

Chapter 1

Discourse Analysis and Second Language Writing

For those who want to develop their writing skills in another language, *discourse*—authentic language as it occurs in context—can be a primary resource. The writing classroom in English as a second language (ESL) can be organized so that students themselves learn to analyze the written discourse of the society around them and appropriate the results of their analysis for their own writing purposes. In so doing, they can personalize their learning, choosing discourse materials suitable for their own proficiency level and areas of special interest. By introducing specific discourse analysis techniques and tasks, instructors can foster greater independence in their students as they develop the ability to take control of their own language development. A discourse analysis approach also leads to greater writing versatility, as student writers are exposed in a systematic way to a variety of written *genres*, or types of written discourse. Each genre presents a different set of rhetorical choices—from lexicon and grammar to format, content, and organization—that students can study and adapt to their own writing. Because cultures use genres to accomplish their social interactions, discourse analysis provides a window on the values and priorities of the community that created them. Moreover, the role of discourse analyst offers a more powerful identity for an ESL student than that of foreigner, alien, or nonnative speaker. Students can become language researchers, or ethnographers, studying the surrounding culture’s ways of writing and adapting what they learn for their own purposes.

The discourse analysis approach presented in this volume is intended for high-intermediate to advanced students. It involves organizing a class curriculum so that students research a variety of genres of written discourse—for example, formal letters, recipes, stories, or academic reports. Following the guidelines provided in this book, students discuss the purposes and uses of each genre, its structural features, and the social roles and conventions that it upholds. They then collect samples of these genres from authentic

social contexts and analyze, compare, and evaluate their rhetorical and linguistic conventions. The analyses are focused into manageable, concrete tasks: for example, students might study strategies for politeness in formal letters or trace the use of a specific grammatical feature, such as verb tense, in college application essays. After completing each analysis, students compose their own writing, taking into account what they have learned from their discussion and analysis of genre samples. Finally, they review and revise their work, applying similar discourse analysis techniques to their own and their peers' drafts. With a more sophisticated understanding of discourse, they are in a stronger position to make informed choices in their future writing.

What Is Discourse Analysis?

To understand what it means to take a discourse analysis approach to the teaching of writing, we need to begin by understanding the term *discourse analysis*, which refers to a broad area of inquiry that involves several dimensions and spans a variety of disciplines. As Chomsky (1965) observed, there is no limit to the number of possible sentences that can be generated from the grammar and lexicon of a language. However, stringing together a random group of sentences that may be grammatically allowable does not result in discourse. Discourse must instead be organized in some coherent way that makes sense in the context of an interaction. Thus, one important aspect of discourse analysis is that texts are regarded as wholes, beyond the level of the grammatical sentence. This extended structure—the sequence in which the language occurs and the connections among the units—becomes an object of study in itself. It is also possible for the analysis of a very short text to count as a discourse analysis. Austin (1970, 243), for example, argued that a sign posted in a field and bearing the single word “Bull” could function as a warning. He was interested in how this language constituted a kind of action—the “speech act” of warning. The point is that regardless of its size, if considered as a functional entity, any text can be analyzed as discourse.

For most scholars, however, the analysis of linguistic structure (extended or otherwise) is not enough to constitute a discourse analysis. Crystal (1987, 116) cites the common concern among discourse analysts “to see language as a dynamic, social, interactive

phenomenon—whether between speaker and listener, or writer and reader.” He goes on to emphasize that discourse involves “the participants’ beliefs and expectations, the knowledge they share about each other and about the world, and the situation in which they interact.” Thus, another important principle of discourse analysis is that language is always studied in its social context. As van Dijk (1997b, 8) points out, when we speak or write, we seldom do so by accident; rather, we have a social purpose in mind.

To understand the social contexts of a text, discourse analysts usually work with naturally occurring—or, to use Schiffrin’s terminology, “empirical”—data. Schiffrin (1987, 416) explains, “Data come from a speech community: data are about people using language, not linguists thinking about how people use language.” Not only spoken language but written language as well can be said to occur naturally. The preceding example of the sign bearing the word “Bull” can be considered naturally occurring in that the writer used language for the social purpose of warning possible wanderers of a dangerous bull. If written on the wall of a college cafeteria as a piece of graffiti, the word “Bull” might serve a different social purpose—perhaps to express disdain at another writer’s remark (as in “I don’t believe this bull!”) or to make an existential lament on the absurdity of life in general (as in “It’s all bull!”). In each case, the intention and interpretation of the language depend on the social setting.

