

On CUE

For the Language Professional in Higher Education

Special Issue, Summer 2004

SPECIAL ISSUE

"About Literacy Across Cultures"

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Conferences

JALT2004

Language Learning for Life
November 19 – 22, 2004
Tezukayama University
Gakuenmae Campus,
Nara, Japan

Thoughts to Ponder

'Read in order to live.'
- Gustave Flaubert -

*'But who shall be the
master? The writer or
the reader?'*
- Denis Diderot -

On CUE Call for papers

Aims: To provide a forum for the presentation and discussion of a broad range of topics relevant to college and university educators.

Articles Sought

Submissions

Submissions deadline for On CUE 12.2 is September 1st

Features

APA-referenced articles relating to language education at the tertiary level.

Criteria for Feature Articles

- Consideration of issues likely to be perceived by college and university educators as relevant to language teaching in Japan.
- Well-designed and well-reported quantitative and qualitative research.
- Writing situated within the context of relevant previous work, adding to or commenting on the current body of research.
- Thought-provoking theoretical papers with clear, practical implications.

Inquiries: Mike Hood <mikehood85@yahoo.com>

Research Digest

Reviews that compare, contrast, and summarize two or more recent publications that cover similar areas, up to 2500 words. Reviews of researcher's resources and tools, up to 1500 words. Summaries of in-house publications, with retrieval information, 200-300 words.

Inquiries: Joe Falout <falout@penta.ge.cst.nihon-u.ac.jp>

From the Chalkface

Classroom applications, techniques, and lesson plans, up to 1000 words.

Inquiries: Tim Micklas <tmicklas@yahoo.com>

Professional Development

Articles of about 1500 words on further education, professionalism, and employment.

Inquiries: Mike Hood <mikehood85@yahoo.com>

Opinion & Perspective

Opinion and Perspective (including Readers Respond and Right to Reply) Short opinion pieces, perspectives on teaching and learning, point-counterpoint, responses to any articles in previous issues.

Inquiries: Keith Ford <fordkeith@hotmail.com>

Reviews

Reviews of books, textbooks, videos, presentations, etc. 600 words; 1500 words for scholarly review essays.

Inquiries: Steven Snyder <snyder@phoenix.ac.jp>

Cyberpipeline

Descriptions of websites useful for language teaching and professional development.

Inquiries: Steven Snyder <snyder@phoenix.ac.jp>

Conference Reviews

Reviews of conferences or individual presentations.

Inquiries: Phil McCasland <mccaslandpl@rocketmail.com>

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About CUE

CUE consists of approximately 300 members throughout Japan. Our goal is to provide a forum for the presentation and discussion of educational activities, ideas and research of broad interest to College and University Educators. If you are involved in tertiary education and are committed to professional development, you are CUE too. For information about becoming a member contact Juanita Heigham <jheigham@sugiyama-u.ac.jp>.

The CUE website is at <<http://allagash.miyazaki-mu.ac.jp/CUE>>. Our goal is to keep you informed about what's going on at CUE. Check for UPDATES on the 15th of every month and please don't hesitate to contact us, it's your CUE too.

Message from the editors of *About Literacy Across Cultures*

Welcome to this special jointly produced issue of On CUE and Literacy Across Cultures (LAC). Under the theme of teaching and learning FL/SL reading at the tertiary level, we are very happy to have been able to put together a wide-ranging collection of articles which we are sure gives an overview of current research and practice, not only in Japan but in neighboring regions as well. Two papers approach reading from a genre perspective. **Zuraidah Don** and **Maya David** argue for foregrounding critical reading skills for learners with relatively high level decoding skills, while **Roberto Rabbini** shows how explicit teaching of the features of a particular genre can have tangible gains in accuracy even at post-beginner levels. On a different tack, **Stephen Krashen** and **Sy-Ying Lee** look at the relationship between reading and writing, and between first and second language literacy, and find some evidence that composing strategies in a first language do indeed transfer to a second. **Rube Redfield** also investigates first and second language literacy connections, and concludes that a major problem for his students in becoming literate in English is simply that they read very little, and not very well, even in Japanese. There are two practical articles in this issue. **Richard Lemmer** gives a blow-by-blow account of setting up an extended reading program in his institution, while **Phil McCasland** and **Brent Poole** describe how they use Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* as a frame for a comprehensive class project. Finally **Andy Barfield** reviews A.P. Cowie's *Phraseology, Theory, Analysis, Applications*; and **Michael Crawford** introduces readers to some useful web resources for increasing reading speeds.

We'd like to thank CUE and LAC for supporting this special issue, and we wish readers happy and instructive reading. Any feedback on the issue is very welcome. If you would like to respond to any of the articles within it, please feel free to do so. Address responses to the CUE *Opinions and Perspectives* editor, Keith Ford <jf6k-ford@asahi-net.or.jp>.

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Deconstruction of advertisements: uncovering ideological bias

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Background to the study

Critical analysis is the ability of a reader to respond critically to the intentions, content and potential effects of texts. Texts should always be read critically and interpreted within their context or contexts. Contexts could include both linguistic context - the words or sentences surrounding any piece of written or spoken text - and extralinguistic context (context of situation) - the whole situation in which an utterance is made, including the backgrounds of speakers, writers, listeners, and readers.

In a study, focusing on reading skills, Govindasamy and David (2002). . .

'examine 32 articles from The Economist magazine, and discuss the journalists choice of textual features, such as word order, sentence initial adjuncts, use of expletive there and discourse markers and the significance and effect of these features on the reader.'

In a similar way, this research using a framework of critical analysis argues that advertisements are ideal subject matter for examining ideological bias.

This kind of critical discourse analysis can make tertiary language learners who are fairly proficient in the target language, English, aware of the power of discourse in empowering or disenfranchising specific groups of people. Age, gender and ethnic identities can be and are socially and culturally constructed at the discourse level. The analysis of texts like advertisements can help adult ESL learners become aware of how language is used to create images and influence readers.

Aim of the study

This paper explores the issues of feminine representation and identity in advertisements found in contemporary popular magazines published in Malaysia. The focus is on how femininity and sexual identity are represented and shaped in the advertisements of items of beauty that appear in these magazines.

Critical discourse analysis is used to scrutinize the prevailing stereotypical representations of femininity in the development of "productive suspicion" (Mills 1995:7) about texts and to help us negotiate our position in relation to gender identities socially and culturally constructed at the discursive level. The ultimate goal is to use such awareness in the tertiary language classroom so that readers, having such knowledge of the power of language in creating meaning and forming legitimate or illegitimate images, learn to decode such texts and their socially constituted meanings and in time become more persuasive writers.

The first part of this paper will provide some background to critical language awareness and will lead on to a cultural construct of femininity. This will be followed by an analysis of advertisements which will in the second part of the paper be followed by pedagogical applications of such knowledge in the reading classroom.

Critical language awareness

It has been said that part of understanding language in society is developing critical perspectives. Drawing on the theories of Habermas and other European critical theories, a critical language awareness approach examines language in social contexts with attention to power relationships. A critical language perspective takes into consideration not only the abstract structure of

language, but also its use as discourse within a social and historical context and explains how the use of language and society influence each other (Fairclough, 1990). Given its critical approach, critical language awareness provides the means of uncovering the underlying ideological bias in texts and exposing the hidden forms of power through the manipulation of language. In general, ideology refers to the ability of a dominant social group to impose its interpretations and meanings of social reality on other groups in society through language (cf. Thompson 1990:4).

Highlighting the effect of contemporary changes on the role of language in social life, Fairclough (1992) brings to light the need for developing critical language awareness “as part of people’s resources for living in new ways in new circumstances”. As societies enter the age of post-modern information economy, the importance of mass-mediated language is also increasing. As every life becomes more pervasively textually mediated, our lives are increasingly becoming shaped by representations produced elsewhere. The politics of representation becomes increasingly important: Whose representations are these? Who gains what from them? What social relations do they draw people into? What are their ideological effects, and what alternative representations are there? (Fairclough, 1992)

Based on the formal features of the text, the reader, who draws on his/her assumptions and expectations, constructs his/her interpretation of the text. Therefore text interpretation is the interpretation of an interpretation. Critical awareness of discourse (Fairclough, 1989:77, 84) can help us get past the ideological common sense of texts, in this study advertisements and ideological representations of women, and examine texts critically to unearth hidden meanings and ideological slants. It thus asks critical questions about a text. Such critical questioning of a text is vital in the reading classroom as it helps the reader decode hidden meanings and ideological slants taken.

Femininity – A cultural construct

In this paper, we assume a broadly social constructionist perspective on femininity whereby femininity is viewed as a cultural construct

whose definitions vary and change over time and are based on cultural expectations of behavior. It is believed that femininity is shaped by a number of influences among which is the print media whose influence can be seen in terms of images and representations. As mainstream popular culture, advertisements in magazines generally act to reinforce the status quo. In sum, advertisements portray versions of femininity which emphasize a dominant or hegemonic version of femininity.

Femininity is bound up very closely with the way in which the female body is perceived and represented. Visual representations in popular culture help to shape social ideals about femininity. Thus, the construction of a feminine ideal which is heterosexual, fair, young, tall, thin and able bodied denies and renders invisible women who do not fit in because of their skin, color, age, physical attractiveness and physical ability. Such a dynamic perspective of femininity will provide us with a more developed understanding of media construction of gender roles and gender relations, gender stereotypes and images of women.

The data

The materials for this analysis consist of advertisements drawn from women’s magazines which are targeted at a particular audience. In these magazines women appear all the time as illustration, hundreds of anonymous faces appear on every cover, in advertisements, and in most articles as a visual aid. We have decided to examine the portrayal of women in advertisements because it is believed this is the aspect of advertising most in need of critical analysis. Advertising discourse is a type of discourse which embodies ideologies that legitimize existing societal relations. It embeds the public within the capitalist commodity system by assigning them the legitimate and desirable role of “consumers” (Fairclough, 1989: 36).

As popular culture texts, magazines are pervasive in contemporary societies. While the aim of popular magazines is to inform, they also function as a commercial vehicle for the sale of products and presentation of images of sexuality, success and normalcy. The magazines become the site for the marketization of goods, delivering the

audience to advertisers. Advertising should not only attract but hold the reader's attention, and convince the reader that the product will gratify some need or even create a new, unexpected need. The success of selling a beauty product for example, depends not only on instilling a desire for it but also convincing women that without it she is unloved and undesired.

Analysis of Data

Although magazines are multi-modal semiotic constructs, this analysis deals only with language used in the advertisements. The selected data were analyzed using the framework of critical discourse analysis (henceforth, CDA) whose concerns include such issues as the constitution of social reality through discourse, the dissemination of ideology through discourse and the relations between discourse and social change (Fowler 1991, Hodge and Kress, 1993; Fairclough, 1992). CDA views text as something that is constructed and anything that has been constructed can be deconstructed. Fairclough (1989:80) regards the production of a text and its interpretation as creative, constructive interpretation. The text producer constructs the text as an interpretation of the world.

Objectification of women

Examination of the data shows how women have been objectified as sex objects and objects of display for the approval of men. The objectification of women can be seen in the way women are represented in the following captions from selected advertisements:

Extract 1

The Naked Truth. With Cellasene you can show off smooth, toned thighs, hips and buttocks. (Source: *Female*, May 2002)

Extract 2

If you have a sagging silhouette like this ... reverse the law of gravity with firmer results. (Source: *Female*, May 2002)

Extract 3

If you shouldn't you, should: I am Martell (Source: *The Malaysian Women's Weekly*, November 2001)

Extract 4

It's the shine that attracts (Source: *Cleo*, November 2001)

The extracts turn women into objects whose various parts are constantly in need of improvement and enhancement. What is stressed here is women's sexual attractiveness to men.

