/French L2 immersion students.

Indrasuta, C. (1988). Narrative styles in the writing of Thai and American students. In A. C. Purves (Ed.), *Writing Across Languages and Cultures: Issues in Contrastive Rhetoric* (pp. 206-266). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Thai students used narrative as a vehicle for exposition and instruction, while American students did not.

Ostler, S. E. (1987). English in parallels: A comparison of English and Arabic prose. In U. Connor & R. B. Kaplan (Eds.), *Writing Across Languages: Analysis of L2 Text* (pp. 169-185). Reading. MA: Addison-Wesley.

Arabic L1/English L2 writers used more coordinate structures than English L1 writers, began essays with a global statement, and ended them with a formulaic or proverbial statement.

Soter, A. O. (1988). The second language learner and cultural transfer in narration. In A. C. Purves (Ed.), *Writing Across Languages and Cultures: Issues in Contrastive Rhetoric* (pp. 177-205). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Linguistic or cultural differences were found in the writing of English L1, Vietnamese L1/English L2, and Arabic L1/English L2 writers.

Relationship to L1 Linguistic and Cultural Background

McKay, S. L. (1989). Topic development and written discourse accent. In D. M. Johnson & D. H. Roen (Eds.), *Richness in Writing: Empowering ESL Students* (pp. 253-262). New York, London: Longman.

One's experiences in a culture play a large role in how writing topics are developed, contributing to a "written discourse accent" in L2 writers.

Nishimura, Y. K. (1986). Prose-organizing strategies of Japanese college students: A contrastive analysis. *Descriptive and Applied Linguistics, 19,* 207-218.

Evidence for cultural transfer of rhetorical organization was found, but transfer weakened with L2 development.

Ricento, T. K. (1987). Aspects of coherence in English and Japanese expository prose. (Doctoral dissertation, University of California, 1987).

In a paragraph reordering task, subjects were better at choosing initial and final paragraphs than those in the middle, and evidence was found for a Japanese-specific rhetorical organizational pattern.

Rittershoffer, J. S. (1987). The nominal reference system in the interlanguage of Japanese students writing in English. (Doctoral dissertation, Columbia University Teachers College, 1987). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 48,* 119A).

Japanese L1/English L2 writers sometimes employed grammatical structures which exist in both languages at the expense of a more idiomatic or appropriate English pattern.

Nonnative Writing Proficiency Development

Bilingual Literacy Acquisition

Hadaway, N. L., & Cukor-Avila, P. (1986,). *Composing in two languages: A bilingual child's response.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Social Science Association, San Antonio, TX. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 280 288).

    Most children observed wrote only in English, and code-switching was rare. Use of Spanish L1 was influenced by genre and topic.

Hudelson, S. (1989). A tale of two children: Individual differences in ESL children's writing. In D. M. Johnson & D. H. Roen (Eds.), *Richness in Writing: Empowering ESL Students* (pp. 84-99). New York, London: Longman.

    One student was more willing to take risks with writing, resulting in more progress in L2 literacy acquisition.

Nathenson-Mejia, S. (1989). Writing in a second language: Negotiating meaning through invented spelling. *Language Arts, 66*(5), 516-526.

    Students used their greater knowledge of Spanish L1 orthography to help them to spell words in English L2.

Piper, T. (1989). *Written language growth in a multiethnic classroom.* Paper presented at the Second Language Research Forum, Los Angeles, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 308 528).

    Bilingual students used compositions to speculate and generalize more than monolingual or beginning L2 peers, although native speakers wrote more and received higher holistic ratings on their work.

Pringle, M. V. (1986). Learning to write in French immersion. *Carleton Papers in Applied Language Studies, 3,* 27-45.

    Three stages are hypothesized in the development of L2 French writing skills by Grade 1-2 immersion students: from writing that is related to drawing and personal experience, to risk-taking writing with errors, to coherent transactional and poetic writing.

Samway, K. D. (1987). The writing processes of nonnative English-speaking children in the elementary grades. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Rochester, 1987).

    The teaching and learning of writing in an elementary ESL classroom were described using ethnographic techniques.

Seda, I. & Abramson, S. (1989). *English writing development of young, linguistically different learners.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 321 882).

    Documents the oral and written L2 development of children participating in interactive journal writing.

Urzua, C. (1987). "You stopped too soon": Second language children composing and revising. *TESOL Quarterly, 21*(2), 279-304.

    Cognitive and social aspects of literacy developed in similar ways for English L1 and L2 young writers.

Later Elementary and Secondary

Elliott, M. (1986). Nasr's development as a writer in his second language development: The first six months.
Australian Review of Applied Linguistics, 9(2), 120-153.

    A high school-aged Arabic L1 student's writing development was traced.