Beyond the immediate social context is the broader cultural context in which discourse occurs, which is also of interest to many discourse analysts. Communities develop norms and conventions for speaking and writing that are usually taken for granted as “natural” within that group. In this sense, the discourse of a community can be said to reflect the commonsense notions, or ideologies, of that community. According to van Dijk (1997b), ideologies are the belief systems that define a group, its social practices, and its interaction with other groups (26). He points out that ideologies tend to preserve the status quo—the power relations among the members of the group. He further cites several ways in which the ideology of a group affects its discourse: the rhetorical devices used, the kind of vocabulary considered appropriate, the choice of metaphors, and the very topics selected are influenced by group ideology (33). Moreover, ideologies place constraints on who can communicate with whom and under what conditions. For example, the social act of applying for a job involves many cultural norms derived from ideologies surrounding

the hierarchical structure of workplace institutions: the proper time to apply, the particular person or group to whom one applies, the fact that one must apply, and the special genre of writing—the job application letter—are all quite restricted. It would be risky to ignore the conventions of the genre of the job application letter by writing the salutation as “Alice” instead of “Dear Professor Jones” or by writing the letter by hand on a torn piece of paper. We are not incapable of acting in these ways, but in the cultural context of applying for a job, to ignore the conventional expectations of this genre would be interpreted as naive or disrespectful of the gatekeeping authority invested in the recipient and the institutional power structure of the workplace. A person violating the cultural constraints of the genre would risk losing the opportunity to obtain the job.

In view of the relationship between ideology and discourse, another aim of discourse analysts is to better understand a culture by studying the discourse of its members. Ethnography, the study of culture through intensive observation and participation, often involves the analysis of discourse in order to understand the ideology behind the use of language. The language with which we choose to express ourselves and the contexts in which we do so displays our social identities and group affiliations. Thus, discourse analysis can lead to a better understanding of the values and social practices of a community.

To summarize, discourse analysis involves the study of naturally occurring language in the context in which it is used. Discourse analysts, whether they are concerned with the coherence of extended structure or with the interpretation of more minute texts, are interested in the language choices people make to accomplish their social goals. For many analysts, cultural ideologies that are reproduced in the discourse of a community are the focus of analysis. In this sense, discourse analysis can be used both as a structural tool to better grasp how texts are organized and as an ethnographic tool to broaden one’s understanding of cultural dynamics.

Spoken versus Written Genres of Discourse

There are certain crucial differences between spoken and written discourse. It has been clearly demonstrated that writing is not just spoken language written down (Biber 1988, 1992, 1995). Distinctions in lexicogrammatical and rhetorical structures tend to occur between

spoken and written language, depending on the genre.¹ For a second language learner, this means that regardless of one's proficiency in speaking, conventions of writing may pose a challenge.

One traditional view (e.g., Goody and Watt 1968) is that written discourse is of a higher order—more logical, formal, and complex—than oral discourse and is therefore superior to it. However, the traits considered superior by proponents of this view are not necessarily confined to written genres. The notion of formality, for example, is an aspect of many spoken genres, such as courtroom argumentations or academic presentations, while some written genres, such as email or personal diaries, can be considered informal. As Ochs (1979) points out, rather than using the terms *formal* and *informal*, it may be more appropriate to speak of planned versus unplanned discourse to describe the differences between such cases. Furthermore, spoken genres are not unstructured or illogical; work in conversation analysis (e.g., Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974; Atkinson and Heritage 1984) has clearly demonstrated that the most casual of conversations is a tightly structured system. The orchestration of turn taking involves a high degree of social coordination. Sacks observed in a 1967 lecture:

One person can start up talking within one tenths, two tenths—that order of speed—of a second after another had done what is, upon much later reflection by an analyst, something that seems to be a sentence. (Jefferson 1995, 650)

Thus, the belief that conversation is somehow random or chaotic when compared to writing is untenable. Instead, the point of view taken here is not that written language is superior to spoken but that any genre of communication is likely to have unique characteristics that differentiate it from other genres.