In Extracts 1 and 2 women are dismembered, their bodies are just collections of physical features that require some repair work. The *Cellesane* slogan (Extract 1) ... *show off smooth, toned hips and buttocks* objectifies the lower part of the body, i.e. thighs, hips and buttocks. In the *Elaniq* advertisement (Extract 2) reader's gaze is directed to a woman's breast which is compared to a guava representing a visual image of a sagging silhouette. The slogan which accompanies the advertisement *If you have a sagging silhouette ...* further brings to light the flaw in the female form (i.e. *the sagging silhouette*), and this flaw can be "corrected" if the product advertised is used: *Reverse the signs of a sagging silhouette with Elaniq Breast Firming Cream*. Women are portrayed as sex objects. The advertisement in Extract 3 contains an alluring and seductive looking woman saying *If you shouldn't, you should I am Martell*. The woman is reduced not only to a sex object but also the object promoted. Her words suggest that she is attempting to induce readers to try *Martel* which refers to both the woman herself and the product advertised. The caption in Extract 4 *It's the shine that attracts* directs our attention to the model's hair that shines with vibrant color after using the coloring product. The advertisement which markets a brand of coloring shows an attractive woman, who having trouble with her car, was not able to stop any vehicle until she removed her hat to reveal her beautiful brightly colored hair. Here, the hair is objectified by turning it into an object that attracts attention and it attracts a man driving a Porsche!

Turning to the grammar of the clause in Extracts 1, 2 and 3, our focus is on features of modality, mood and transitivity. In all three extracts, clauses are declarative with subject-verb-object structure. The grammatical person of the agent is made explicit, i.e. the second person (you). The synthetic personalization of readers as "you"

identifies readers as individuals and simulates a relatively personal and informal relationship between the advertiser and the reader. “You” also avoids any ambiguity concerning who the addressee is.

In terms of modality, the deontic modality “should” in Extract 3 ... *you should* .. imposes an obligation on the reader to try the product. Extract 1 contains a modal verb “can” which is ambivalent between “possibility” and “ability” ... *you can show off* This seems to suggest that that by consuming the product a woman is able to have “smooth, toned thighs, hips and buttocks”, thus making it possible for her to “show off” her beautiful transformed self.

In Extract 4, the writer uses the “it- construction” in order to postpone a subject clause to a later position for end-focus. The non-modal simple present tense presents the information (that it is the hair that attracts) as categorical truth, i.e. facts.

One of the writer’s central purposes in the captions of product advertising is to draw attention to the parts of the body. These are described in terms of their positive and negative qualities. A number of expressions whose function is to carry out this purpose are used. *Smooth, toned, firmer* and *sagging* are the most salient examples. While *smooth, toned* and *firmer* are positive attributes, *sagging* is a negative attribute.

Extract 5 which advertises a slimming product perpetuates the ideology that women’s worth is contingent on how they look: In Extract 5, women are told that men value their appearance more than their inner self. Her body, that has to be slim in order to be desirable, is an object to be displayed in a figure-hugging outfit. The implication is that only a slim figure is worth showing and that only slim women attract men. “The Little Black One,” which refers to the outfit that women would want to wear, casts women in the role of a sex object, an object of pleasure for men. The non-modal simple present tense, i.e. “looks”. in “*Everybody looks at your external body ..*” is used to present the proposition as categorical truth, as an undeniable fact. Incidentally, the use of the address term ‘honey’ can in this context be seen as sexist and condescending.

Extract 5

Honey be real! Everybody looks at your external body first before appreciating your internal. ... Want to be clad in form fitting “The Little Black One”? And show of those slim figure of yours. (*The Malaysian Women’s Weekly*, Nov. 2001)

Analysis of the action in the advertisements shows that overall women are portrayed as being passive or less active than men. The language that accompanies these visuals further objectifies women as sex objects. In short, the marketization of women’s bodies and sexuality (i.e. women as sex objects, women’s distorted body image, severance of women’s body parts) is seen as acceptable.

Commodification of Femininity

Commenting on the role of contemporary advertising in creating an artificial image of women based on superficial beauty, Kilbourne (2000, 237) states that this narrow image of women causes them to be continuously dissatisfied with their own appearance. Indeed, advertisements promote the ideology of what women should look like (crystal clear complexion, visibly young looking skin, smooth sexy curves, beautiful body shape and contour, etc) and perpetuate the belief that it is possible to attain this idealized feminine beauty by consuming the product advertised.

Advertisements of beauty products are constructing subject positions for readers as a community of commodity consumers which they are induced to join. Femininity in these advertisements is constructed in terms of purchase and use of beauty products such as anti-ageing cream, anti-gravity firming eye lift cream, bust beauty lotion and body firming lotion, which are said to correct women’s imperfections.

It is fair to say that the current beauty standards promoted by these advertisements, are at odds with reality. Women are not mannequins; indeed few women have perfect bodies and flawless complexion; women age and have lines and wrinkles as they advance in age; most women expand after giving birth and as they grow older. Advertisers are well aware of this. To sell products they manipulate the various images of beauty and promote the ideology that women’s

beauty can be artificially created with the help of products. What is implied in most of the advertisements is that the product advertised can help women achieve the specific new image of beauty that they desire. Thus, idealized beauty is commodified in the form of the product that is claimed to help women attain such beauty. The following extracts promote images of femininity that are associated with certain products:

Extract 6

Trim off excess flab and unsightly cellulite for a slimmer body contour (Source: *Female*, January, 2002)

Extract 7

This brand new exclusive enhancement cream helps enlarge small breasts, firm the sagging breasts, make the breasts even rounder and let you have your ideal bustline (Source: *Her World*, January 2002)

Extract 8

Beauty without surgery! Bio-essence Marvel Mask provides you with fairer and finer skin similar to cosmetic surgery. (Source: *Female*, May 2002)

Extract 9

For an Ideal Body Shape, I Know Who I can Really Trust. (Source: *The Malaysian Women's Weekly*, June 2002)

In Extract 6 images of beauty are associated with having a slimmer body contour and cellulite-free, Extract 7, full, firm and rounded breasts, Extract 8, flawless pale skin and Extract 9, ideal body shape. In all, the claim is that the product is able to give women the kind of beauty that is "on sale". Their narratives about beauty create a stereotyped image: feminine beauty is associated with having a particular shape and form - slim, firm rounded breasts, ideal body and fair and smooth complexion. What is implied here is that if women buy proper products, they too can improve on their natural state in order to generate a greater degree of beauty.

Certain lexical items seem to dominate advertisements of beauty products, partly through their

relatively frequent occurrence. These descriptive words (i.e. adjectives or adverbs) indicate judgment about someone's looks and they can either denote desirability (*fairer* and *finer* skin; *rounder* breasts; *ideal* bustline) or undesirability (*unsightly* cellulite, *small* and *sagging* breasts).

Another group of lexical items are those which indicate judgment about products and this judgment further enhances its positive qualities. For example, to bring out the special quality of the cream, it is not just any ordinary cream but a "brand new exclusive enhancement cream" (Extract 7). Likewise the action of the product is described using verbs which assert its effectiveness (e.g. ... visibly *improve* the appearance of skin already damaged by the ravages of time; .. *reduces* wrinkles around the eyes; actively *stimulates* the production of collagen fibers). And to enhance the product's action the verbs are accompanied with adverbs. The product does not just improve the appearance of skin but *visibly* improves it; it does not only stimulate the production of collagen fibers but does so *actively*.

Advertising discourse that promotes particular standards of feminine beauty usually contains contrasting descriptions of the female form: the undesirable form before the use of the product and the desirable form after its use. Extracts 10-11 illustrate how advertisements create this contrasting image of femininity:

Extract 10

Is your skin looking dull? Reveal bright, fresh and healthy skin instantly with St. Ives range of Head to Toes Apricot cleanser and scrubs. (Source: *The Malaysian Women's Weekly*, November 2001)

Extract 11

Plagued by dull skin and open pores? Turn to L'Oreal Skin Refiner for a smooth, clear complexion. (Source: *Female*, May 2002)

The writers/advertisers systematically establish semantic contrast by choice of appropriate and contrasting lexical items. Flaws are highlighted through negative lexicalization. Positive lexicalization comes about as a result of using the products advertised!

The grammatical features of Extracts 10 and 11 are somewhat like a dialogue between the text writer and the reader, but unlike normal dialogue the writer has complete control over the discourse. The texts shift in the kinds of relation they adopt to their readership, and the way they position their readers with respect to the conditions described. They begin with direct questions (*Is your skin looking dull?* (Extract 9); *Plague by dull skin and open pores?* (Extract 10)). The close-ended questions are directed to the reader and control the response to either yes or no. Although questions position the addressee as information provider, in this instance the writer seems to assume that women do have problems with their physical appearance. Among the presuppositions of these questions are: the addressee has dull looking skin and she is plagued by dull skin and open pores. Such presuppositions are an effective means of manipulating readers through attributing to their experience things that the writers want to get them to accept.

Solutions to the presupposed problems that the addressees are assumed to be facing are provided. Extracts 10 and 11 provide advice in the form of explicit instructions to the reader: *Reveal bright, fresh and healthy skin instantly with St. Ives range of Head to Toes Apricot cleanser and scrubs* (Extract 10); *Turn to L'Oreal Skin Refiner for a smooth, clear complexion* (Extract 11). This instruction presented in the imperative form is directed to the reader. While the word “reveal” (Extract 10) focuses on the result of using the product, “turn” focuses on the action that one should take in order to have “a smooth, clear complexion”.

The language in Extracts 12 and 13 conjures up images of war. The product is seen as fighting a war. Because the woman’s body has now been turned into a battle field, there is the emergence of militarization of discourse in the narrative drawn upon the wording of the product as “miracle weapons”, results as “DYNAMITE” (Extract 12) and action as “combat” (Extract 13).

Extract 12

Separately, these new potent substances are “*miracle weapons*” in the war against wrinkles. We’ve just put them together and the results are pure DYNAMITE! (Source: *The Malaysian Women’s Weekly*, June 2002)

Extract 13

Unpleasant symptoms like hot flushes, palpitations ... Take a traditional approach as an alternative to *combat* these symptoms. (Source: *The Malaysian Women’s Weekly*, June 2002)

In order to sell, advertising must be able to convince readers of the products’ “curative” properties. One way of doing this is to give advertising space to the users’ personal experience narratives. Extracts 14-15 exemplify how the benefits of the products are presented in the narratives as facts:

Extract 14

All my attempts to lose weight gained no result. ...I started taking Bestrim. Just three boxes, my weight had significantly dropped 15 kg approx. 33lb. Now I am a mere 58kg. I am truly overjoyed. (*Female*, May 2002)

Extract 15

After six weeks, I can definitely see improvement in my skin. It is smoother and the pores are less visible. I feel that my skin is really clean and make-up application is easier too. I will definitely introduce it to all my friends who are having problems with large pores (*Her World*, January 2001).

The texts in Extracts 14 and 15 are secondary discourse added to the primary discourse for the purpose of instilling belief in the product. However, instead of merging the voices of the secondary and primary discourse, they are kept apart. In Extracts 14 and 15, this demarcation is made by retaining the first person pronoun “I” which clearly identifies the secondary discourse as that of the product user instead of the advertiser. The narrator in Extract 14 relates her own experience as a consumer of the product which she finds to be effective and which has helped her to lose weight. By telling people how the product benefited her she is actually promoting the product on behalf of the advertiser. She draws attention to the effectiveness of the product by comparing her previous failed attempts to lose weight with her success in losing weight after using the product. By using the simple past tense, she presents the effectiveness of the product

as categorical truth. In Extract 15, the narrator stresses that it took her only six weeks to see improvement in her skin which she describes as being smoother with the pores less visible. The adverb “definitely” (*definitely see ...*) further enhances the degree of certainty. The focus of the discourse is on the outcome of product use. The users using their own words lend credibility to the claims made about the product by reporting how the product has benefited them.