Peyton, J. K. (1986). *Dialogue journal writing and the acquisition of English grammatical morphology.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 276 257).

    Individual differences in the development of correct grammatical morpheme usage were found.

Literate Adults

Anakasiri, S. (1986). Indicators of quality in second language written communication. (Doctoral dissertation, Southern Illinois University, 1986). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 48,* 583A.

    Highly rated writers used more subordinate constructions per t-unit, made fewer global errors, and used more reference and substitution cohesion.

Linnarud, M. (1986). Lexis in composition: A performance analysis of Swedish learners' written English. *Dissertation Abstracts International, 47,* 812C.

    Native writers wrote longer sentences, varied sentence length more, and used more unique vocabulary items than nonnative writers.

Rivers, W. J. (1987). Story writing: A comparison of native and L2 discourse. In J. P. Lantolf & A. Labarca (Eds.), *Research in Second Language Learning: Focus on the Classroom.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

    Uses a Vygotskian framework to analyze the narratives of L2 learners.

The Writing Process

Brooks, E. (1989). *Interviews with students and colleagues: What can we learn?* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 314 958).
    Traces college students' experiences and progress as college writers in a follow-up to a previous study.

Cumming, A. (1990). Metalinguistic and ideational thinking in second language composing, *Written Commmunication, 7*(4), 482-511.
    One third of L2 writer's decisions during writing involved simultaneous considerations of gist and appropriate L2 use.

Dennett, J. T. (1990). *ESL technical writing: Process and rhetorical differences.* Paper presented at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Chicago, IL.
    The best writers, both L1 and L2, spent most of their composing time on prewriting. L2 writers had less sense of audience while composing than L1 writers.

Kelly, P. (1986). How do ESL writers compose? *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics, 9*(2), 94)119.
    Describes think-aloud protocols of nine L2 writers.

Martin-Betancourt, M. E. (1986). The composing processes of Puerto Rican college students of English as a second language. (Doctoral dissertation, Fordham University School of Education, 1986). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 47,* 2577A.
    Significant individual differences were found in composing processes and in L1 and L2 use in the process.

Relationship to Attitude

Betancourt, F., & Phinney, M. (1987). *Souces of writing block in bilingual writers.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 281 361).
    Sources of writing apprehension in bilinguals varied by the language used and how experienced students were with writing in that language.

Fayer, J. M. (1986). *Writing apprehension among Puerto Rican university students.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Chicago, IL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 280 283).
    Writing apprehension was higher in English L2 and higher in speaking than writing.

Gungle, B. W., & Taylor, V. (1989). Writing apprehension and second language writers. In D. M. Johnson & D. H. Roen (Eds.), *Richness in Writing: Empowering ESL Students* (pp. 235-248). New York, London: Longman.
    A writing apprehension survey found small correlations between students' writing requirements for their majors and their interest in writing and taking advanced writing courses.

Revision

Cohen, A. D. (1987). Student processing of feedback on their compositions. In A. Wenden & J. Rubin (Eds.), *Learner Strategies in Language Learning.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice/Hall International.
    A survey of students in language courses showed that few incorporate teacher comments into revisions.

Cohen, A. D., & Cavalcanti, M. C. (1990). Feedback on compositions: Teacher and student verbal reports. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom* (pp. 155-177). Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.
    Students in both L1 and L2 composition courses saw teacher feedback as judgement rather than comments of an interested reader and seldom used teacher comments for revision.

Gaskill, W. H. (1986). Revising in Spanish and English as a second language: A process-oriented study of composition. (Doctoral dissertation, University of California, 1986). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 47,* 3747A-3748A.
    Most revisions were made during writing rather than between drafts, and most revisions were surface changes in both L1 and L2.

Hall, C. (1990). Managing the complexity of revising across languages. *TESOL Quarterly, 24*(1), 43-60.
    Revision was very similar in L1 and L2, although L2 revising took more time and demanded some unique strategies.

Lai, P. C. (1986). The revision processes of first-year students at the National University of Singapore. *RELC Journal, 17*(1), 71-84.
    Most revisions were mechanical, and students described revision as checking for error.

Effect of Task and Other Contextual Variables

Benesch, S. (1987). *Word processing in English as a second language: A case study of three nonnative college students.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Atlanta, GA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 281 383).

Found individual differences in how computers were utilized in writing, although in no case was there substantive revision.

Campbell, C. (1991). Writing with others' words: Using background reading text in academic composition. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom* (pp. 211-230). Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Non-native writers' incorporation of background texts was not integrated into compositions as well as native writers'.

Chastain, K. (1990). Characteristics of graded and ungraded compositions. *Modern Language Journal, 74*(1), 10-14.