Nevertheless, within this view, certain general characteristics can be said to manifest themselves differently in written versus spoken genres. At the organizational level, there is a tendency for rhetorical structures to distinguish the two modes. For example, the separation

1. My use of the term *genre* coincides with Biber's and others' use of the term *register*. Biber (1995, 9) points out that there is no clear consensus in the field on the distinction between the two. He states, "In my own previous studies, I have used the term *genre* as a general cover term, similar to my use of *register* in the present book."

of topics into chunks or paragraphs in many genres of writing contrasts with the gradual shift from one subject to the next, or topic shading (Schegloff 1990), that is likely to occur in conversation. Moreover, explicit cohesive devices, such as the phrases “the second point” or “in contrast,” are often used to link topic units together in academic essays, while conversation is more often replete with *discourse markers*—such as “well,” “oh,” and “so” (Schiffrin 1987)—to indicate organizational structure. At the lexicogrammatical level, Biber (1988, 1992) has found statistical evidence that the frequency with which specific grammatical structures occur differs between spoken and written genres. His method was to conduct computer-based searches of huge corpora of texts to discover sets of linguistic features common to various text types. Some of these characteristics may be traced to the differing functions that particular genres serve. As Kaplan (1987, 14) notes, because requests for information are less common in written language than in many spoken genres, patterns of question formation are more likely to be found in spoken discourse. To add other examples, scientific writing contains frequent nominalizations (Halliday 1988)—such as “the execution of the experiment,” rather than “we executed the experiment”—and many written genres are likely to include parallel structures, sentential organization, and embedded, instead of conjoined, clauses (Hatch 1992, elaborating on Ochs 1979).

Furthermore, the expression of emotion and attitude is different in spoken versus written genres. In speaking, one can rely more on facial expressions, gestures, and prosody—the pitch, timing, and volume of the voice—to convey a variety of meanings and emotions (Wennerstrom 2001). Although written genres can be equally expressive, such expressions must be conveyed either through more elaborate lexicogrammatical descriptions or through punctuation, special fonts, and so on. A related difference involves the relationship between the speaker/writer and the audience. Spontaneous conversation tends to involve a continual negotiation of what direction the interaction will take next, as each participant responds verbally or non-verbally to the last contribution. In the case of a misunderstanding, for example, one speaker can immediately indicate that clarification is needed, and the other can repair or otherwise redirect what has been said (Clark 1992). Likewise, one person’s feedback to another’s remark can affect the direction the topic takes. In most genres of writing, in contrast, it is necessary to imagine the audience reaction. Planning, composing, and revising with the audience in mind are

part of the process. Thus, as Kaplan (1987, 17) notes, a written text may be “merely a waystage” in the evolution of a finished written product. In general, writers have more opportunity than speakers to review, revise, or otherwise “polish” their output. This generalization does not apply universally, as there are genres of speaking, such as formal speeches, that involve composing and polishing, as well as genres of writing, such as list making and form filling, that may be relatively spontaneous. Moreover, the luxury of revision is not necessarily an advantage, because there is higher audience expectation for written genres. In conversation, participants expect false starts, hesitations, slips of the tongue, and so on as a natural part of the interaction, whereas readers of finished written products may be less tolerant of these so-called errors.

Discourse and the Second Language Writer

How do the preceding facts about discourse come into play in a situation of adult second language learning? At the purely structural level, Fine (1988) points out that part of one’s cultural knowledge is an awareness of how genres of discourse are organized. Members of a speech community develop *schemata*—sets of expectations based on repeated experiences—for the rhetorical patterns of written genres. For example, when American readers read a newspaper article in English, they expect that the first paragraph is likely to contain a bare-bones summary of the news story and that later paragraphs will provide further details. They also expect a general-to-specific paragraph structure. Such knowledge of rhetorical conventions facilitates cognitive processing, in that as the readers read and listen, they are able to locate key elements and predict what the structure will be (Fine 1988, 13).

