TEACHERS OF ENGLISH
TO SPEAKERS OF
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the

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Functional
Classroom

approaches to written text:
applications

Guest
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Functional Approaches to Written Text: Classroom Applications

Volume I

Edited by Tom Miller

CONTENTS

Section III Social Approaches

Section IV Genre Approaches

Editorial

Jacqueline Quéniart, Publications Director

T ESOL France has great pleasure in publishing the latest issue of *The Journal*. Guest-edited by Thomas Miller, Assistant Cultural Officer at U.S.I.S. in Paris, it is the first of two volumes focussing on Discourse Analysis.

This anthology provides readers with an updated description of various approaches to Discourse Analysis. However, it goes further than a theoretical survey: several types of texts are analysed and examples of pedagogical applications for the classroom are given so that readers can decide which methodological approach best fits their students' needs.

It argues that Discourse Analysis can help teachers review classroom practice in training reading and writing skills in English. Thus, it paves the way for current debate of vital importance. We hope that it will be a relevant contribution to English Teaching in France, in Europe and abroad.

Next Issue

The next issue will also be guest edited by Thomas Miller, Assistant Cultural Officer at USIS in Paris. Top French, American and British researchers in the field of English teaching will contribute subjects on Discourse Analysis.

Contents

1. Describing and Teaching English Grammar with Reference to Written Discourse
   Marianne Celce-Murcia

2. Tense and Aspect in (Con)text
   Kathleen Bardovi-Harlig

3. Towards a Psycho-Grammatical Description of the English Language
   Jean-Rémi Lapaire and Wilfrid Rotgé

4. Using the Concepts of Given Information and New Information in Classes on the English Language
   William J. Vande Kopple

5. Theme and New in Written English
   Peter H. Fries

6. Waves of Abstraction: Organizing Exposition
   J.R. Martin

Publication date for the next issue is set for October 1996

THE JOURNAL of TESOL France

TESOL France

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TESOL France, an affiliate of TESOL International and of IATEFL, is a non-profit organization of teachers of English in France. Its purposes are to stimulate professional development, to disseminate information about research, books and other materials related to English, and to strengthen instruction and research.

TESOL France organizes various events and a convention each year in Paris. Members receive *The News*, a bi-monthly newsletter and *The Journal*, the academic journal of the association.

Introduction

Tom Miller, Guest Editor

I t has become increasingly obvious that little in language can be understood without taking into consideration the wider picture of communicative purpose, content, context speaker/writer and audience. Sentence-based intuitions and analyses wither in the face of empirical studies made possible by concordances using corpora of millions of words. In fact, as Celce-Murcia states in volume II, only a handful of grammatical features can be understood by looking at the sentence alone. Research in the field of psychology, particularly in the field of reading (see Grabe, chapter 1) provides considerable support for the teaching of textual awareness particularly for expository prose. Teaching text structural awareness has also had positive effects on students' writing (see Johns and Paz, chapter 3 for a review of some relevant research).

The title of this, the first of two volumes, reflects the assumption that form follows function. Several themes run through the chapters. First, texts, and in fact knowledge itself are socially constructed. In other words, the meaning of texts is co-constructed by the interaction of reader and text and does not reside in the text alone. The approaches described in this volume all advocate a careful analysis of the text to understand this process more fully. Thus, we lose the somewhat artificial distinction between process and product as we study the text to discover the writer's mental models (see Kramsch, Chapter 4) or biases and presuppositions (see Huckin, Chapter 6). A second theme is that genres - the manner in which language accomplishes the goals of communication - affect the overall text from macro-organization to the choice of words. Finally, most chapters assume that texts are so rich and complicated that no single approach can tease out all of the meaning. Learners need to become aware of the richness of interaction among ideology of the writer/reader, genre, overall organization, cohesion, presupposition, and lexical choice to understand not only what is in the text but what has been omitted or presupposed.

Volume I focuses on expository text for two reasons. First, research seems to indicate that students experience more difficulties writing and understanding dense hierarchical expository text than narration and in fact seem to benefit more from the teaching of textual awareness of expository than narrative prose (see Grabe, Chapter 1 for a review of the literature). Secondly, although most

students have had considerable exposure to reading and writing narratives, they will ultimately need to master expository prose to succeed in the workplace or in the university, even in English classes.

Each chapter tries to bridge the gaps between a description of an approach, an analysis of at least one text, and pedagogical applications. Sufficient sources have been provided for those who wish to pursue reading in a particular area, while enough examples of approaches are given so that readers can decide for themselves which method warrants further consideration.

Chapter 1 entitled "Discourse Analysis and Reading Instruction" anchors the text in the literature. William Grabe describes many studies which provide empirical support for teaching text structure to students of reading, particularly in expository text. Chapters 2-5 show how an awareness of text structure and strategies is reflected in the quality of student essays. Robert Kaplan's chapter on Contrastive Rhetoric presents a model for the writing process which takes into consideration the impact of author, content, audience, purpose, genre, and context and which shows how students' language and culture shape their writing in English. Claire Kramsch's chapter on Rhetorical Models of Understanding presents student summaries of a narration, while Ann Johns and Danette Paz' chapter on Text Analysis and Pedagogical Summaries deals with summaries of expository texts. Asserting that meaning is a rhetorical and not just a cognitive process, Claire Kramsch presents a model for text analysis and shows how a careful analysis of students' writing can flesh out their respective mental models. Describing Johns and Davies (1983) topic types, Johns and Paz show what expert and novice summary writers look for when identifying the macro structure of a text. In Chapter 5 John Swales and Christine Feak describe successful and less successful strategies for describing non-verbal information. They recommend going beyond simply transforming information to writing a commentary on non-verbal data.

Chapters 6-9 describe the socio-pragmatic **effects** that certain language, images, orientations, and organization have on the reader. In an introduction to critical discourse analysis, Thomas Huckin provides the reader with a set of strategies to unveil the assumptions and hidden messages in a text. Greg Myers in Words and Pictures in a Biology Textbook provides guidelines for reading visuals, showing how the purpose of visuals changes with genre. Following Myers' description of the modality of visuals is Françoise Salager-Meyer's description of hedges in written scientific discourse. Salager-Meyer shows how

scientists modulate the strength of their claim and provides suggestions for using hedges to join the discourse community of the scientist. Anamaría Harvey continues Johns and Paz's, and Myer's description of the difference between academic texts and popularizations, showing how science reports are really discourses about discourse. An awareness of the demands of the primary and secondary discourse helps classify texts for pedagogical purposes.

Chapters 10-12 focus on genre analysis and its applications. Vijay Bhatia highlights some of the major features of genre theory and discusses how a genre-based approach can inform language teaching. Tony Dudley-Evans describes some of the insights and dangers of genre analysis in academic papers and provides suggestions for a flexible approach. Finally, Tony Jappy describes a practical approach for using corpora for both research and pedagogy and shows how various language structures are used in different genres.

It is hoped that these chapters give the reader a glimpse of some approaches to discourse analysis and encourage the reader not only to apply some of the approaches described but to continue reading. Volume II (to appear in October, 1996) focuses on discourse analysis and grammar and tries to show that many aspects of English grammar which have defied explanation become understandable when viewed from the text rather than the sentence.

Finally, I wish to thank the authors for their suggestions and contributions to this volume. Particularly, I would like to thank Ann Johns and William Grabe, whose patient guidance and generous assistance over the years have made this work possible.