Writing Styles of Second Language Learners

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Some twenty-five years ago, it occurred to me that non-native speakers of English, when they wrote in English, could compose texts that were to a significant degree grammatically correct but were nonetheless substantially different from the texts composed by native speakers of English. By looking at these texts intensively, I found that speakers of particular languages did more or less similar things and that the things they did were consistently different from the things native English speakers did. I hypothesized that these differences had to originate in the structure of those other languages.

Initially, it seemed that most of the difference could be described in terms of the surface differences between languages: that is, given that the surface verb structure of Chinese was significantly different from the surface verb structure of English, one would anticipate differences in the way verbs were used in the two languages, and one would anticipate that such differences would lead to apparent variations in the text realizations. But surface differences in the uses of articles and prepositions, in the uses of verbs, in the position of modifiers, and the like account for only a small part of the variance. Something else appeared to be happening.

Further analysis suggested that each language came fully equipped with a complex set of rhetorical rules. These rhetorical rules are much more flexible than the syntactic rules of any particular language, that is, there are many ways in any particular language for accomplishing a given discourse objective. Further it is clear that any discourse objective that can be accomplished in one language can be accomplished in any other language. The problem lies in the fact that readers of particular languages will not accept all of the available solutions. It isn't that various solutions are impossible; rather, it is that certain solutions are undesirable because they invoke sociolinguistic reactions that are anathema to the discourse objective.

At approximately the same time, historically, the U. S. was beginning to recognize that it was not a monolingually English speaking community but rather that it was a multilingual community and that some segments of its population were being (at least) deprived of equal opportunities for access to education because they were linguistically isolated from main-stream schooling. Teachers in those early, allegedly bilingual, programs were discovering that there were certain features of spoken language behavior that were also causing problems. Some teachers discovered, for example, that the varieties spoken by certain groups of Southwestern Native Americans lacked the slot for an initial politeness markers: for example, in the utterance

1. please give me a pencil
speakers of some languages weren't aware of the English discourse rule requiring the please and as a consequence sounded rude to native English-speaking teachers.

2. _____ gimme a pencil.
But the spoken-language situation is confounded by the co-existence of a large number of other variables, and as a consequence a great deal of effort was invested, appropriately, in paralinguistic features like proxemics, gestural systems, and the like. Although some attention was also given to linguistic features, the attention tended to focus on phonological and syntactic elements and not on discourse elements.
Written discourse is different from spoken discourse in a number of important ways. First, it is, of necessity, stripped of all the feedback loops available in spoken language: that is, the writer normally is not looking at his/her audience and is therefore unable to correct in the light of the audience's signals in terms of glance, body posture, gesture, and the like, and the writer is not able to respond immediately to direct questions from the reader. But in addition to this important difference, written language tends to serve a different set of discourse purposes: after all, we do not generally exchange notes when we are in sufficiently close proximity to talk together—except during committee meetings when our talking might be disturbing to the group, so we find ourselves obliged to pass notes. Even in that circumstance, what we write in those notes is different from what we might have said. It can be generalized that written language is more carefully planned than spoken language (e.g., everyone has observed the phenomenon of the writer, pencil in hand, staring into space and trying to articulate the appropriate message, or placing the pencil somewhere in the vicinity of the mouth, perhaps to draw inspiration from the vocal organ), and it can be observed and generalized that written language is, in some senses at least, more "formal" than spoken language. Research conducted by Biber (1984) over a massive corpus, and by Grabe (1985), (and more recently others) shows that there are important linguistic differences between spoken and written language, too complex for me to attempt to summarize here.