However, many scholars, starting with Kaplan (1966), have claimed that rhetorical patterns are not necessarily the same cross-culturally. Indeed, the field of contrastive rhetoric (Connor 1996; Kaplan 1966; Leki 1991) is devoted to the comparison of culturally based conventions of discourse. Claims about the influence of culture on rhetorical patterns involve many aspects of discourse: the sequencing of sentences (McClure, Mason, and Williams 1983), the use of discourse markers (Fine 1988), the overall organization of ideas into “discourse blocs” (Connor 1996, 32), the presentation of facts and how they are supported (Leki 1992), and even the degree of effort

that the writer versus the reader is expected to make to ensure that the communication is clear (Hinds 1987). This suggests that a second language learner who has developed rhetorical schemata in one language may be hindered in language processing at the discourse level in another language. Information presented in an unfamiliar rhetorical pattern may also be more difficult to retain in long-term memory (Eggington 1987). Likewise, second language writers who follow the rhetorical strategies of their heritage culture may find that audiences from other backgrounds misinterpret or devalue their writing, by judging it according to their own cultural expectations (Connor 1996, 167).

In sum, the cultural knowledge students need to communicate effectively, or their “sociolinguistic competence” (Kramsch 1993), includes a knowledge of how to use genres of discourse in context. The stakes in this regard can be quite high, because the genres of a community often serve a gatekeeping function. Swales (1990) points out that community membership is constituted in the ability to use genres appropriately; he focuses his discussion on the academic community, where the writing of such genres as abstracts, research reports, and grant proposals constitutes the very activities of the community and delineates the options for participation. Thus, an effective strategy for language learning is to become familiar with the genres of discourse, their conventional structure, and the norms for how and by whom they are used in the context of the surrounding community.

A discourse analysis approach to the teaching of ESL writing can, therefore, provide strong advantages to students. First, with a focus on the organization and content of discourse, this approach explicitly addresses the rhetorical differences among culturally based writing conventions in a variety of genres. Students can analyze the macro-structure of discourse samples from the surrounding culture in order to understand the rhetorical strategies that contribute to their overall coherence. In this way, they develop and enhance their own schemata for these genres. To paraphrase Johns (1997, 27–28), it is through repeated experience of processing, producing, and reflecting on texts that we become familiar with the genres of our communities, and when students engage in a variety of genre-based activities, they develop increasingly sophisticated knowledge for how to approach future texts of a similar nature.

A second advantage of a discourse analysis approach is that it provides opportunities for intensive study of grammar and lexicon in

context. Ellis (1995, 90) proposes that the progress of students learning a second language is influenced by the students' "noticing" of target structures and by their "cognitive comparison" of these and their own interlanguage structures. As Ellis explains, such comparisons "serve as a mechanism for disconfirming or confirming hypotheses in implicit knowledge." A discourse analysis approach can facilitate this type of cognitive comparison: it allows students to trace through a text to analyze particular grammatical structures. As noted earlier, work by Biber has demonstrated that genres of discourse vary in the frequency with which different lexicogrammatical patterns occur. Therefore, by varying writing assignments among several genres, students can be exposed to numerous lexical and grammatical structures. Within each genre, students can target particular structures for analysis as is appropriate for their level of language proficiency. For example, in discourse analysis 8-C in part 2 of this volume, students analyze modal auxiliaries used in emails of request (e.g., "could you possibly . . ."). By examining multiple examples of modals in different email messages, they can draw conclusions about the grammar and pragmatics of these structures. Vocabulary can also be a focus of the analysis. In discourse analysis 9-B, students search for words and phrases used to make contrasts in academic texts and apply these to their own assignments. Approaches to the teaching of writing that center on a single genre are missing the lexicogrammatical variety offered by a genre-based discourse analysis approach.

A third advantage of a discourse analysis approach is that students can become more critically aware of the social structure and ideologies of the culture or community that produced the discourse. Students are then in a better position to make informed choices about how they would like to interact with the dominant culture or present themselves in it. As Norton Peirce (1995) notes, by better understanding the power relations of the dominant culture, students may discover avenues of participation where they might otherwise have been marginalized. The writing class can become a forum for a discussion of cultural values.

Students as Discourse Analysts

In a discourse analysis approach, students are encouraged to take an active role as language analysts, or—as Riggenbach (1999) expresses it—ethnographers. In other words, they study language in detail in the context in which it occurs and draw conclusions about the social structure and ideologies of the culture that produced it. Many other

applied linguists have advocated the role of ethnographer for the ESL student (e.g., Benesch 1996; Johns 1997; Liebman 1988; Norton Peirce 1995; Roberts et al. 2001; Silberstein 1984; van Lier 1988). Liebman (1988), who used an ethnographic approach to the teaching of academic writing, lauds the increased cultural awareness that the approach fosters, as well as the broader repertoire of rhetorical choices with which students become familiar. She also cites the high level of motivation of students involved in an ethnographic project.