Pedagogical Implications in the Reading Classroom

In the reading classroom undergraduates can and must be made to realize that language can and is used as a powerful instrument to reflect, shape and manipulate people’s beliefs, actions and relationships. In settings where English is a second or foreign language, it is even more vital that the language learner’s skills to interpret and consciously reflect on language used in the text must be developed.

It is important that the language teacher, in a foreign language learning context, should first focus on the development of the decoding skills to create consciousness of the role of language in empowering the writer or the institution he represents. At tertiary levels such higher level reading skills such as inferences, innuendos, “hidden” meanings must be decoded so as to help learners become critical readers and writers.

It is clear from this analysis that no linguistic act is ‘neutral’ or unaffected by contextual variables. Language is value-laden and deeply engrained into the beliefs and cultural background of the participants in the communicative event. Consequently, for effective understanding of the power of advertisements in the reading classroom a cooperative teacher-learner joint deconstruction of texts is necessary. Such a decoding and deconstruction of advertisements will help in the understanding of the significance of choice of language including formal/informal use and syntactical and lexical choices in creating specific meanings.

The reading teacher can act as a facilitator and ask asking leading questions such as:

- What tenses are used and why? (syntax)
- Why is the modal “should” rather than “can” used? (syntax)
- What is the effect of using the direct voice (for instance personal experience narrative) and of passive voice? (structure)
- Are rhetorical questions asked and, if so, what is the purpose of such questions?(structures)
- Which adjectives/adverbs/verbs/nouns are used and why?(lexical choice)
- Which pronouns are used and why? (lexical choice)
- Are metaphors, similes and other literary forms used and, if so, what do they achieve? (lexical choice-literary language use)
- Are there any semantic contrasts (positive or negative?) and what is the effect of such contrasts?(semantics)
- What are the textual concepts and features (e.g. given/new information) used and why? (semantics)
- Are any speech acts used? What are they and why are they used? (discourse)

Using a range of advertisements to anchor discussions on language related issues will help tertiary learners realize and appreciate the need to be critically aware of the language used in texts and how such language positions men/women, young/old, majority/minority ethnic groups, priests/laymen etc. Through such language awareness sessions, readers can be made to realize the power of language. Language is not an end in itself. Language is a means of acting in the world in order to establish relationships, to integrate new knowledge into existing knowledge, to obtain and convey values and attitudes, ideas and information, and to influence significant others.

Readers must be made to see the effect of texts in relation to emotions (e.g. sympathy, empathy), relationships (e.g. power relations), knowledge (e.g. related to history, social conditions, personal experiences) and aesthetics (e.g. appreciation of the artistic elements). In the reading classroom, undergraduates can be made to engage with a range of appropriate texts by:

1. identifying and analyzing verbal features of texts;
2. critically reflecting on the writer's point of view;
3. identifying language which reflects bias and manipulation.

Readers can be made to respond to the aesthetic, affective, cultural and social values in texts through exposure to a wide variety of genres. Within the range of genres the effect of structures and syntax (features of modality, mood and transitivity on the representation and world view created) can be explained. It is hoped that with such awareness of language used in texts, readers can in time, become not only more critical readers but also more effective writers.

In summary, this paper argues that the reading and joint and active deconstruction of texts like advertisements in the second language classroom must be seen as an act that empowers tertiary learners to understand the relationship between language and power and become critical readers. Readers must be made, through active and joint deconstruction of texts in the language classroom, to develop and reflect critically on attitudes and values and language used in a text. Constant reading and deconstruction of a wide variety of texts in different genres may in time also help readers to become more effective users of language and learn to express their thoughts “appropriately,” bearing in mind their hidden agendas.

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Competence in Foreign Language Writing: Progress and Lacunae

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Feature Article: Krashen & Lee

In this paper, we examine some of the factors that contribute to success in foreign language writing. Although our emphasis is on the composing process, the strategies good writers use to discover meaning and “stay on course” while they write, we must, of necessity, first review the role of reading in developing writing competence. We turn next to the role of actual writing, and the development of the composing process.

How reading contributes to writing

Reading provides writers with knowledge of the language of writing, the grammar, vocabulary, and discourse style writers use. This “Reading Hypothesis” is consistent both with general theory and with the research. It is a corollary of the more general Comprehension Hypothesis (a.k.a. the Input Hypothesis, Krashen, 1984, 2003), the hypothesis that we acquire language in only one way, when we understand messages. It is also consistent with a number of studies in both first language and second language development showing that those who read more acquire more of the written language. This is the consistent result of correlational studies (EFL studies include Gradman and Hanania, 1991; Y-O Lee, Krashen, and Gribbons, 1996; S-Y Lee and Krashen, 1996; S-Y Lee, 2001), studies of free reading in school (e.g. Mason and Krashen, 1997), as well as case histories (Krashen, 1993, 2003).

Different writing styles have different linguistic characteristics, but there is also considerable overlap among styles (Biber, 1986): So-called narrative style has, for example, some, but not all of the characteristics of formal, expository prose. Thus, reading anything at all will help all writing, to at least some extent. Smith (1988), however, is undoubtedly right when he advises: “To learn to write for newspapers, you must read

newspapers; textbooks about them will not suffice. For magazines, browse through magazines rather than through correspondence courses on magazine writing. To write poetry, read it.”

How writing contributes to writing

There is no evidence that writing contributes to writing competence; those who write more do not write better and increasing writing does not result in better writing (Krashen, 1984, 1994). Writing, however, makes a different kind of contribution: Writing can make you smarter. When we write something down on the page, we make a representation of our thoughts, of our “cognitive structures.” Once on the page, the brain finds it irresistible to come up with a better version of our cognitive structures. Improving our cognitive structures is real learning (using “learning” in the general sense, not as contrasted with “acquisition”). Writing is not the only way of doing this, of course, but it is a very effective way.

The insight that writing makes you smarter is shared by many observers. Elbow (1975), for example, concluded that meaning is not what you start out with in writing, but what you end up with. Boice (1994) noted that inspiration is the result of writing, not the cause. In addition, there is empirical evidence supporting this assertion, experiments showing that writing can aid in thinking and problem-solving (Krashen, 2003) as well as positive correlations between eminence and amount written among professional writers and thinkers (Simonton, 1984).

The composing process

One of the great triumphs of the language arts profession has been the description of the “composing process,” strategies writers use to solve problems and make themselves smarter.

Studies have shown that good writers utilize several strategies:

Before good writers write, they have a plan. They are, however, willing to change their plan as they write and come up with new ideas.

Good writers are willing to revise. They consider their early drafts to be tentative, and understand that as they move from draft to draft they come up with new ideas.

Good writers delay editing. They concern themselves with formal correctness only after they are satisfied with the ideas they put on the page.

Good writers stop frequently and reread what they have written.

The above are the “classical” components of the composing process. There is good reason to add two more components:

Productive writers engage in “regular daily writing” rather than “binge writing”; instead of waiting until they have large blocks of free time, they write a modest amount each day, a strategy demonstrated to produce more writing as well as more new ideas (Boice, 1994). Also, good writers understand the importance of short breaks that encourage “incubation,” new ideas and solutions to problems that emerge when writers leave their writing and give their minds a rest (Krashen, 2001).

It is reasonable to suggest that the strategies that make up the composing process perform two valuable functions: In addition to encouraging the emergence of new ideas, they keep writers from losing their place. Losing one’s place is very easy to do when problems are complex. A plan obviously helps writers know where they are, rereading reminds writers where they are, delaying editing prevents losing the train of thought, and failure to write regularly is a guarantee of losing one’s place.

The strategies that make up the composing process are most valuable when writing involves complex issues and difficult problems. There is less need for planning, rereading, and revision when writing simple descriptions and summaries, and more need for these strategies when writing requires the integration of a great deal of diverse information, when a complex analysis is called for, or when data can be interpreted in different ways.

Writer’s block

Failure to use these strategies when writing on complex topics is one cause of writer’s block, defined as “an inability to begin or continue writing for reasons other than a lack of basic skill or commitment” (Rose, 1984, p. 3).

Rose has presented a number of cases of writer’s block that are clearly due to lack of mastery of the composing process (Rose, 1984) inspected the composing behavior of college students who scored high on the blocking subscale and noted that they tended to engage in premature editing more than subjects classified as low blockers, and had inappropriate strategies for dealing with complexity. One high blocker, Liz, for example, was so preoccupied with editing and correctness that she would often forget the thought she was trying to express (Rose, 1984, p. 46). Liz also failed to engage in sufficient planning before writing, “but planned in increments as she wrote” (p. 48), which prevented her from getting a sense of the whole essay.

Rose also operationalized writer’s block in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire has items dealing with the existence of writer’s block (eg “There are times when I sit at my desk for hours, unable to write a thing.”), referred to as the “writer’s block subscale” as well as subscales that cover hypothesized causes of writer’s block:

1. Premature editing, an excessive concern with form while writing, was covered in several questions, such as: Each sentence I write has to be just right before I’ll go on to the next sentence. Premature editing is, of course, a failure to apply a crucial composing process strategy, delaying editing.
2. A lack of strategies for dealing with complex writing tasks was covered by a “complexity” subscale, e.g. I’m not sure, at times, of how to organize all the information I’ve gathered for a paper. The questionnaire, unfortunately, does not ask about what specific strategies were used to deal with complexity.

Rose reported that for each of his subscales, scores on individual items intercorrelated with each other, as well as with the total subscale, a

result consistent with Rose's claim that the subscales each represented one concept.

Rose administered the entire questionnaire to 351 university students, and obtained significant correlations between scores on the blocking subscale and both the premature editing ($r = .37$) and complexity ($r = .59$) subscales.

These results are consistent with the hypothesis that blocking is in fact related to a failure to apply strategies of the composing process. This is quite clear in the case of premature editing, but, as noted above, the questionnaire does not specify actual strategies used in "dealing with complexity."

The second language writer

Most of the research on the composing process has been done with writing in English as a first language. The first question we need to investigate when discussing the second language writer is whether the composing process is the same for all languages: Do writers in languages other than English use similar strategies when dealing with complex writing tasks for keeping their place, and discovering new ideas? There is suggestive evidence that they do.

In a previous paper (Lee and Krashen, 2003), we administered Rose's blocking questionnaire to subjects whose first language is Mandarin Chinese, undergraduate university students in Taiwan. Mandarin is a particularly interesting language to compare to English because there are obvious differences in the structure of essays in these languages (Cai, 1999; Shi, 2003; but see Kirkpatrick, 1997). We translated the questionnaire into Mandarin and confirmed that the translation was accurate using back translation, that is, we asked highly proficient bilinguals to translate our Mandarin version back into English and compared these translations to the original. We also attempted, using factor analysis, to confirm that the items on Rose's questionnaire grouped together as subscales in Mandarin Chinese as they did in English; in general, they did, although we had to make some minor adjustments.

Our results were nearly identical to Rose's: those who reported more premature editing also reported more blocking ($r = .27$) and those who reported more difficulty with complex writing tasks reported more blocking ($r = .48$). Our results are thus consistent with the hypothesis that at

least some aspects of the composing process are similar in Mandarin and English. Again, however, we have clear evidence for only one specific strategy, delaying editing. Additional research should examine other strategies to confirm that writers in different languages deal with complexity and avoid blocking in similar ways. In addition, we need to look at more advanced writers.

Does the CP transfer from the first to the second language?

If writers in different languages do indeed use the same strategies for discovering meaning and dealing with complex writing tasks, we can then ask if some or all of the strategies transfer from the first to the second language. This question is important practically as well as theoretically. If it is true, the strategies that make up the composing process are part of a "common underlying proficiency" (Cummins, 1989), deeper than any specific language, and need only be developed once, in the first language. Also, it will be much easier to develop these strategies when writing in the primary language, as developing writers will have less concern with mastery of the language and the conventions of writing and can thus focus more easily on meaning.