Graded compositions were longer, with longer and more complex sentences, but similar in terms of errors made, content, and organization.

Chiste, K. B., & O'Shea, J. (1988). Patterns of question selection and writing performance of ESL students. *TESOL Quarterly, 22*(4), 681-684.

When given a choice of essay questions, ESL students favored short questions and questions appearing first in a set.

Friedlander, A. (1990). Composing in English: Effects of a first language on writing in English as a second language. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom* (pp. 109-125). Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Students wrote longer and better essays when planning in L1 on a topic related to L1 background.

Johns, A. M., & Mayes, P. (1990). An analysis of summary protocols of university ESL students. *Applied Linguistics, 11*(3), 253-271.

Low proficiency students tended to copy more in summaries, and high proficiency students combined more ideas from the original in their sentences.

Johnson, P. (1986). Acquisition of schema for comprehension and communication: A study for the reading-writing relationship in ESL. *RELC Journal, 71*(1), 1-13.

Tests the notion that inexperienced L2 writers find it easier to remember and summarize information presented in narrative than expository form.

Kroll, B. (1990). What does time buy?: ESL student performance on home versus class compositions. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom* (pp. 140-154). Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Students made similar errors and achieved only slightly better holistic scores on at-home than in-class essays.

Li, K. N. Y. (1990). *Writing with pen or computer: A study on ESL secondary school learners.* Paper presented at the Annual World Conference on Computers in Education, Sydney, Australia. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 322 720).

Computer-written essays were longer and more highly rated, although learners did not find nonnative writing easy or enjoyable.

Peyton, J. K., Staton, J., Richardson, G., & Wolfram, W. (1990). The influence of writing task on ESL students' written production. *Research in the Teaching of English, 24*(2), 142-171.

Students wrote more and wrote more complex prose in dialogue journals than in assigned writing.

Reid, J. (1990). Responding to different topic types: A quantitative analysis from a contrastive rhetoric perspective. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom* (pp. 191-210). Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Writing in different genres affected lexical choice but not syntactic patterns.

Seidhofer, B. (1990). *Summary judgments: Perspectives on reading and writing.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language, Dublin, Ireland. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 321 571).

Writers who were provided with texts as they originally appeared in print wrote summaries borrowing more from the original text than writers who were given only a typed manuscript without headings.

Siu, K. P. (1986). *The effects of mode on syntactic and rhetorical complexity for EFL students at three grade levels.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 274 163).

Subjects used longer *t*-units and clauses and more clauses per *t*-unit on argumentative than narrative tasks.

Swales, J. (1990). Nonnative speaker graduate engineering students and their introductions: Global coherence and local management. In U. Connor & A. M. Johns (Eds.), *Coherence in Writing: Research and Pedagogical Perspectives.* (pp. 187-207). Alexandria, Virgina: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Students were able to compensate for communication difficulties caused by grammar, semantics, and register by following the conventionalized form of scientific text introductions.

Van Haalen, T. (1990). *Efficacy of word processing as a writing tool for bilingual elementary school students: A pilot study.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 318 233).

No relationship was found between field dependence and bilingualism, and bilinguals reported using more effective composing strategies than monolingual counterparts.

Nonnative Writing and Other Language Skills

Reading/Writing Relationship

Carson, J. E., Carrell, P. L., Silberstein, S., Kroll, B., & Kuehn, P.A. (1990). Reading-writing relationships in first and second language. *TESOL Quarterly, 24*(2), 245-266.

Correlations between reading and writing skills in L1 and L2 were weak to moderate, with differing patterns for Chinese L1 and Japanese L1 learners.

Cumming, A., et al. (1989). *Reading and summarizing challenging texts in first and second languages.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 306 773).

Subjects displayed similar expertise in reading and writing in L1 and L2, and literate expertise was a more significant factor in subject performance than language proficiency.

Pimsarn, P. (1986). The reading and writing relationship: A correlational study of English-as-a-second-language learners at the collegiate level. (Doctoral dissertation, North Texas State University, 1986). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 47,* 2974A.

Reading and writing ability were significantly correlated, but neither were correlated with self-reported background variables.

Speaking/Writing Relationship

Florez, V., & Hadaway, N. L. (1987,). *Relationship of oral language proficiency and writing behaviors of secondary second-language learners.* Paper presented at the Southwest Regional Conference of the International Reading Association, Phoenix, AZ. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 283 359).

LAS test scores were unrelated to assessments of writing ability in L2.

Wald, B. (1987). The development of writing skills among Hispanic high school students. In S. R. Goldman & H. T. Trueba (Eds.), *Becoming Literate in English as a Second Language* (pp. 155-185). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Late learners of English differentiated more between written and spoken syntactic features than early learners.