[I]t provided an opportunity for the students to write in a meaningful and interesting context. They were engaged in the topic, and they felt they were doing important work. (17)

Similarly, Riggenbach (1999) stresses the importance of the researcher role in increasing student motivation.

[P]roviding learners with the tools to develop language research skills can appeal to their autonomy, build confidence, and tap into their natural inquisitiveness. If learners invest in their own learning process by observing “real” language interactions (spoken and written), by reflecting critically on these and their own language exchanges, and by collaborating on and reviewing what they have observed, the result can be an energizing and validating experience. (14–15)

Riggenbach also emphasizes that the analytical approach is suited to many adults’ inductive learning styles. As she explains, the point of this approach is that students are not handed down “correct” answers but, rather, are encouraged to analyze the complexity of language in context. She writes:

[M]any of the activities have no one right or wrong conclusion. A primary goal of these discourse analysis activities is to stimulate student interest in language, to develop learners’ confidence in their own abilities to “discover” truths about the structure of language, and to help raise learners’ consciousness not only about the structure of language but also about their own linguistic strengths and weaknesses. (47)

In this sense, the discourse analysis approach rejects the one-way “transmission model” of education (as does Friere 1970), in favor of a more dynamic exchange of information about cultural traditions. As I explain in more detail in chapter 3, in the discourse analysis approach, the instructor takes on the role of planner and facilitator of the activities, while the students themselves work as analysts.

For many students involved in the language learning process, the role of ethnographer or cultural analyst is more interesting and empowering than the role of a mere novice. According to Schumann's view (1976, 1978), a large component of success in language acquisition is the extent to which learners acculturate to the dominant culture. In his acculturation model, the degree of affiliation the learner establishes with respect to the target community, which depends on social and psychological distance, affects language acquisition. Norton Peirce (1995), however, critiques Schumann on the grounds that his view of acculturation puts most of the responsibility for social and psychological distance on the shoulders of the individual learner. She points out that the political power structures of the dominant culture in relation to the learner's culture greatly affect what that contact will be like. If a learner is positioned by the dominant culture as an alien, a minority, or in other ways an outsider, an individual may be at a loss to decrease social distance, regardless of personal motivation. Norton Peirce argues:

[T]heories of communicative competence in the field of second language learning should extend beyond an understanding of the appropriate rules of use in a particular society, to include an understanding of the way rules of use are socially and historically constructed to support the interest of a dominant group within a given society. (18)

A discourse analysis approach, with its emphasis on cultural study, is compatible with a deeper sensitivity to such issues of social power. This approach encourages students to study the surrounding culture in an ethnographic sense, under instructor guidance. Assignments used under this approach commence with discussion questions so that students can evaluate, for better or worse, how various genres of writing are used and what purposes they serve in preserving the institutions of the culture being studied. For many students, the heightened awareness and understanding of the ideologies and conventions of the surrounding culture may allow them to reconsider their own position and choices about participation. The hope is that, in Norton Peirce's words, "they may learn to transform social practices of marginalization" (27). From the perspective of cultural analyst or ethnographer, students can begin to view society as a system of communities with social practices and can discover new ways to "claim the right to speak [and write]" (*ibid.*) in those communities of practice (see Roberts et al. 2001 for a similar perspective).

In sum, a discourse analysis approach teaches language learners to analyze discourse in a purposeful way—in order to discover those linguistic features that are pertinent to their own language development and in order to become more aware of the value system of the culture that produced the discourse. This approach considers language structure at both the micro and the macro levels. The focus on genre provides a rich variety in the forms and purposes of the texts students encounter. It is hoped that in viewing the discourse of the surrounding culture as an object of study, students will gain a sense of control over their language development, making informed choices about how to use language to meet their needs in a variety of social contexts.