The results of several studies suggest that at least some aspects of the composing process transfer.¹ Saraki and Hirose (1996) studied the writing behavior of American and British studies majors in Japanese universities. More of those considered "strong writers" in English reported planning for organization before writing in both Japanese and English, and more reported that they wrote "with organization in mind" in both languages. Saraki and Hirose reported no difference in revision behavior between strong and weak writers, however, which may have been due to the fact that subjects were given only 30 minutes to write (but see their note 7 in which they suggest that the time allotted was sufficient to allow revision). Also, only about 30% of the strong writers reported planning in advance, compared to less than 5% of the weaker writers.

Pennington and So (1993) compared the composing process of college students in Singapore writing in their first language (English or Chinese) and in a language they were studying in school (Japanese), and reported "similar patterns" in their writing process. They reported

that “skilled writers” were more willing to revise in both languages, but unskilled writers did not “experience writing as a back-and-forth process of generating ideas and revising texts to find their intended meaning” (p. 51). Unfortunately, no details are provided supporting this claim. Hall (1990), however, reported clear similarities in the revision behavior of foreign students in the US when writing in their L1 and in English: in both cases, about half the revisions affected the information contained in the essays, about 40% were grammatical, and about 7% were “cosmetic,” i.e. handwriting. Also, in both cases about 60% of the revisions were at the word level, 25 to 30% at the phrase level, and 10-15% at other levels.

In Lee and Krashen (2002), we administered Rose’s questionnaire to university students in Taiwan, asking about blocking, premature editing, and strategies for dealing with complexity in both their first and second languages, Mandarin and English. We grouped the premature editing and strategies for complexity subscales together and labeled them “composing process.” We found that those who reported having an efficient composing process in their first language tended to have an efficient composing process in English ($r = .43$). We also found that an inefficient composing process in English was significantly associated with blocking in English ($r = .63$) and we confirmed that an inefficient composing process in Mandarin was associated with blocking in Mandarin ($r = .49$).

Lacunae

The results presented here are suggestive, but there are huge gaps that need to be filled in the research. Fortunately, the work to be done is straightforward:

1. Additional study of the impact of reading on writing. Previous work has in most cases utilized global measures of writing quality; it is important to determine whether all aspects of the written language impacted by reading. Some of the most impressive studies showing the impact of reading on writing in English as a first language are studies of those with modest amounts of formal education who became outstanding writers, and who attribute their success to massive reading (see Krashen, 1993). Such cases

would be even more convincing for writers in English as a foreign language, those who developed high levels of competence in writing English with little or no explicit instruction in writing. Do such cases exist? If they do, were these excellent writers also readers? Evidence in the foreign language situation is more convincing than evidence in the first or second language situation, because input is available from fewer sources in the foreign language situation.

2. Additional study of different aspects of the composing process in a variety of first languages, using multiple methodologies (observation, interviews, questionnaires), with writers at different levels of development. In addition to demonstrating the existence of aspects of the composing process in different languages, it is especially convincing to demonstrate that a failure to utilize these strategies results in blocking.
3. Additional study of the transfer of strategies from the first language to the second, again using different languages, multiple methodologies and examining specific strategies.

If it is confirmed that even some strategies transfer across languages, the results will parallel those seen in studies of bilingual education in children: It has been demonstrated that reading ability transfers across languages: those who read better in their primary language typically read better in the second language (given sufficient exposure), and pedagogical approaches that build literacy in the primary language have been shown to be successful in developing second language literacy (e.g. Krashen, 1996, 2003).

If writers have not developed the composing process in their first language, it is likely that it can be developed in the second language. As noted earlier, however, it will be easier to develop an efficient composing process in the language writers know best, their primary language. Because writing makes such a profound contribution to intellectual development, and because the composing process allows us to use writing as an intellectual tool, if the composing process does in fact transfer, education in the first language is an efficient means of promoting intellectual development.

Such a result would confirm the importance of developing all aspects of literacy in the primary language. It would also show that developing literacy in the primary language not only aids in developing literacy in the second language, it also provides writers with a means of intellectual growth that can be used in any subsequent language they acquire.

Note:

(1) We have restricted this discussion of the transfer of aspects of the composing process to studies in which both L1 and L2 are examined in the same subjects, and correlations of some kind are made. Several published reports show that those writing in their L2 do use aspects of the composing process, which suggests transfer. It is possible, however, that these strategies were taught or were developed through writing in the second language.

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Faculty of Engineering Freshmen Reading Habits: Survey Results

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Introduction

In a series of studies done in the 1990's, I found scant evidence that Japanese students could actually read English in a meaningful sense, although they could decipher and at times translate written English into Japanese (Redfield, 1994a, 1994b, 1998). In a study now in preparation, I found no meaningful correlations between formally assessed English reading ability and perceived reading ability and habits in Japanese (Redfield, in preparation). This final study used survey data gathered from freshmen engineering majors at Kansai University, an elite private institution. These learners were taking a non-streamed, required English course. Previous research has indicated that Kansai University Engineering majors are at a lower level of English than the other Kansai University faculties (Truscott & Redfield, 1999, Larson & Redfield, 1999, Leven, Redfield & Truscott, 1999.). The classes were a mixed group of regular entrance students, recommended students, and ronin (those having taken Japanese entrance examinations in more than one year). Looking at the survey results, I noticed a rather startling fact: many of these students do not seem to read very much outside of their schoolwork in their native language. If they do not read and enjoying reading Japanese, there is little wonder why they are not accomplished readers in English, in spite of all the time and effort that goes into teaching them reading.

The Study

Subjects. Subjects were drawn from two intact required freshmen English classes at the Faculty of Engineering, Kansai University (N = 61).
Instrument. A six-item survey was developed by the researcher to investigate a hypothesized correlation between Japanese L1 reading skills

and EFL reading proficiency (see Redfield, in preparation). Four of the items from that survey have been isolated for the purposes of the present paper. The reliability of these four items (standardized alpha) is .7161, more than acceptable for a survey of this size. The English version of the survey items themselves can be found in the results section.

Administration. The four-item Japanese Reading Habits survey was given to the combined Faculty of Engineering classes before the course final exam, in January 2003. Not all of the items were completed by all of the subjects.

Statistical analysis. Frequency counts and percentages for each item were derived, along with correlations and item means.

Results

The survey items, their means, frequency counts and percentages are as follows:

1. Please rate your Japanese reading skills

($\bar{X} = 2.2459$)

Poor	6 (10%)
Average	38 (62%)
Good	13 (21%)
Very good	4 (7%)

2. What kind of grades did you get in Kokugo?

($\bar{X} = 1.8688$)

Poor	23 (38%)
Average	23 (38%)
Good	15 (25%)
Very good	0

3. How many books do you read in Japanese for pleasure in a year? (X = 4.7678571)

0	9 (16%)
1	6 (10%)
2	13 (23%)
5	15 (27%)
10	10 (18%)
20+	2 (3.5%)

4. How many minutes do you read non-school Japanese a day? (X = 17.3275)

0	22 (40%)
15	17 (30%)
30	11 (19%)
60	6 (10%)
60+	1 (1%)

5. Do you like to read Japanese? (X = 2.2295)

No	13 (21%)
A little	24 (39%)
Somewhat	21 (34%)
A lot	3 (5%)

These results indicate that many of these engineering students do not read very much (49% read two or less books a year, 40% report not reading at all on a daily basis apart from schoolwork), do not like to much (21% do not like reading, 39% report only liking it a little), did not do very well in Japanese language arts classes (Kokugo) in high school (38% said they got poor grades, with no one reporting getting very good grades), and rate their Japanese reading skills as average (62%).

A correlation matrix is provided below to show how well the items correlate with each other.

As can be seen, only a few items correlated well with each other. In social science as a field, correlations above .20 are considered meaningful. Higher correlations of course show a closer relationship between the items.

Discussion

We can presume that as students at a major college these students have the ability to read in their strongest language. Looking at the results from this study, it becomes obvious that a good many of them do not however, read very much in their native language. Twenty-six percent report reading one book or less a year, with forty percent reporting not reading anything outside of school work on a daily basis at all. Twenty-one percent say they do not like to read.

The question for EFL reading instructors of these students is how can we get them to read English on their own when they do not even read much in their native language.

I have no answers to the above questions, although personally and professionally I am an advocate of both the SRA Reading Labs, and Extensive Reading. I am presenting these findings in an effort to alert the readership that at least many of our science students do not actually read much in their native language, and that therefore we should not automatically expect them to be avid readers in an L2.

The Japanese Reading Habits Survey used here is of course a blunt instrument. It was designed for different purposes, and may indeed not get at the subjects actual reading habits. A more elaborate survey might include items looking at newspaper, magazine, and even manga reading habits. It might look at reading on the train, library visits for pleasure reading, book and

Table 1. Japanese Reading Habits Correlation Matrix

	J reading skills	Kokugo grades	#books read	#minutes reading	like reading
J reading skills	1.0000	0.5307	0.1849	0.0621	0.3338
Kokugo grades	0.5307	1.0000	0.2153	0.2349	0.5198
#books read	0.1849	0.2153	1.0000	0.4722	0.3338
#minutes reading	0.0621	0.2349	0.4722	1.0000	0.4656
like reading	0.3338	0.5198	0.3338	0.4656	1.0000

magazine purchases, and even time spent reading cell phone messages. As a very broad based instrument however, Japanese Reading Habits Survey does seem to point at single conclusion; these particular engineering freshmen do not as a whole, seem to read much Japanese.

Further research

A more detailed survey, including some possible additional items as discussed above, administered to other subjects affiliated with other institutions and faculties would allow us to see how far these preliminary results are representative of other groups.

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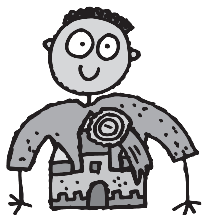
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An Analysis of the Hypothesis that Genre Framing Facilitates Structural Knowledge

Roberto Rabbini

Introduction

The genre perspective in applied linguistics, which rose chiefly in Australia over the past twenty years (Martin 1986; Martin and Rothery 1986; Swales 1990, Cairney 1992), attempts to develop literacy across a broad range of identifiable categories by raising the learner's awareness of the linguistic elements of genres. This helps students to better understand written texts, and also assists in developing writing skills. The notion of genre is essentially based on *functional grammar* (Halliday 1994), which describes how a text is bound together to create meaning in its particular context (Halliday and Hassan 1976). This paper analyzes the extent to which the genre approach consolidates structural knowledge in the writing of non-native English-speaking students based in Japan.

Although certain studies (Jarrell 2000) have indicated that using genre analysis increases writing fluidity and generic textual knowledge, quantitative research on the acquisition of structural forms in the writing context is sparse. The objective of this paper, then, is to provide a small empirical base to the claim that using genre-based classroom activities not only builds writing confidence, but also develops greater grammatical awareness. I will compare the rate of past simple usage from two different classes: one, (experimental group) which uses the generic framework, and one (control group) that does not. My hypothesis, therefore, is that there should be more correct examples of the past tense in the experimental group than there are in the control group.

What Is Genre?

In functional linguistics the term *genre* is increasingly used as a means of describing text-types. *Genre* is similar to the lay notion of

register, except that where *register* refers to the categorization of texts on the basis of shared meanings, *genre* refers to similarities of structural elements. So there can be a register of, say, teacher talk, or doctor-patient talk, since these represent types of talk concerning similar meanings. On the other hand, examples of genre might be narratives, essays, technical reports and so on, since each category shares structural (grammatical and rhetorical) elements.

For the purpose of this study and its application to ELT, the term *genre* goes beyond the traditional definition of a recognizable category of literary composition, to include any distinctive form of text that has attained a general level of identification.