Relationship to NL Writing

Canale, M., Frenette, N., & Belanger, M. (1988). Evaluation of minority student writing in first and second languages. In J. Fine (Ed.), *Second Language Discourse: A Textbook of Current Research* (pp. 147-165). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

The strength of the relationship between writing in L1 and L2 depended on the evaluative instrument used on texts.

Cumming, A. (1989). Writing expertise and second language proficiency. *Language Learning, 39*(1), 81-141.

Writing expertise and second language proficiency accounted for large, but separate portions of the variance in L2 writing quality.

Fagan, W. T., & Eagan, R. L. (1990). The writing behavior in French and English of grade three French immersion children. *English Quarterly, 22*(3-4), 157-168.

Students wrote faster and wrote longer and better texts in English than in French. Many composing processes were the same.

Doushaq, M. H. (1986). An investigation into stylistic errors of Arab students learning English for academic purposes. *English for Specific Purposes, 5*(1), 27-39.

Students were equally unskilled in L1 Arabic and L2 English composition.

Jones, S., & Tetroe, J. (1987). Composing in a second language. In A. Matsuhashi, (Ed.), *Writing in Real Time: Modeling Production Processes* (pp. 34-57). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Planning strategies transferred from L1 to L2 but were poor in both languages.

Instructional Factors

Instructional Program

Castellano, M. (1989). *The literacy experiences of a Chicano student: A case study of Ernesto.* Paper presented at the conference on College Composition and Communication, Seattle, WA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 320 457.)

Attributes difficulties in college-level writing to negative early literacy experiences.

Kangas, J. A., & Reichelderfer, N. (1987). *Persistence by successful and nonsuccessful remedial and nonremedial English and English-as-a-second-language students: A longitudinal study* (Research Report No. 65). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 289 539).

Success in reading and writing courses was one of the most significant factors in persistence.

Stairs, A. (1990). Questions behind the question of vernacular education: A study in literacy, native language, and English. *English Quarterly, 22*(3-4), 103-124.

The introduction of English (L2) literacy instruction might have caused the Anglization of Inuktitut (L1) written language.

Curriculum and Methodology

Burger, S. (1989). Content-based ESL in a sheltered psychology course: Input, output, and outcomes. *TESL Canada Journal/Revue TESL du Canada, 6*(2), 45-59.

Students in sheltered subject matter courses made proficiency gains equal to those enrolled in ESL courses. Extra reading and writing practice was not linked to gains in proficiency.

Chandrasegaran, A. (1986). An exploratory study of EL2 students' revision and self-correction skills. *RELC Journal, 17*(2), 26-40.

Three revision techniques were successively employed with ESL writers, but students were still unable to recognize one third of composition errors.

Fathman, A. K., & Whalley, E. (1990). Teacher response to student writing: Focus on form versus content. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom* (pp. 178-190). Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.

While both grammar and content feedback were beneficial, grammar feedback had more effect on revisions made than content feedback.

Liebman-Kline, J. (1986). *Toward a contrastive new rhetoric: A rhetoric of process.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Anaheim, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 271 963).

Some of the L2 rhetorical phenomena claimed to be culturally influenced may actually be vestiges of infrequent, product-centered composition instruction in L1.

Robb, T., Ross, S., & Shortreed, I. (1986). Salience of feedback on error and its effect on EFL writing quality. *TESOL Quarterly, 20*(1), 83-93.

Type of error correction had little effect on fluency or accuracy in compositions.

Ross, S., Robb T., & Shortreed, I. (1988). First language composition pedagogy in the second language classroom: A reassessment. *RELC Journal, 19*(1), 29-48.

Three different modes of instruction had no effect on accuracy measures, and fluency building techniques were of limited value in expository writing instruction.

Ulijn, J. M., & Strother, J. B. (1987). Interlanguage and EST writing: Some syntactic evidence. *English for Specific Purposes, 6*(2), 99-112.

Students' major played a larger role in the use of scientific register than their language background.

Zamel, V. (1990). Through students' eyes: The experiences of three ESL writers. *Journal of Basic Writing, 9*(2), 83-98.

The instructional model followed by composition teachers affected student attitude toward writing.

Sandra R. Schecter is associate director of the Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy at the University of California at Berkeley.

Linda Harklau is an ESL teacher and doctoral student at the University of California, Berkeley.

How English Works:
A Grammar Handbook with Readings.

Ann Raimes. New York: St. Martins Press, 1990. Pp. xxiii + 389.