Still another important difference lies in the history of written language as compared with the history of spoken language. Although the evidence is incomplete, it is probably the case that spoken language as we know it came into existence something like 100,000 years ago; the archaeological evidence supports that claim in terms of changes in the shape and size of the brain cavity and in terms of changes in the buccal cavity. It is likely, however, that humanoids had elaborate call systems for many millions of years before that; that assumption is based on the evidence that the species has engaged in group hunting over most of its existence, as far back as our Australopithecine ancestors. Group hunting requires the ability among the hunters to inform each other of where they are in relation to the game, what direction they are moving in, how fast they are going, and what their intention is, all suggestive of the use of some sort of fairly sophisticated oral communication system. But writing, by contrast, is no more than 10,000 years old.

When writing came into use, its first functions were associated with various kinds of book-keeping; subsequently, it took on a number of magical and religious functions, initially serving merely to record blessings, oaths, or curses, but later becoming the repository for entire bodies of religious lore. It is not an accident that our oldest written records seem to include the Bible and other religious writing. Since literacy was very limited, writing served the needs of those who were literate, and that group tended to include largely the clergy. As recently as the 16th century, it was not uncommon for kings, and certainly queens, to be illiterate and to depend on the literate clergy to keep records; it is not an accident that Kings used royal seals—they did so because they could not sign their names. The relatively more recent advent of the Protestant faiths was significantly responsible for the more general spread of literacy because this group believed that one had to have personal access to the gospels in order to achieve salvation. It is for this reason that one of the earliest acts of the Protestant settlers in North America was to set up schools in the midst of what they perceived as a howling wilderness, and it explains why they have been described as perhaps the most literate community in history.

As writing has evolved, it has taken on more and more specialized functions, as well as a life of its own distinct from oral language. It is absolutely essential that teachers and students recognize that important fact. Richard Rodriguez, in his lyrical autobiography called Hunger of Memory, makes the important point that the child comes to school speaking a private language—the language of the home and of the heart—and has to learn, in a remarkable short time, to manage a public language—not
only the language of school, but the language of the impersonal world; it is this latter language that carries the important additional functions of written language, and so the child is gradually led to use of written text.

With respect to written language, one can differentiate several controlling phenomena: written language is organized in terms of whom it is addressed to, of what its mode is, and of what its channel is. It is necessary to define each of these parameters. First, with respect to audience, one can talk to oneself, to one known other, to one unknown or generalized other, to a small group of known others, to a small group of unknown others, and to a large group of unknown others. Second, with respect to mode one can engage in the act of writing either without composing or with composing, and when one is engaged in writing with composing it is possible to differentiate between the intent of giving information or the intent of somehow altering information—or, to put it in Scardamalia and Beriter's terms, between "knowledge telling" and "knowledge transforming." Third, with respect to channel, it is important to differentiate between form filling and list making on the one hand and the writing of letters, sermons, scholarly articles, novels and short stories, and poems on the other. Perhaps a few examples will help to make this taxonomy clearer.

Virtually every week, my wife makes up a shopping list. It does not require any composing because it is merely a list of brief noun phrases. It is addressed to herself: since her world knowledge is exactly coterminous with the world knowledge of her intended audience, there is no need for any sort of elaboration. And its channel is the typical English-language list mode—that is, the noun phrases are arranged on paper in a single long column. On the relatively rare occasion when she is for some reason unable to do the shopping, I become the audience for the shopping list. Our world knowledges do not exactly overlap, so she has to annotate the noun phrases in order for me to understand them. In these circumstances, the item milk becomes one half gallon of low-fat milk with the most remote shelf date I can find, and the item dog food becomes six medium-sized cans of whatever is on sale this week. In the normal act of creating a shopping list, then, she has addressed herself, writing without composing, and using the list mode.