Expectations of readers within a genre form a pattern; and by using this pattern as a guideline, the writer is able to model his or her work in ways that readers will recognize. Consequently, one advantage of the genre approach to language learning is that it endows learners with specific guidelines, at a textual level rather than a sentence level, that are of practical use in composing various kinds of texts. This results in more efficient and focused communication. Wood (1998), tracing the pedagogic potential of film reviews, contends that text will recreate certain models due to the "conventionalising function of the genre" (p. 30). These patterns establish reference points and produce the "contextual framing of the text, the means of conceptually structuring the text for the writer" (p. 30). That is, the genre approach has the capacity to raise the learners' awareness of the various choices on offer.

The Use of Frames

How can these skills be practically developed? One strategy designed to encourage students to

be more autonomous about their learning experience and to heighten awareness about their written work, is that of *writing frames*.

A writing frame contains a unique generic set of starters, connectives and sentence modifiers which help students expand their writing whilst acting as a substitute for the teacher's interventions (see appendix B for an example of a recounting genre writing frame). Any given writing frame is a template, acting as a tool to enable learners to focus on communicating their thoughts within a form rather than having no coherent structure at all to lean on. Frames should be used initially with teacher-led discussions and modeling of the generic form which teaches vocabulary and connectives. Then, the learner undertakes the writing phase supported by the frame. In low-level classes, many oral sessions with the teacher acting as a scribe may be required before students are ready to write using the frame. One aim of a project in British primary schools was to practice writing frames until the children "become familiar enough with these written structures to have assimilated them into their writing repertoire" (Lewis and Wray, 1992, p. 1). It is therefore proposed that teachers wean the children off the frames as their knowledge of the generic pattern increases.

One of the great strengths of the writing frames' strategy is its unlimited applicability. Moreover, teachers "have found the frames particularly useful with children of average writing ability [sic]; and with those who find writing difficult" (Lewis and Wray, 1992, p. 7), a note pertinent to Japanese writers of English. Additionally, it was discovered that after one or two applications of a frame, the competent language users annexed the genre and its linguistic elements into their repertoires and, "without using a frame, produce fluent writing of high quality in the genre" (Lewis and Wray, 1992, p. 7). The ultimate aim is for all the students to reach this plateau of accumulating the generic patterns and linguistic features into their writing banks.

Genre for Japanese Learners

In a study whose data allowed comparisons to be made between ESL learners of five nationalities, Kroll (1990, p. 147) found that the written work of the Japanese group was "the most

flawed," and the "worst in terms of rhetorical competency" (p.153). These findings suggest that a genre based writing course may be useful in Japan where the greatest challenge for students resides beyond the sentence level and in the creation of coherent and cohesive texts as whole entities. This is not to suggest that Japanese students have no problems whatsoever at the sentence level, but that secondary education in Japan concentrates on grammar within the sentence, and consequently students have little experience in producing coherent texts such as essays and reports which are expected at the tertiary stage. In addition, some research into writer-reader relationships has suggested that in the English language, responsibility for successful communication rests with the writer, whereas in Japan, the emphasis shifts to the reader since, "there is a different way of looking at the communication process" (Hinds 1987, p. 144). This kind of assertion is contested, but still may have cultural and schematic implications, of which teachers plying their trade on ESL writing courses in Japanese colleges need to be aware.

Genre is also important for English teaching in Japan as it allows for the exploitation of authentic materials. Gallagher (2000, p.14) remarks that "an integral aspect of a genre approach is working with texts from the beginning; authentic texts that represent genres that are used outside the language classroom." Jarrell (2000, p.4) echoes the sentiment that authentic materials are motivating since they are "geared towards the students' interests and awareness." Using the anecdote section from an American magazine for teenage girls, he identifies three further advantages:

- 1 the basic generic pattern is abundantly demonstrated via numerous examples.
- 2 the material is flexible enough to cater for learners at differing levels.
- 3 a low lexical density exists within the subject matter which is "crucial to a writing task where students need a model" (Jarrell, 2000, p.4).

The orientation element of the anecdotes mentioned above revealed habitual use of the past continuous tense in the first sentence. Rather

than presenting this structural item in isolation, Jarrell maintains that by emphasizing the generic pattern in its writing context provides the learner with a deeper understanding of how to use the past progressive. After the vital phase of exposure to the genre by reading, considering and discussing examples of it (Gallagher 2000:14), Jarrell found that by using a generic structure, students were able to decode the anecdotes and that most were able to reproduce their own stories in the written form. This suggests that used in an appropriate context, the incorporation of authentic materials within a genre approach can facilitate foreign students' comprehension of the anecdote genre.

Although writing from personal experience is an essential element in the process of becoming a competent writer, it is vital for instructors to judge when ESL students require assistance in adopting other genres. In Japan, where college students lack experience of different English genres of non-fiction and their structural organization, writing frames and genre based pedagogy may well reduce their textual inexperience and improve their rhetorical competence. Like the elimination of copying, the use of frames is a developmental process. As the genre and its linguistic features are approximated, greater responsibility passes over to the student and the frame is eventually discarded.

We have shown that genre is important for Japanese students precisely because of their lack of experience creating coherent texts above the sentence level. To what extent generic blueprints enhance structural knowledge will be addressed next.

Procedure

Fifty six 2nd grade senior high school students of the same age (16/17), and generally, of similar ability in English with the odd exception at either end of the proficiency scale, took part in the study. The majority of students was motivated and seemed to enjoy communicating and writing in English and expected to enter university. One group of 28 were exposed to the use of autobiographical (recount) frames for several weeks, after which time they were asked to produce a short written story about an early memory or an incident from their childhood without reference to a

frame. Conversely, a control group consisting of 28 students from the same grade and institution were asked to write a similar passage without the benefit of having used the frame at all. Data was collected by counting the number of (in)correct past tense verbs, connectives, clause modifiers, pronominal references, demonstratives, and rhetorical markers in all assignments. Writing about a past experience naturally lends itself to the use of the simple past tense, and thus any significant differences between the two groups in their use of this aspect could be expected to be apparent. The autobiography genre also requires a range of linking devices that could be compared between the two groups.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of the data indicates that students who used the frames seemed to have a better command of structure, in this case the simple past tense. Students not exposed to the framing activities displayed greater inconsistencies with past tense conjugation and usage.

There are 25 fewer mistakes in the experimental group (which had access to the autobiographic frames) than the control group (which produced its texts "blind," that is, without referring to the frames). Moreover, the first group has 174 correct past tense verbs whereas the control group's figures have only 121. In other words the experimental group not only made fewer mistakes but also used the simple past tense more frequently. From this basic comparative analysis of the data, it may be that exposure to the frame creates a heightened awareness of the simple past tense in the autobiographic writing genre. This finding occurs consistently throughout the texts yet it is only one effect of the genre approach.

In addition, the style and flow of the work is more fluent in those students who practiced with the frames. There are more examples of the Hallidayan 'glue' that binds a text together; a higher number of connectives, clause modifiers, pronominal references and demonstratives are present in these short stories and lend them a more natural feel. They are, essentially, more balanced and easier on the eye. The quality is better.

On the other hand, texts from the control group reveal a lack of cohesion and are rhetori-

cally immature (see appendix A for a contrast of samples). There is a distinct lack of linkers and sentence starters, and a prevalence of incorrect past tense usage. In short, non-use of the frames leads to inferior final products. Use of the frames leads to fewer grammatical mistakes and appears to increase textual cohesion and coherence. We can observe from this small-scale study a distinct improvement in both the quality and quantity of the work produced by students who have utilized the frames. The original contention that exposure to generic framing yields improved writing rhetoric seems to be, at least tentatively, substantiated here.

In brief, the differences in the texts of students who used the generic pattern are as follows:

- more correct past tense forms are evident
- fewer incorrect past tense verbs appear
- there is a higher number of sentences
- there is a higher number of verbs
- more writing occurs (i.e. the texts are longer)
- greater cohesion and coherence is evident

It must be borne in mind that both sets of students are of very similar abilities and motivation. The fact that a genuine textual difference between the groups is palpable in spite of their academic and cognitive homogeneity, and despite the fact that recounting an event from one's past naturally employs the past tense, reinforces the notion that genre frames enhance the final product both on a structural level (in terms of the empirical fact that more correct past tense verbs are used) and at the level of cohesion and coherence (in terms of greater fluidity and accessibility for the reader).

Conclusion

The present paper explores the hypothesis that generic framing facilitates a greater awareness of structure and cohesion in writing. Although modest in scale, it would appear that this theory is corroborated to a degree. That is, we can attribute improved writing to exposure of the frames. It was also shown that genre is important for Japanese students because of their lack of experience creating coherent texts above the

sentence level. Numerous advantages of the genre approach have been identified:

- The experimental group used the target structure 30.5% more accurately than the control group.
- This approach is relevant for foreign learners who lack exposure to practical writing tasks, which is particularly the case in Japan, where one study found that Japanese learners had low cohesive writing capabilities.
- Its broad applicability and ability to employ authentic materials further confirm the value of the approach.
- It would appear that the use of generic patterns offers learners real opportunities to develop skills to reproduce coherent and cohesive texts.

In conclusion, generic framing seems to cultivate Japanese students' writing proficiency and level of grammatical awareness. More exploration is needed but initially, it seems that young adult Japanese students of writing can only profit by its implementation.

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Appendix A

Sample texts from frame exposed students

S11

When I was 12 years old, I played electrone at a concert. It was held in Hibiki-no-mori in Okegawa. It was afternoon. I was strained. But, I could play as usual. When my performance finished, I was glad, because I could succeed in. It was interesting that I played well. Now, I think that it is important to practice very hard.

S10

One day afternoon, when I was 12, I played with my friends in the Ayase river bank. We enjoyed *mizukiri*. Then, we found a tire in the river and I tried to catch the tire, but I missed it and fell in the river. Next, I thout that I will die....But I lived. Finally, I went back home to wash my body. Now, I never play in the river.

S6

When I was 10 years old, I was invited to my uncle's marriage ceremony. Then, I met a bride-

groom and bride wearing special costumes. They were very nice. After that, I ate delicious lunch. Especially steak dish was very good. Finally, I went home. As you can see, I enjoyed it very much.

Sample texts from non-frame exposed students

S25

I was teach piaro. I like to play piaro. But I don't like to lesson. I had good friends in the class of piaro lesson.

S10

When I was an elementary school student, I belonged to baseball club. Because I wanted to be a baseball player and liked baseball. One day, I play baseball as usual. Then, a ball which someone throw hit my head. And I faint. But, my friend snap my face, I

S12

When I was 12 years old, I belonged to swimming team. I practiced swimming very much. The final game day, I played swimming hard. The final game was won by us. I am glad to won the game.

Appendix B

Example of Recounting Genre Writing frame

Recounts retell events in an informative and/or entertaining manner which are often written in chronological order, use the past tense and focus on individual participants.

When I was

Next

Then

After that

It was interesting that

Finally

As you can see / Now

A Brief Look at One Extensive Reading Program

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Feature Article: Lemmer

A little over three years ago I had an opportunity to attend a class about methods of teaching reading in EFL. This was the start of my interest in Extensive Reading (ER). I began to search for information on the subject and soon realized that an ER program could benefit my students. We have just completed the sixth semester of ER, and results have been very favorable. It is now mandatory for all English majors. This article will take you through the steps we followed in planning, implementing and supporting the ER program at Chugoku Junior College.

Information:

One need not have any formal training in teaching reading to start an ER program. The first step required is to learn about what ER consists of, why it is considered to be a good learning strategy and how it should fit into the curriculum. All the necessary information on ER and on starting a program is available online. Two web sites of particular interest are the ER site at <http://www.kyoto-su.ac.jp/information/er/index.html> and "The Extensive Reading Resources" site at <http://www1.harenet.ne.jp/~waring/er/>. We utilized both sites and found them to be very helpful. We also read a number of books on the subject. There is now an ER discussion group for teachers to exchange information and experiences related to ER <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ExtensiveReading/>.