ROBERTA J. CHING
California State University, Sacramento

I n the not too distant past teaching English as a second language was synonymous with teaching grammar. However, recently a great deal of research and not a little rhetoric have been devoted to questioning the place of grammar instruction in the adult second language classroom: whether it should be central or peripheral, implicit or explicit, inductive or deductive. Ann Raimes herself in 1983 claimed that a concentration on grammar, language use, and mechanics could inhibit the flow of writing and lead students to concentrate on the written product and not on the writing process (Raimes, 1983). Nevertheless, teachers who prepare students to function in academic and business settings know that at some point students must focus on accuracy in order to produce the edited English that their audiences expect.

The question for most of us in the '90s who teach college students is not whether to teach them grammar but when and how to do it. Jack Richards (1986) advocates giving students "pedagogic tasks and learning experiences that allow for the development of monitoring, revision, or editing capacities, that is, making grammatical accuracy a part of the communicative process, rather than focusing on the study of grammar for its own sake" (p.157). In a recent article Barbara Kroll (1990) suggests that "this is best done through having contextual writing to look at, writing which has been produced by the students and which they have a vested interest in improving" (p.51). She proposes an ESL curriculum where students first develop rhetorical control and then turn their attention to syntax, not as an end unto itself but as a tool in the effort to communicate effectively to a reader.

A traditional grammar book in which grammar is taught for its own sake would not be appropriate for such a course. However, Ann Raimes' *How English Works: A Grammar Handbook with Readings* gives students a communicative context for learning grammar; it attempts to make the connections between reading, writing, and grammar so

close that knowledge about grammar will result in change in student writing. The text offers students opportunities to read, write, and learn strategies for editing their own writing.

Following a sequence similar to traditional grammar books, *How English Works* opens with chapters on basic sentence structures, followed by chapters on noun and verb phrases, modifiers, agreement, verbals, connecting and combining sentences, and finally principles of written discourse. But it departs from traditional texts in its focus on grammar in discourse, both in the writing of professional authors and in the student's own writing. Each chapter has students analyze a brief reading passage for a particular grammar point. Readings are taken from authors such as Nora Ephron and Russell Baker; they are brief, interesting, and cross-referenced to the grammatical points which they illustrate.

For teachers who wish to spend more time on reading, at the end of the book Raimes includes the entire essay with two writing topics and a list of references to the relevant grammar chapters. A clear exposition of the grammatical rules in question follows the reading passage. Abundant charts schematize the rules and provide handy references when students are in the editing phase. A variety of exercises, most based on the reading passage, allow students to apply the rules that they are formulating. They edit a piece of student writing, write on a related topic, and conclude by editing their own work.

For example, in the chapter on articles, students read a passage from Russell Baker's autobiography and analyze how articles are used in terms of whether the noun phrase refers to something actual and specific for both the writer and the reader either inside the text or outside it. Rules governing the use of articles are followed by exercises. In one, students work with partners to make generalizations on topics such as "babies" and "homework" in order to practice using *zero article*. In another they take a series of noun phrases from Baker's autobiography and classify them as countable or uncountable, singular or plural, and specific or nonspecific. Because the items come from a passage, rather than from disconnected sentences in the manner of traditional grammar texts, students can observe how the rules function in discourse. After editing a piece of student writing, they write about a surprise they once had or that they prepared for someone else and check their work for the use of articles using the categories introduced in the chapter.

The instructor's manual that accompanies *How English Works* provides answers for exercises, noting that often more than one answer is correct and that students should consult with their teacher if they believe their answer is correct. This caveat is particularly important when students work through the exercises in a chapter at their own pace, a strategy that teachers will find useful for dealing with the different levels of grammatical literacy that inevitably occur in their classes. The instructor's manual also contains suggestions for using

How English Works in a course focusing on reading and writing, using grammar in the service of reading comprehension and the editing of compositions. Raimes provides preview and response questions for the complete essays, as well as questions for analysis. The instructor's manual also provides suggestions for using the grammar sections, including suggestions for responding to errors. Raimes offers a "Response Form and Checklist" that teachers can use first to comment on ideas and organization and then to identify "main problem areas in grammar" (p. 5) in the draft they are reading. This form allows the teacher to refer the student back to the chapter where a grammatical topic has already been discussed and to assign relevant pages and exercises for review, encouraging students to see that what they are learning is cumulative, not something to be studied and then forgotten once the chapter is completed.

One problem that teachers using *How English Works* may encounter is that many ESL students in the United States are immigrants; many of them have lived in this country for a number of years and have had their education in American high schools and community colleges. For a variety of reasons, these students, unlike traditional international students, have often not had systematic instruction in either the grammar of their first language or of English. Thus, even though students have achieved a fair degree of fluency in English, they frequently lack the grammatical terminology and concepts that Raimes takes for granted. Teachers of these students may have to backtrack and lay foundations before they can proceed with a lesson. For example, in the chapter on phrases and clauses, Raimes lists prepositional phrases as one category of front structures (p. 17), but she never defines or discusses prepositional phrases. Teachers will have to fill in this gap before students can accurately identify subjects of sentences and understand the concept of *sentence packing*. Nor does she contrast clauses with phrases. *How English Works* will work best for high intermediate to advanced students who have already become familiar with basic English syntax.