Organization of This Book

This chapter has suggested several advantages of using discourse analysis activities that take genre into account in high-intermediate to advanced ESL writing classes. Students themselves can take an active role in analyzing the discourse of the kinds of writing that are relevant to their lives. Chapter 2 addresses the topic of genre in more depth. As we have seen, genres serve social purposes and tend to have conventionalized features. By exploring a variety of genres, students can become more versatile as writers, as they familiarize themselves with the ways in which the surrounding culture has organized its written activities. Chapter 2 also traces the history of the popular “process approach” in writing pedagogy, to suggest that a genre approach can add a more practical, task-based orientation. Successful writing is the result not only of native creativity but also of a knowledge of conventional modes of expression. Researchers in language learning argue that because these conventions are culturally constructed, they are learned (and therefore learnable). By conducting discourse analysis activities in a variety of genres, students become more aware of how writing practices respond to social needs and of how they can apply their skills to improve their writing in these genres.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the practical aspects of the writing class itself. Principles are there outlined for how to organize and conduct discourse analysis activities and how to effectively promote teamwork among students. Following these principles, students move from a research phase, in which they collect and analyze discourse

samples from the culture around them, to a composition phase, in which they draft their own writing, taking advantage of what they have learned from the analysis. Revision and editing are encouraged as students again apply discourse analysis techniques in reviewing their own and their peers' written work. Many additional activities are suggested to enhance the learning process and to integrate other skill areas into the writing class. Chapter 3 concludes with a discussion of how to adapt discourse analysis activities and create new ones.

Part 2 of this book presents a variety of sample assignments and activities, with detailed instructions for carrying them out. The assignments are divided into two chapters, one involving writing in everyday life and the other on academic writing. The sample activities are meant to illustrate how the approach can work; however, instructors are encouraged to adapt them for their own situations. Chapter 4 provides a series of writing assignments in nonacademic genres, including formal letters, recipes, and informational brochures. Each assignment begins with a discussion of the social purposes of these genres and the cultural factors surrounding their use. The activities guide students through the process of collecting examples of these genres of writing in their "native" contexts and analyzing, comparing, and evaluating these samples. The analysis activities cover a range of topics. At the macro level, many activities involve the overall cohesion and organization of the writing, as well as pragmatic issues of politeness, persuasion, and audience. At the micro level, grammar and vocabulary activities help students focus on the finer details of linguistic structure. In the application phase, students assess their own writing needs and reformulate for the purposes of their own compositions what they have learned in their discussions and data analysis. Finally, revising, editing, and in some cases even publishing of the writing is encouraged.

Chapter 5 provides a series of academic writing assignments. These begin with a genre that is used before one even begins college: the college application essay. Other assignments include email communications, descriptions of graphs, and, for more advanced graduate students, research abstracts. The activities encourage students to discover the purposes and conventions of these genres of academic discourse and to collect samples for analysis. Students are then given techniques for analyzing these samples and applying their findings to their own academic assignments. As in chapter 4, the focus of the activities ranges from the macro level of understanding the global

role of academic writing in context to the micro level of discovering specific lexicogrammatical features in the texts.

For Teachers: Discussion Questions

1. How might you define the term *discourse* in simple terms for a language student?
2. This chapter states that a random group of sentences does not constitute discourse. What are some mechanisms in written language that serve to link the words, clauses, or paragraphs together, or—as some say—to provide “cohesion” to a text? Find a short newspaper article and search for actual examples. How might you explain the examples to a language student?
3. Think of examples of a single word or phrase (e.g., “Bull” in the example in this chapter) that can take on a completely different meaning depending on context and social purpose. How might you explain the examples to a language student?
4. Several differences between spoken and written genres of discourse have been mentioned in this chapter. Under what circumstances might it be an advantage to speak rather than write or to listen rather than read? What are the implications of the differences for language teaching?
5. This chapter claims that “communities develop norms and conventions for speaking and writing that are usually taken for granted as ‘natural’ within that group.” Do you agree with this statement? Think of a community in which you felt like an outsider. What was considered “natural” in that group but seemed unusual to you? Now think of a community to which you belong. What do members of this community take for granted that might not seem “natural” to a newcomer?
6. Think of examples of how the values of your culture are manifest in its discourse. Consider organizational structures, the topics considered appropriate, and vocabulary choices, among other features of the discourse.
7. Discuss evidence (from your teaching, language study, or other life experience) for the claim that the rhetorical structures and conventions of written discourse differ from culture

to culture. Is this claim true for all writers and types of writing, or are there exceptions?