Planning:

I wrote a brief proposal for the Department of English Communication that consisted of a rationale for introducing ER to our students, a list of necessary materials, the initial cost for book purchases and an outline for implementing such a plan. As native speakers do not teach any

reading classes, the plan was to incorporate ER as part of Oral English classes. Receiving approval was surprisingly easy as the other department members readily supported the idea.

Funding:

We approached the school librarians to discuss the program. Our library did have about 400 graded readers on hand, but most of them were unsuitable for our students because they were higher level books, and many were duplicate copies. Our initial order was for 20 books and 10 accompanying audio cassettes which the library bought. We now use funds from the departmental book budget to buy between 20 and 30 new readers a semester. In addition, there was a sizable video library which included many of the same titles as the readers. As the concept of comprehensible input is an integral part of ER, listening to tapes or watching videos of the story, either before, during or after reading can be of help to students. Students can check out the videos and cassette tapes from my office for home use. We provide them with an individual updated list of titles available that is also posted next to the ER section in the school library.

Library:

Ideally, the readers should be in the actual classroom where students have easy access to them and the instructor can monitor student selections and make recommendations. This is impossible in our situation so the librarians agreed to designate a special section devoted to graded readers. Then, with the help of a few students, we proceeded to classify books into five groups based on vocabulary levels. Each level book was then color coded and assigned a letter code of A-E. A represents the lowest level (300

words) and E the highest (1500 words). When new books are ordered I inform the librarians as to their level and they do what is necessary to put them on the shelves.

Other Materials:

We designed some simple printouts to assist in program management.

library log - a form kept at the library check-out desk where students record their name, the title of the books borrowed, their level and the dates they were taken and returned.

student log - a form for each student to keep a personal record of all books that have been read by author and level, dates started and finished and the number of pages read.

book report- a simple two-sided sheet to be completed after reading each book. Students use a 0-10 scale to rate books according to enjoyment, difficulty, vocabulary and characterization. On the back is a section where they write brief comments about characters and plot and give reasons for their answers.

overview handout- a short paper explaining the purpose, goals, grading scheme and tips on getting the most out of ER. At this point the handout is in English only.

placement test - an A3 page with a representative page from one book at each of the five levels. Students read all of them on the first day of the semester and choose the selection they are most comfortable reading (8-10 lines a minute is a useful guide to a good reading speed). If there is any doubt, we recommend one level lower to start to ensure a successful experience early on.

Introduction to students:

When introducing the idea of ER to students we found it important to make clear the distinctions between intensive reading, which they are accustomed to, and ER. Reading in volume, not using a dictionary, reading easy material, and being satisfied with less than 100% comprehension: our students have found these difficult

concepts to grasp at first, because they are so accustomed to the grammar-translation approach to reading. However, through more and more reading these old habits begin to loosen. Our students informed us that reading material they find interesting is one of the key factors in this attitude transformation.

Related Activities:

The short book report has already been mentioned. In addition, my students each make two short oral reports to the class each semester about their favourite titles. We plan to introduce small discussion groups next semester to further integrate the reading and speaking skills acquisition processes. Including such activities can help in responding to criticisms from students and faculty who fail to see the value and purpose of ER in a conversation class. We do not have any formal test of their ER work for two reasons. First, it would be incompatible with the idea of reading for pleasure. Second, there are too many extraneous variables to adequately evaluate the effect of ER alone on students' progress.

Requirements:

In our program the first semester first year students read 300 or more pages. The remaining three semesters all students read 500 or more pages. One student has read 1240 pages. Of course, the students thought this is an impossible task when first given the assignment but with a few successful readings behind them they realize that it is a reachable goal. They receive credit for as many pages as they have read and extra credit if they surpass the target number. Students are encouraged to stop reading a book if it is too difficult or not interesting and we are currently exploring ways to incorporate newspaper and magazine reading into the program.

Although ER is sometimes referred to as pleasure reading it is nearly impossible to get our students to read merely for pleasure. Therefore, it was necessary to assign a percentage of the total course grade to the reading assignment, all of which is done outside of class. This, and the personal sense of accomplishment and enjoyment from the reading, is the only reward offered. For some, constant encouragement and prodding on the part of the instructor is still needed.

Including staff in preparations for the program:

We found that if you plan to set up a program that includes library staff and classes other than your own you should bring the others on board at the earliest possible stage. Encouragement and support for part-time teachers, who may have many other commitments and whose involvement in the program may not be as strong as that of full-time staff, can go a long way in achieving success.

Conclusion:

While setting up an ER program is not difficult, it requires careful planning and sufficient time. Gaining the cooperation of all those involved - teachers, librarians and those controlling the budget - is essential in implementing and continuing a successful program. In order to be effective, a long-term approach should be taken, as improvement can come only after reading many pages. With many departments recently facing budget restraints ER is a relatively inexpensive way to attain student progress in acquiring English. From my observations and student feedback I consider the time and resources devoted to our ER program to have been well spent.

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Conference Reviews

- *Have you been to any good conferences lately?*
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Playing with the Rabbits: A guide to helping students interact with Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*

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Introduction

One of the primary reasons for teaching literature in an ESL/EFL context is that literature can be an authentic source of both language and culture. While students are undoubtedly challenged by the diction they confront as well as the complexity of the plot, these obstacles can easily be overcome with proper preparation and instruction. In the end, students feel a sense of pride when they have read a “real” book for the first time in their second language. The authors found that this notion was reinforced when students indicated on their end of semester evaluation that the activities associated with the teaching of Steinbeck's (1937) *Of Mice and Men* was one of the more enjoyable aspects of their reading and writing course. This success can be attributed to the activities that were prepared by the teachers. The purpose of these activities were to 1) provide background knowledge 2) to provide linguistic knowledge, 3) to engage the students with the story 4) to provide several ways for the students to demonstrate their understanding of the story.

It should be noted that the procedure and activities outlined in this article were carried out at an Intensive English Language Program (IELP) where student motivation was high and classes met four times a week. The students' second language proficiency at the time was between 450-500 on the TOEFL. Therefore, adaptation will need to be made in order to teach this material in a more likely Japanese university setting.

Schema Activation and Pre-Reading Activities

One could start with an introduction of the author's life and the part of California he wrote

the most about. The most comprehensive internet sites are the National Steinbeck Center and the Center for Steinbeck Studies at San Jose State University (Augenbraum, H. & Shillinglaw, S., 2003). For those who would like to read the FBI file on Steinbeck, go to the Freedom of Information site (see reference list for URL). At the very least, students should be aware of the following facts about Steinbeck's life:

- Born in 1902 in Salinas California.
- Went to Stanford University, where he studied literature and writing, but didn't graduate.
- Worked as a journalist and a laborer for five years in New York City.
- Was a contemporary of such other well-known American authors as F. Scott Fitzgerald, Sinclair Lewis, John Dos Passos and Ernest Hemingway.
- Worked with the famous war photojournalist Robert Capa.
- Themes of his books included social justice and existential issues.
- His work was noted for outward simplicity of plots but also the complexity of the issues they raise.
- Labeled a communist by the US government.
- His books are some of the most often-read books in America.
- Won a Nobel Prize in 1962
- Died in 1968

(Shillinglaw, 1999)

***Of Mice and Men* and Steinbeck's Salinas Valley**

Before the preview of the vocabulary in chapter one, students need to have a rough idea of the setting of the novel. Distribute or display a map of the state of California. After forming into groups of three or four, have them find the following locations: Auburn, Monterey, Salinas, Soledad, Sacramento, San Francisco, the Gabilan Mountains and the Salinas River.

The next task is to provide some contextualization of the setting of the work that will be read. This can be accomplished in one of two ways. The teacher can deliver a mini-lecture about the era or alternatively various research assignments can be given to the students. They should study the era of the Great Depression and then present their reports to the class.

A brief synopsis of the basic historical and economic elements is necessary, but avoid a tendency to provide a superfluous amount of details. Explain that during the post-World War I period, the US was in a state of recession and as a reaction farmers increased production by cultivating more land. As a result, and coupled with the fact that soil conservation practices were not used, many of the farms dried up and this became the era known as the "Dust Bowl days". At the same time, the stock market crash in 1929 left many independent farmers out of luck when the bank came looking for payments on their debts. Consequently, the situation deteriorated to the point where there was a thirty percent unemployment rate.

The solution for many of the unemployed was to migrate to California because at the time the land was fertile and there was promise of work. Those who endured the journey found that the number of migrants greatly exceeded the number of jobs available.

The excess supply of workers drove down the wages they could get, and kept them in economic distress and poverty while they remained in economic distress and poverty. During this period if a person were able to carve out a subsistence existence, they would find their lives to be transient in nature because migrants had to follow the harvests around the state.

Fanslow (1998), at the U.S. Library of Congress, has created a website about the migrant

experience of the time and it also includes many useful links. For example, there are links to musical recordings of the era that could be incorporated into classroom practice. There are also links to authentic written texts (newspapers) that may prove useful for building up background knowledge.

Reading Procedure Basic Procedure

Before previewing the vocabulary for chapter one (Appendix 1), it is advisable to give students a brief synopsis. It is important that students understand the relationship between George Milton and Lennie Small. It is advisable to explicitly tell students that George had promised Lennie's Aunt Clara that he would take care of Lennie after she died. However, this relationship is not entirely one-sided because George is dependent upon Lennie for his unconditional friendship. Another issue that should be addressed is the fact that Lennie is mentally challenged. It should be noted that Lennie is not severely challenged because he usually persuades George to tell him over and over about their dream and how they are different from other migrant workers. Another indication of Lennie's cleverness is that he tells George that he could just as well go off and live in a cave on his own. After the relationship of the two main characters has been established, one should preview the vocabulary. Next, students read chapter one for their homework and answer comprehension questions (Appendix 2).

The next class period, students compare their answers to the comprehension questions with one another. After that, students watch the first segment of the film in class. Then distribute the critical thinking questions (Appendix 3) to complete for their homework. The next class period students will work in small groups and compare their answers to those questions. This eventually leads into a class-wide discussion. Students are then provided with the vocabulary for the next chapter and the cycle starts again. Supplementary activities, which can be fused into the procedure, are as follows:

Supplementary Activities

Reflections Journal

Students are required to keep a reflections journal where they 1) give the chapter a one or two word title, 2) write about a particular character that they like or dislike and give reasons to support their opinions 3) predict what will happen next after each chapter, including chapter six, 4) comment on one of the many themes of the novel and apply it to modern times 5) keep a list of their favorite quotes. An additional activity is to have students sketch a scene that they felt was profound. Both activities require students to critically reflect on the novel, and encourage them to empathize with the characters.

Formal Essays

Various rhetorical patters could be explored in conjunction with the various themes (dreams, loneliness and violence) of the novella. However, for this activity to be implemented, it is best that it be done after the story is finished.

Dreams are one of the more dominant themes. In chapter one we are introduced to the dream that George and Lennie share: to buy their own property and live off the fat of the land. Later on in the story, Candy conspires with the two main characters and also shares that dream. Curley's wife also had a dream: to be in the pictures. They failed for different reasons. What mistakes did they make? How were they similar and different? What dreams do students have, and how do they compare to the ones presented in the book?

Loneliness is a prominent theme and many characters are influenced by it. For example, one could use the comparison and contrast rhetorical pattern to examine the loneliness felt by George and Candy. Both characters shared the dream of living off the fat of the land but the occurrences that happen at the end of the novel seem to shatter that dream which leaves both of the men alone.