Teachers will find little need to supplement material in the text but, like most grammar texts, it covers far more than can be handled in a 15-week semester. They will have to be selective, perhaps eliminating some chapters, such as the one on questions and negatives, since spending time on items such as tag questions promises the least benefit to students' writing. Teachers may also choose to sequence chapters somewhat differently than they are presented in the text, for example, shifting the chapters on punctuation and connecting sentences, which occur late in the text, to the early weeks of the course since students need these skills for all of the writing they will be doing in the course. Although Raimes' intention is that teachers follow the sequence that she has laid out, teachers can readily adapt *How English Works* to the needs of their students and their own vision of how grammar instruction should be sequenced.

How English Works is not a grammar book for all purposes. It assumes that students have reading skills, writing fluency, and knowledge of the fundamentals of English grammar. It is not a reference book although its index would allow students who were familiar with its contents to refer to it in the future. It also contains some inconsistencies which may confuse students. For example, two exercises on modals include *will*, but Raimes never explains why *will* can be considered a modal, nor does she include it in a chart that summarizes the uses of modals and related idioms. What the text sets out to do, however, it does well. *How English Works* represents an innovative approach to grammar for students who are on the syntax side of the rhetoric/syntax split defined by Barbara Kroll and who have achieved a degree of fluency and are now refining their grammatical accuracy in written academic English.

ESL practitioners must still answer the question of when explicit grammar instruction is most productive. Students need to begin developing grammatical literacy while they are developing fluency in the language, but devoting an entire course to grammar is probably most effective, as Barbara Kroll recommends, when students have the ability to communicate in writing, generating ideas and developing and organizing them in a clear and effective manner. Once students have control of rhetoric, they then have a reason for learning grammatical rules in order to edit that writing. Higher level students tend to be more interested in and responsive to grammar instruction. They will see its relevance more clearly than students at lower levels. Krashen is persuaded that we can't alter the order in which grammatical forms are acquired, but even he recommends that a university ESL program include grammar study "to produce 'optimal' Monitor users, performers who will use conscious rules to raise their grammatical accuracy in situations where communication is not impaired, e.g., in writing or in prepared speech" (Krashen, 1985, p.76). Students need to be taught to be good monitor users, which, in writing, means to be good editors.

Behind the selection of interesting reading passages, the clever and varied exercises, and the motivating writing assignments included in *How English Works*, lies the assumption that the application of grammar is part of the transaction between reader and writer. Thus, grammar is an integral part of the writing process, not a separate entity that can be labeled product and divorced from the writer's attempt to convey meaning and the reader's attempt to construct it. *How English Works* offers teachers a more effective way of helping students come to terms with the grammar of English so that they can use their knowledge to become better writers, not just better grammarians. ▨

Ed. Note: See the following review for another recently published grammar text.

References

Krashen, Stephen D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications.* Essex, England: Longman.

Kroll, Barbara. (1990). The rhetoric/syntax split: Designing a curriculum for ESL students. *Journal of Basic Writing, 9*(1), 40-55.

Raimes, Ann. (1983). Anguish as a second language? Remedies for composition teachers. In A. Freedman, I. Pringle, and J. Yalden (Eds.), *Learning to write: First language/second language* (pp. 258-272). London and New York: Longman.

Richards, Jack. (1986). *The context of language teaching.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Using English, Your Second Language, 2nd Ed.
Dorothy Danielson, Patricia Porter, and Rebecca Haven
Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents. 1990.

MAY SHIH
San Francisco State University

The differences between the first and second editions of *Using English* show how ESL grammar teaching has changed in the past 20 years. The first edition of this textbook, published in 1973, reflects the traditional, structuralist approach; it contains simple, brief explanations of grammar forms and patterns and numerous teacher-directed drills (completion, transformation, restatement, etc.)

The second edition shows the influence of cognitive and communicative views of second language teaching, not to mention the vastly expanded knowledge of English syntax, semantics, and pragmatics contributed by linguists. The book's explanations, now more complex and cognitively demanding, are discourse-based and cover sociolinguistic as well as linguistic points. The exercises aim to have students use grammar correctly but also in socially appropriate ways (by means of activities like role play), and frequently have students working in pairs and groups for extended communicative practice. Indeed, the second edition of *Using English* is an entirely different book from its predecessor.