8. How do you understand the term *social distance* as a factor in language acquisition? Where do you place the responsibility for social distance—in the motivation of the learner, in the social structures of society, or in both? What are the implications for language teaching if opinion tends toward one end of the spectrum or the other?

Suggested Readings

Celce-Murcia, M., and E. Olshtain. 2000. *Discourse and context in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

The authors of this book recommend that language teachers incorporate an awareness of discourse and pragmatics into their teaching if they truly wish to implement a communicative approach. After two introductory chapters on discourse and pragmatics, the authors show how a discourse perspective can enhance the teaching of traditional areas of linguistic knowledge (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary) and the teaching of language processing skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking). Within this perspective, they also discuss curriculum development, language assessment, and classroom research. This book includes discussion questions and activities at the end of each chapter.

Connor, U. 1996. *Contrastive rhetoric: Cross-cultural aspects of second language writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This book outlines and reviews several approaches to contrastive rhetoric. It demonstrates that rhetorical patterns differ cross-culturally on many levels and that the writing patterns of one's primary language and culture are likely to influence writing in a second language. Taking a broad view of rhetoric, Connor suggests that ESL educators need to be aware of how these differences can affect student reading and writing. This book is well researched and provides an excellent resource on the topic of contrastive rhetoric.

Hatch, E. 1992. *Discourse analysis and language education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This practical book, designed for instructors of ESL and other languages, outlines several of the major areas of inquiry in the field of discourse analysis. Hatch provides questions and hands-on activities for each area, so that readers can actually collect and analyze discourse in context. In so doing, they can become more aware of the issues involved in discourse analysis and of the cultural basis of many discourse-level aspects of language. Hatch argues that ESL education should include discourse-level topics, and gives suggestions for how to teach students to use spoken and written discourse more effectively.

McCarthy, M. 1991. *Discourse analysis for language teachers*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

The author of this book offers a range of approaches for analyzing discourse, with the goal of providing language instructors with a thorough understanding of the subject. This book breaks language down into skill areas, such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, and provides analysis activities for each area. There is also a chapter on the analysis of spoken interaction, including turn taking, storytelling, and other aspects of informal talk. McCarthy provides many samples of authentic discourse, as well as analysis tasks for practice.

Riggenbach, H. 1999. *Discourse analysis in the language classroom*. Vol. 1, *The spoken language*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

This companion volume to the present book focuses on spoken, rather than written, discourse. It outlines a rationale for having students themselves explore their own and others' spoken interactions, analyzing both micro and macro features. Riggenbach gives many practical discourse analysis activities for the ESL classroom, in which students are taught to tape-record and transcribe natural speech for analysis. She argues that discourse analysis provides a means of improving communicative competence, putting language development under the learner's control. Volumes 1 and 2 can be used individually or in tandem.

Roberts, C., M. Byram, A. Barro, S. Jordan, and B. Street. 2001. *Language learners as ethnographers*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

This fascinating book outlines an ethnographic approach to the study of language and culture from a social constructivist perspective. After a thorough discussion of the philosophy behind the approach, a particular case, the Ealing Ethnography Project, is examined in detail. Language learners who participated in this program lived abroad and employed ethnographic methods to analyze the everyday social practices of a subculture of the society in which they lived. Simultaneously, they developed their communicative competence within that culture. The authors of this book argue that ethnography leads to a richer language socialization experience and a deeper intellectual understanding of the complex relationships among language, culture, and identity.

van Dijk, T., ed. 1997. *Discourse studies: A multidisciplinary introduction*. 2 vols. London: Sage.

In this two-volume series, van Dijk presents a comprehensive collection of articles on the structural, social, cultural, and political aspects of discourse analysis. In both volumes, van Dijk has recruited distinguished lists of contributors, including many top scholars in the field. Volume 1, *Discourse as structure and process*, centers on discourse structure, asking how form and function interrelate. This book includes such topics as genre, cognition, argumentation, semantics, and semiotics. In volume 2, *Discourse as social interaction*, which deals with the sociocultural aspects of discourse, the issues covered include critical discourse analysis, conversation analysis, gender and discourse, institutional discourse, and discourses of ethnicity, culture, and racism. Readers will appreciate van Dijk's introductions to these volumes, which give thorough and accessible overviews of the field.