This brings us to another option where the narrative rhetorical pattern could be fused into a formal essay. Individually or in groups pick up where the story left off and explore the many ways that George and Candy fight their loneliness.

Violence is the third theme. Here one could incorporate an argumentation or rhetorical pattern. For example, could the death of Lennie be construed a mercy killing? Why or why not? What

is the evidence? How is the foreshadowing of the death of the dog, representative of the killing of Lennie? What about euthanasia: do the terminally ill, for instance, have the right to die?

Drama

Students choose a scene from each chapter and then act it out in class. It is helpful if you, the teacher, demonstrate a few scenes on your own because, however awful your performance, students will appreciate the fact that you expressed emotions and feelings in such a personal way. When students finish reading the final chapter, they get together in groups and plan to act out their favorite scene. To make it more realistic, rent out the theater for the time that you usually have class because students tend to put extra effort into the project when they are actually on stage.

An interesting spin would be to put a little John Gresham-type legal thriller into the mix and have the students act out a courtroom scene where George is put on trial for the murder of Lennie. This will probably take a good deal of time because students are not familiar with the intricacies of the American legal system. If the class is too big, you may have to break it up into two courtroom dramas, which in the end may have different results. The important thing here is that everyone is involved and no one should really know until the end if George is convicted or set free. This activity also gives them a different setting in which to debate some important issues related to the themes.

Poster Sessions

Again, this activity should be used when the class has finished reading the story and it is best when there are no more than four students per group. Groups are randomly assigned characters from the book (exclude Carlson, The Boss and Whit because their roles are rather minor). They are given a large white poster, magazines, colored paper, colored marker and pencils, scissors, glue and access to the internet. They are to make a poster that represents the character they were assigned. Let their imagination guide them. The sky is the limit here in that it can be just colors, colors and pictures, etc. When everyone has finished, students present their poster to the

class. This activity allows for creativity in a group setting where everyone has the opportunity to make suggestions and contributions.

Conclusion

Initially, one may question if students in an EFL context are able to understand what life was like for two migrant workers in rural California during the depression. The answer to that question can be found by following this procedure. While it is true that the story is set in a very particular time and place, nonetheless the themes of people trying to cope with the hard circumstances of life, with loneliness and violence, and striving for their dreams are universal. The use of video in class fills in schematic gaps in historical knowledge and promotes a deeper understanding. Also, when students are given the opportunity to reflect on the comprehension and discussion questions in a group setting it enables them to co-construct a deeper understanding of the complexities found in the novella. The additional activities, such as the use of drama, allow students to emotively relate to the characters, and to reflect, through English, on their own lives.

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Appendix 1 (A partial listing of vocabulary words from chapter 1)

Acres (n.) any of various units of area; *specifically* : a unit in the U.S. and England equal to 43,560 square feet (4047 square meters)

Bastard (n.) an offensive or disagreeable person -- used as a generalized term of abuse. George called the bus driver a bastard.

Companion (n.) one that keeps company with another, a friend This word is used when Steinbeck is describing how Lennie and George look as they walk toward the pool of water.

Current (n.) the part of a fluid body (as air or water) moving continuously in a certain direction, the swiftest part of a stream

Debris (n.) the remains of something broken down or destroyed, an accumulation of fragments of rock. Steinbeck describes where the two men camp and that "debris of the winter's flooding" would be drops of water falling from the leaves of the tree."

Elaborate (adj.) planned or carried out with great care Lennie wants George to elaborate on their dream to own a piece of land.

Foothill (n.) a hill at the foot of higher hills

Irrigation - to supply a piece of land with water by artificial means. An irrigation ditch is where they store the water prior to using it. Lenny and George had to hide in an irrigation ditch up in Weeds because Lenny got into trouble.

Mimicking (v.) to imitate closely, to ridicule by imitation

Morosely(v.) in a gloomy or sad way George starred morosely into the fire.

(Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

Appendix 2 (Comprehension Questions from chapter 1)

1. Why does George warn Lennie not to drink so much water?
2. Why is George angry at the bus driver?
3. Lennie has a poor memory and often has to repeat things to remember them. What is the first thing that Lennie forgets?
4. What does Lennie hide in his pocket from George? Why is George angry that he has it?
5. How far is the ranch from where the two are camping?
6. What did George see on the way to the camping site and what does this reveal about the type of work that they will do?
7. What does Lennie like to have with beans?
8. When George tells Lennie about their dream at what point does Lennie get excited?
9. Towards the end of the first chapter Lennie feels proud? Why does he feel this emotion?
10. . . What is Lennie to do if he gets into trouble at the ranch?

Appendix 3 (Discussion Questions for Chapter1)

1. Steinbeck often describes Lennie with animal like characteristics throughout the book (e.g. ch 1 "Lennie dabbled his big paw in the water"). What affect does this have on the reader? Would you agree that this serves to dehumanize Lennie?
2. In this chapter we learn that George is critical about his friend Lennie (e.g. "You crazy son-of-a-bitch. You keep me in hot water all the time"). What does this fact say about the relationship between George and Lennie?
3. We learn about the dream that George and Lennie have in this chapter. What does this indicated about their past economic situation? If you were forced to live out their dream, how would you react?
4. George tells Lennie that if he gets into trouble that he should come and hide down by the river. What predictions can you make based upon what you know about both men?

Research Bulletin

•Have you written for your in-house research bulletin?

•Do you know of in-house research papers that might interest On CUE readers?

Please submit brief summaries of current in-house publications and abstracts of research reports to the incoming editor: Mike Hood <mikehood@hotmail.com>

Cowie, A.P. (ed.) (1998). *Phraseology: Theory, Analysis, Applications*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (258 pp.). ISBN 0-19-829964-8.

Reviewed by Andy Barfield, Chuo University

Phraseological fusions, phraseological unities, free collocations, phrasal lexemes, idioms, phrasemes, anomalous collocations, formulae, collocational blends, restricted collocations, phraseoids, and, yes, cranberry collocations: The profusion of terminology in theorizing, analyzing and applying phraseology is nicely summed up by Altenberg's opening sentence in Chapter 5: "Phraseology is a fuzzy part of language" (p.101). Grappling with the fuzziness are nine papers in this anthology, which itself is divided into four parts. The two papers in the first part examine Russian studies (*The Russian Tradition; The Cultural Element*, pp.23-75), while the next section's pair of studies look at *Phraseology in Written and Spoken Corpora* (pp.79-122); the third part offers three papers on *Phraseology in Special-Purposes Languages and Foreign Learner Language* (pp.125-186), before the volume closes with two papers on *Phraseology and the Dictionary* (pp.189-228).

Cowie illuminates these nine papers with a detailed historical thematic overview in the introduction. Of interest is how in the late 1940s Vinogradov theoretically distinguished between 'phraseological fusions' (semantically opaque combinations, i.e., idioms or pure idioms), 'phraseological unities' (combinations metaphorically extending core senses, i.e., figurative idioms) and 'phraseological combinations' (combinations with one figurative element and one literal element, i.e., phrasemes, phraseoids, collocations and restricted collocations). This typology stands in contrast to the lexical classification of Palmer who, just over a decade earlier, had worked with five categories (single words, or monologs, derivatives, formulas, construction patterns and collocations) in his efforts to decide "what collocations may or may not be legitimately incorporated into

a simplified text" (Palmer, 1933, p.13). Palmer (and later, Hornby) thus conceptualised the lexical challenge from the learner's rather than the theorist's perspective by focusing on "successions of words that must or should be learnt, or are best learnt as integral wholes rather than pieced together from their component parts" (Palmer, 1933, p.10; Cowie, abridged quotation, p.211). Both approaches eventually had to address "the degree to which a collocation can be varied and still remain 'restricted'" (Cowie, p.6). It is this fundamental question that *Phraseology: Theory, Analysis, Applications* repeatedly addresses.

The Russian phraseological school is represented by Igor Mel'ëuk in Chapter 2 (*Collocations and Lexical Functions*, pp.24-53) and Veronika Teliya, Natalya Bragina, Elena Oparina and Irina Sandomirskaya in Chapter 3 (*Phraseology as a Language of Culture in the Representation of a Collective Mentality*, pp.55-75). Bracing the reader for a theoretical onslaught, Mel'ëuk observes: "Collocations constitute the absolute majority of phrasemes and represent the main challenge of any theory of phraseology" (p.31). Using Meaning-Text Theory focused on the spoken production of text, Mel'ëuk puts forward a set of conditions by which phrases can be sub-categorized, and, ultimately, collocations described in terms of *Lexical Function*. At a deep structure level, a lexical function **f** represents a general abstract semantic notion that (i) "associates with a specific lexical unit [=LU], L, which is the 'argument', or 'keyword', of **f**" (p.32) and (ii) can be lexically realized in different surface forms. In these surface forms, according to Mel'ëuk, two-word collocations such as *crack a joke* or *launch an attack* have one freely chosen constituent lexeme that retains its literal sense (in both examples, *joke* and *attack*), whereas the other component is restrictedly constructed because it is contingent on the first element. In the

first example, the freely chosen ‘argument’ *joke* motivates the restricted and contingent selection of *crack* (pp.29-31). Mel’èuk, in other words, takes a deep structure approach towards pursuing a semantic analysis of the lexical realizations and restrictedness of ‘surface’ collocations.

In Chapter 3, Teliya et al. look at how lexical collocations, among other multi-word units, carry cultural knowledge, concepts, connotations and metaphors for members of a speech community with shared values. With a different emphasis from Mel’èuk, they note: “In restricted collocations...the activation of cultural connotation is connected with the type of cultural information contained in the keyword (the base of the collocation) and the nature of the semantic specialization in the meaning of the collocator” (p.59). One example is the Russian collocation *vuikovuiva kharakter* (forge someone’s character), which implies association “with a blacksmith hammering at a metal object to give it firmness and hardness” (p.65)—in contrast, the English *mould one’s character* emphasizes “the idea of giving shape to an originally shapeless mass” (p.65)! Teliya et al. further note how restricted collocations become culturally marked through being repeatedly used and ultimately conventionalized in particular genres and bodies of discourse. Here, they identify four major ‘classical’ sites of production of “culturally relevant phraseologisms” (p.73): religion and philosophy, literature, poetic folklore, and political discourse. Interestingly, the four researchers omit scientific-academic discourse and the mass media, although Howarth later draws on studies of newspaper language as a benchmark for his analysis of restricted collocations in academic writing (p.171).

With these two opening papers by Mel’èuk and Teliya, Bragina, Oparina & Sandomirskaya, the reader gains a fascinating view of the breadth and depth of Russian classical phraseology. The next five chapters, by scholars perhaps more familiar to a Western Anglophone audience, present corpus-based research into phraseology. In Chapter 4 (*Frequencies and Forms of Phrasal Lexemes in English*, pp.79-100), Rosamund Moon underlines the centrality of lexical verb-noun collocations in fixed and semi-fixed multi-word units. She finds that predicates (“a verb and its arguments or complementation”, p.88) account for 40% of the grammatical types of phrasal lexemes. She also observes that the same percentage of phrasal lexemes “did not have frozen and canonical forms” (p.92), while many multi-word units are frozen

in certain lexico-grammatical patterns. In the following chapter (*On the Phraseology of Spoken English: The Evidence of Recurrent Word-Combinations*, pp.101-122), Bengt Altenberg examines which three-word combinations occur more than 10 times in the London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English. Although he finds that lexical collocations are infrequent in the data, Altenberg concludes from his analysis of different multi-word units (such as thematic frames like *well I mean*, pp.112-113, and vagueness tags such as *or something like that* and *things like that*, pp.116-118): “...the great majority of the examples occupy a position along the cline between fully lexicalized units and free constructions” (p.121).