A dialog or prose passage begins each chapter and includes numerous examples of the targeted grammatical forms in context. These are accompanied by half-page illustrations (useful for prereading discussion) and follow-up discussion questions and social/cultural notes. The dialogs center around typical conversational situations such as one student asking questions of another in an effort to get acquainted (illustrating various types and functions of questions) and friends discussing what to bring on a picnic (showing various social uses of modals). The passages, written in easily accessible style, are on various stimulating topics, for example, endangered species, rules of politeness, and sexism in language. Examples of the targeted grammar topics are then extracted from the dialog or passage for study; this begins the formal grammar presentation in the chapter.

A traditional variety of grammar topics are covered in *Using English,* from morphology (e.g., verb tenses and possessives), to parts of speech, to complements (e.g., direct and indirect objects, noun clauses, and reported speech), to sentence-level constructions (e.g., question construction, passive and conditional sentences).

Each chapter section presents explanations and examples of the particular grammar feature, charts, and numerous exercises and communicative activities. The exercises are helpfully labeled to indicate their focus (e.g., "future—predicted activities;" "future—scheduled plans"), making it easy for an instructor to scan the chapter and select exercises appropriate for a class. At the end of each chapter, cumulative and integrative exercises are provided for reinforcement and review (e.g., role plays and composition assignments). The chapter organization of *Using English* makes it easy for instructors to design three-stage grammar lessons as recommended by Celce-Murcia and Hilles (1988): presentation, focused practice, and communicative practice.

Using English is innovative in the quantity and variety of communicative activities that it provides. These activities elicit repeated use of the particular grammar point, allow students to exercise their imagination, and stimulate students to interact with one another. The oral communication tasks include interview activities, group discussions, contests, and short oral reports. For example, students are invited to submit 150-word entries to a Stowaway Travel Agency contest, stating "where you have always wanted to go for a vacation and why" and telling "how long it has been since you had a vacation and where you went on that vacation" (grammar focus: present perfect and simple past). Writing tasks include short summaries, compositions, written dialogs, questionnaires, and letters.

Because *Using English* covers so many grammar topics and is so packed with detailed grammatical explanations as well as activities, instructors must be careful to use it selectively. The authors point out that the chapters do not need to be taken up in any particular order; they recommend selecting chapters and parts of chapters most appropriate to the needs of a particular student group. It is essential for teachers who use this text to plan a realistic syllabus with sufficient time for students to process grammatical information and to apply it in communicative activities.

The instructor's manual provides many helpful teaching guidelines including suggestions for planning a course syllabus, orienting students to the book, presenting grammar information, conducting group and pair work, and writing tests. Chapter notes which include common student errors/problems are also useful.

Using English is not only a unique ESL textbook but also a valuable reference and resource book for ESL teachers. I have used it in a pedagogical grammar course (for prospective ESL/EFL teachers) to supplement *The Grammar Book* (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1983). The two books complement each other perfectly. This is no coincidence, as Danielson, Porter, and Hayden have adapted some of *The Grammar Book*'s analysis and concepts. Some examples include the Bull framework for analyzing verb tenses in discourse, the classification of uses of modal auxiliaries into *social* and *informational* (i.e., having logical probability), and the categories of conditionals.

ESL teachers will find *Using English* is ideal for advanced ESL students in academic programs. It is especially appropriate for college ESL classes and for the highest level in intensive programs for college-bound students, in courses where the goal is expanded formal knowledge of grammatical structures and application to oral communication. Students who have studied grammar formally but who need to review and fill in gaps will find it very helpful. It is also useful for those who need to refine their grammatical competence so as to improve the accuracy of their speech and writing. The book makes it possible for grammar learning to be not only systematic, but enjoyable. ∎

References

Celce-Murcia, M., & Hilles, S. (1988). *Techniques and resources in teaching grammar.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Celce-Murcia, M., & Larsen-Freeman, D. (1983). *The grammar book: An ESL/EFL teacher's course.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Language Aptitude Reconsidered.

Eds. Thomas S. Perry and Charles W. Stansfield.
Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall Regents. 1990.

DOROTHY S. MESSERSCHMITT
University of San Francisco

B ased strictly on its title, *Language Aptitude Reconsidered* might be mistakenly classified as just another collection of articles on the two fairly old but well-known language aptitude tests, *The Modern Language Aptitude Test* (Carroll & Sapon, 1959) and *The Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery* (Pimsleur, 1966), or, as simply another work on language aptitude in isolation. The volume, however, covers considerably more research than indicated in a narrow interpretation of its title. The work includes a wide range of research articles on a number of personality, cognitive, and motivational factors contributing to second language learning success. Thus, it is a volume whose use should not be limited to classes on second language testing. It could be extremely useful in a class on applied linguistics, research in second language acquisition and psycholinguistics. The title must not mislead the reader.

Language Aptitude Reconsidered consists of a number of articles by authors such as John Carroll, Rebecca Oxford and R.C. Gardner. Two overall impressions emerge from the work. First, the articles touch on a number of topics that are often glossed over when success in second language learning is discussed. Second, the work clearly indicates that we already know a lot about success in second language acquisition, but, at the same time, there is much that we do not know.

The following will highlight a few of the topics discussed in this work that are not commonly found in current literature.

First, in his article "Cognitive Abilities in Foreign Language Aptitude: Then and Now," Carroll addresses the issue of hearing loss, which might interfere in class performance. It is not often that hearing loss problems are even considered as a variable in research on adult second language acquisition.

In the same article Carroll observes that different aptitudes may be required for success in the beginning aspects of second language acquisition (i.e., "scratch") as opposed to higher levels:

In my research, high verbal ability (as measured by vocabulary and reading comprehension tests) was generally not a good predictor of early language learning success, but it is possible that it would be a good predictor of success in reaching higher levels of proficiency. (p. 24)

Such information merely confirms the complexity of determining language aptitude.

Second, in her article "The Role of Personality Type in Adult Language Learning: An Ongoing Investigation," Madeline Ehrman examines the very popular psychological instrument *The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator* (MBTI) (Briggs & Myers, 1983) and its usefulness in predicting success in second language learning. The MBTI classifies individuals on four bipolar scales of personality type. These are *Extraversion-Introversion, Sensing-Intuition, Thinking-Feeling,* and *Judging-Perceiving.* The author suggests that individuals who rate high on intuition and feeling may be more successful second language learners. However, she cautions that exact correlations between MBTI scores and successful second language learning are tentative at best. Although the results of this research do not lead to any simple one-to-one correlations, the contribution of the research is that of bringing this particular personality type instrument into the domain of second language learning research.

Third, in their article, "Predictors of Success in an Intensive Foreign Language Learning Context," Lett and O'Mara discuss the Defense Language Institute categorization of languages by levels of difficulty. Categories are determined by the length of time the DLI estimates it takes an adult to acquire certain levels (e.g., beginning, intermediate, advanced) of proficiency. Category 2, for example, includes German, Hindi, Indonesian, Malay, Romanian, and Urdu, and it is estimated to take 1,020 hours for intermediate proficiency. The most difficult languages include Mandarin, Korean, and Arabic which are estimated at 2,160.

These types of listings are seldom seen in methodology and applied linguistics texts. Perhaps the reason is that linguists must carefully avoid statements that appear to be value judgments with respect to any one language. In so doing, it is possible to overlook the idea that *relative to English* one can make certain statements about the ease with which particular other languages may be learned.

Thus, it is clear that one of the distinctive features of this work is its forthrightness in dealing in a scholarly way with refreshing new topics that are often neglected or disregarded in other works within the field.

The second distinctive feature of *Language Aptitude Reconsidered* is its balanced approach to presenting what we know about the issue of aptitude and what we do not know at this point in time. Virtually all of the articles present tentative findings but also indicate how much more research is needed in the field.

In 1972, Gardner and Lambert published *Attitudes and Motivation in Second Language Learning.* The issues highlighted in this book and related articles remain alive today. *Language Aptitude Reconsidered* includes an article by Gardner titled, "Attitudes, Motivation, and Personality as Predictors of Success in Foreign Language Learning." Gardner still maintains that among the affective variables—including personality, attitudes, and motivation—the latter plays a fairly substantial role in language learning success.

Rebecca Oxford's article "Styles, Strategies and Aptitude: Connections for Language Learning" examines what learners do for themselves to facilitate the learning process. She looks at the issue in relation to style and reports findings from a variety of researchers. It may be of interest, for example, that good learners may not be as uninhibited as once thought and that they pay more attention to form than meaning. She ultimately concludes that all of these issues need much more extensive and thorough investigation.

Language Aptitude Reconsidered thus touches on a number of issues, any one of which could be the subject of a far more thorough investigation. It should be noted, however, that the articles all discuss issues relevant to the adult or older learner. There is virtually nothing on aptitude in children, and an article exploring some of the differences between child and adult second language aptitude would be a useful addition. Nevertheless, this volume is excellent professional reading for both ESL instructors and researchers. ■

References

Briggs, K. C., & Myers, I. (1983). *Myers-Briggs type indicator.* Palo Alto: Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc.

Carroll, J. B., & Sapon, S. M. (1959). *The modern language aptitude test. (MLAT).* New York: The Psychological Corporation.

Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning.* Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Pimsleur, P. (1966). *The Pimsleur language aptitude battery.* New York: The Psychological Corporation.