Whilst the two papers by Moon and Altenberg draw conservative conclusions from their empirical analysis, Chapter 6, *The Stylistic Potential of Phraseological Units in the Light of Genre Analysis* (pp.125-143), by Rosemarie Gläser is less rigorous and not of particular interest for this reviewer. Chapter 7 by Sylvaine Granger (*Prefabricated Patterns in Advanced EFL Writing: Collocations and Formulae*, pp.145-160) examines collocations and formulae in a contrastive interlanguage analysis of French students’ written English, but more substantial work is offered by Peter Howarth’s finely grained analysis of the phraseology of post-graduate students’ academic writing (Chapter 8, *The Phraseology of Learners’ Academic Writing*, pp.161-186). Howarth takes Cowie’s earlier findings that roughly 40% of the verb+direct object combinations in front page news stories and feature articles could be categorized as restricted collocations or idioms (Cowie, 1991a, 1992). Do similar percentages hold for both native and non-native speaker corpora of academic writing? Like Moon’s, his quantitative results show that approximately 38% of the verb+direct object combinations in NS academic prose feature restricted collocations (33%) or idioms (5%), whereas the figure drops to a total of 25% for NNS academic prose. Howarth’s qualitative investigation is based on a five-level sub-classification of collocations that considers the semantic specialization of the verb in terms of whether it features a figurative, delexical or technical sense (pp.169-170). The first point is that technical senses, unlike delexicalised senses, produce the least deviant forms. One implication is that more fully lexicalized forms are easier to acquire and use appropriately. The second point is that verbs used in a non-core figurative sense tend to produce collocational overlaps (e.g., *attain a re-*

ward) and blends (e.g., *draw a correlation*). Indeed, such combinations occur in both the NS and NNS data, though much more so in the latter. Howarth concludes: "...it would seem that many learners fail to understand the existence of the central area of the phraseological spectrum between free combinations and idioms. It is in handling restricted collocations that errors of both a lexical and grammatical nature constantly occur." (p.186)

Heeding this reminder about the learner's (let alone the researcher's!) phraseological burden, the final two chapters of the book consider in what ways dictionaries can be best organized to help learners become more collocationally proficient. In Chapter 9 (*Discovering Significant Lexical Functions in Dictionary Entries*, pp.189-207), Thierry Fontenelle reviews the problems in defining collocations and organizing a machine-readable bilingual collocational dictionary. Just as Howarth does, Fontenelle also draws on Cowie's 1991 definition of restricted collocations as "word-combinations in which one element (usually the verb) has a technical sense, or a long-established figurative sense which has since lost most of its analogical force" (Cowie, 1991a, p.102); he further highlights the prevalence of delexicalised verbs, or "support verb constructions" (p.192) with semantically empty verbs that supply "information on number, tense, and aspect" (p.192). However, in contrast to Mel'èuk's *a priori* list of lexical functions, Fontenelle's approach uses a database of collocations to identify the lexical-semantic relationship between keywords and their collocates. The example bilingual dictionary entry for *anger-colère* points to the impressively detailed and useful resources that such work can offer advanced learners (pp.205-207). In the final chapter (*Phraseological Dictionaries: Some East-West Comparisons*, pp. 209-228), Cowie re-works his introductory historical overview of phraseological research in the twentieth century. He pays due respect to the pioneering work of Palmer and Hornby, yet notes their limitations in overlooking "the cline of idiomaticity" (p.213) casting its shadow over the solely syntactic categorization of multi-word units. That said, Cowie pays even greater homage to the work of Vinogradov and Amosova for their tripartite categorization of phraseological fusions, phraseological unities and phraseological combinations. In his closing review of the organizational principles of several collocational dictionaries (Kunin; Cowie, Mackin & McCaig; Kozłowska & Dzierżanowska; Ben-

son, Benson & Ilson; see Cowie, 1999b, for a full discussion), Cowie as much praises the detailed analytical thinking of these different lexicographers as categorically condemns the futility of seeing frequency of co-occurrence as "the only significant measure of 'conventionality' in language" (p.226): a nicely heretical closure in an otherwise almost religiously rigorous anthology.

In conclusion, it is rare to find one volume with so many theoretical insights into collocations: That alone makes this anthology a valuable reference. Its other strengths include a strong sense of historical development in phraseology, as well as a welcome (and perhaps untypical?) East-West combination of international perspectives and research findings. One problem, though, remains in pinning down more consistently the differences between collocational types ranging from free lexical combinations to frozen idioms and clichés. Another involves tracing the collocational development of L2 users. This volume covers various synchronic views of collocational use, whether by native speakers or non-native speakers. Offering some general benchmarks for future research into learners' phrasal development over time, *Phraseology: Theory, Analysis, Applications* can be seen as a necessary prelude to such developmental work. My final observation is that the volume generally fails to explore the fundamental internal processes of 'collocationization' (you read it here first!): Why do verbs tend to delexicalise more than nouns in verb+noun collocations, for example? Such are some of the intriguing puzzles that research into collocations creates—and has yet to answer conclusively.

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Websites for testing and increasing reading speed

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Introduction

The issue of reading speed is often overlooked in the field of second language teaching and research. This is unfortunate, as research in L1 reading has shown that faster readers generally comprehend more of what they read than slower readers. Whether or not this holds true for L2 reading is still not completely clear, but there is evidence to suggest that it does. In a study of Japanese university students, Kitao (1995, p. 8) found a “high correlation between reading ability and reading speed,” and concluded that teachers should help their learners increase their reading speed.

An important issue that comes into play here is whether a person’s reading speed changes depending on the mode of presentation. In other words, is reading speed on paper the same as reading speed on a computer screen? For an excellent overview of this issue within the context of computer-based testing, see Sawaki (2001). She cites research on L2 readers showing that there is no significant difference depending on mode, but points out that more research is needed.

There are still relatively few reading textbooks on the market that include activities for increasing learners’ reading speed. Jamestown Publishers’ *Timed Readings* series (Spargo, 1989), distributed in Japan by McGraw-Hill, is a notable exception, as the primary aim of the books is to increase reading speed. Using the books in this series in my own classes, I have been somewhat surprised to see how interested my learners are in increasing their reading speed. I have also been surprised to hear my students comment that they were not aware of the importance of reading speed. As Anderson (1999) notes, developing awareness of the issue is one

of the benefits of working on reading speed in class.

Besides doing exercises related to reading speed in my classes, I have also been encouraging my learners to work on increasing their reading speed on their own. However, simply timing themselves while reading the stories in the textbook appears to lack that very important, yet elusive element - the “fun factor.” This is where computers come in. I have been searching the web for sites that allow learners to test and/or increase their reading speed, and have been encouraging my learners to try them out¹. Because the response from the students has been favorable, I would like to introduce what I have managed to find so far in this brief article. I have divided the list into two different sections. The first section describes three sites that have been designed especially for ESL/EFL learners. The second section describes two sites that are designed primarily for native speakers. The second is a promotional site for a speed-reading software package, and because of this is somewhat commercially oriented. Despite this, learners might enjoy it for its authenticity.

Sites designed for ESL/EFL students

1. Easy Readings (Kitao and Kitao, 2003)

URL: <http://ilc2.doshisha.ac.jp/users/kkitao/library/student/reading/>

This page, designed by the prolific Kitao, has a list of 29 short readings (from 100 to 295 words) on a variety of high-interest topics. Readings 1 through 3 are actually the same story, but clicking on 1 or 2 leads to a paced reading exercise, while clicking on 3 leads to a timed reading exercise. The paced reading exercise allows students to try out several different reading speeds and get a

feel for what it is like to read at that speed. Readings 4 through 29 are all timed reading exercises like reading 3. For these exercises, the students click on the “Start” button when they are ready to read. A timer at the top of the page displays the elapsed time. When they are finished reading, students click on the “Stop” button, and then can calculate their reading speed by clicking on the “No. of Words Read per Minute” button. Finally, each reading has multiple choice comprehension questions that the students can do to check their understanding of the passage. The combination of interesting readings and ease of use make this an excellent page for students to test, as well as increase, their reading speed.

2. On-line lessons – reading skills (n.d.)

URL: <http://eslus.com/LESSONS/READING/READ.HTM>

This page, part of a site for a private language school in the United States, has a small but interesting collection of activities for practicing reading speed, as well as other reading skills. There are five exercises for practicing reading speed. I will describe three of them here. The first is a simple word recognition exercise. A sentence is displayed on the screen for two seconds. One of the words in the sentence is highlighted. After two seconds have elapsed, the screen changes and a multiple choice question is displayed. Students must select the word that was highlighted in the sentence. The second exercise is essentially the same as the first, but instead of single words phrases are highlighted in the sentences. In the third exercise, a question is flashed on the screen for 3 seconds. Then the screen changes and students must choose an appropriate response to the question. Each of these exercises has 50 questions. Although unlike the page described above, these exercises do not allow learners to check their reading speeds, the exercises are fast-paced and fun and provide ample opportunity to practice reading quickly. The only bad thing about the exercises is that the students see an ad for the school on every page with a multiple choice question. This is a bit annoying, but is fairly easy to ignore.

3. English Language Centre Study Zone (1997)

URL: <http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone/index.htm>

Part of the University of Victoria’s (Canada) English Language Centre site, this page has reading exercises divided by level. The top three levels, 410, 490, and 570, include reading comprehension exercises that set a time limit for reading a passage and answering questions about it. At the 410 level, there are five reading passages. Students are given 12 minutes to read the passage and answer the questions that follow. At the 490 level, there are five readings, four of which have a timed exercise. The time limits are either 3 or 5 minutes. The 570 level includes a skimming exercise and a scanning exercise on a passage about the logging industry entitled “Pulp Friction.” Each exercise gives students 2 minutes to read the passage and answer five questions. The readings for each level are interesting, and the questions are well written, making this a good site for students to improve their reading speed and test their comprehension.

Sites designed for native speakers

1. Amby’s Reading Resources - The Velveteen Rabbit (Duncan-Carr, 1998)

URL: http://amby.com/reading/Velveteen_Rabbit/

This site has a complete story from a children’s book divided into four parts. The story, entitled “The Velveteen Rabbit,” was written by Margery Williams Bianco (1983), author of over 30 children’s books. When students are ready to begin reading, they click on the “Start Timer” button. When they are finished, they click on the “Stop Timer” button and their reading speed is calculated and immediately displayed at the bottom of the page. This can be done for each of the four parts of the story. The length for each part varies, with parts 1 and 3 being about 1,500 words, part 2 being about 700 words, and part 4 being only about 140 words. There are no comprehension questions to accompany the story, but the quality of the story itself and the ease with which students can check their reading speed make this an interesting and useful site.

2. Speed Reading Test Online (2000)

URL: <http://www.readingsoft.com/index.html>

This online test of reading speed is part of a promotional site for a speed reading software package. The text used for the test is essentially a sales pitch for the software package, but it does include some interesting information about reading speed. Some of this information is useful for fostering awareness of the importance of reading speed. Like other sites described above, with this page the students click on the “Start” button when they are ready to start reading, and the “Stop” button when they are finished. After clicking on “Stop,” reading speed is calculated and displayed immediately. Then, students can proceed to a comprehension test about the reading that has 11 questions. Although the site is not designed with EFL students in mind, the text and the questions are not especially difficult. As long as teachers mention the commercial nature of this site in advance, they should feel comfortable recommending it to their learners.

Conclusion

The five websites I have introduced in this article provide learners with opportunities to test and increase their reading speed in an interactive way. While I would not recommend them as substitutes for in-class paced and timed reading exercises, I do think that teachers should feel comfortable recommending them to students who express an interest in improving their reading speed on their own. I would also like to encourage teachers to search for additional sites that can be used for practicing reading speed. Finally, to computer-savvy teachers out there, I would like to say that more web-based exercises for testing and increasing reading speed would certainly be welcome. If more exercises such as the ones described here could be created and put online, both teachers and students of reading would benefit greatly.

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