While it not possible here to offer an exhaustive taxonomy, it is possible to exemplify it: thus, one may write a diary, which is an example of writing with composing to one's self as an audience, or one may write a letter to a personal friend, or a note to the teacher; the former being an example of writing to one known other with composing, the latter of writing to one generalized or unknown other without much composing (e.g., "John had a temperature yesterday") One may write to the members of the alumni association to ask for money or one may compose a sermon; the former being an example of writing with composing to an unknown or generalized audience, the latter of writing with composing to a small known audience. One may compose a talk of the sort represented by this text or fill out one's income tax forms; the former being an example of writing with composing—yes, I did compose this text—to a larger unknown audience, the latter an example of writing without composing for a large unknown audience (the entire anonymous IRS, including the specific unknown person who will eventually audit you). Not to belabor the point, one may write an article for publication in the TESOL Quarterly, which is an example of writing with composing for "knowledge telling," or one may write a poem or a short story or a novel, which is an example of writing with composing for "knowledge transforming." It is possible to go on, but in the interests of time I will stop at this point in the taxonomy, hoping that these few examples help to establish the point and inviting you to develop the rest of the taxonomy for yourselves at your leisure.

There are two additional important points to make. The first point is that this taxonomy is not immediately transparent; that is, children and second-language learners will not immediately perceive the existence of the taxonomy, nor will they be able to work it all out for themselves without any help. It is not the case that the
knowledge underlying this taxonomy can be readily acquired; rather, it is probable that the necessary knowledge has to be made explicit—that it has to be taught. The second point is that, characteristically, the school system neither recognizes the existence of this taxonomy nor pays any attention to it in terms of curriculum construction. If you will consider for a moment the writing that you typically do, I believe you will agree that a substantial portion of your writing experience through the extent of your literate lives has involved writing without composing and that a considerably smaller portion of your writing experience that involves writing with composing has been focused on "knowledge telling."

Informal research over the past few years with a number of audiences of English speakers—both native and non-native—suggests that typical English speakers write virtually nothing that requires composing to any significant degree. Teachers, in particular, do great quantities of form-filling in relation to students' performance and grades, do a fair amount "memo" writing, but do virtually no extended "composing." Both teachers and non-teachers do writing tasks involving filling out personnel forms, income tax forms, and the like, write brief messages on Christmas cards, but rarely are engaged in writing "articles" in any extended format, though some do write brief pieces for school or church-related newsletters and other similar publications. Studies among professional accountants, for example, show that their non-accounting writing is almost entirely limited to memos. Even university professors in the majority of academic disciplines, while they are expected to "publish or perish," do relatively little "knowledge transforming" and tend to write in rather formulary ways as required by the professional journals in which they publish. But the school curriculum regularly stresses writing with composing for the purpose of "knowledge transforming"; indeed, it pays virtually no attention whatsoever to writing without composing (but we are amazed when high school graduates cannot fill out a job application), and without having taught "knowledge telling," it assumes that learners will be able to undertake "knowledge transforming."

Further, the school system is guilty of another important confusion. In school, children are often encouraged to write some sort of fiction—whether the given topic is "what I did last weekend," or "where I went for my last summer vacation," or "my favorite character." Now it is likely that story telling is a universal human phenomenon; as far as the evidence is available, it appears that all cultures tell stories. One of the characteristics of stories with which we are familiar is that they tend to be organized in some sort of chronological sequence; many human beings seem to perceive time as a unidirectional flow. Broadly defined, a story is the interaction over time of two or more characters, so the writer's task is to describe the characters and then to describe their interaction over a chronologically sequenced set of encounters—think of the story of the three little pigs and the big bad wolf. It is true, of course, that great novels have some of the same characteristics, but their primary function is not merely to narrate some sequence of events but rather to provide some "knowledge transforming" such that the world is significantly changed because the novel exists—though what I am describing need not be a "novel" in the technical sense; think of Hamlet as an example. While children are taught to write simple narratives, they are expected to learn from writing such simple narratives, how to write complex "knowledge transforming" texts. There is clear evidence that, as grammatical knowledge is not sufficient to composing, so narrative writing is not sufficient to learning how to write complex analytic texts. Children are not taught a sufficient variety of "knowledge telling" contexts, and they are rarely taught "knowledge transforming" contexts at all.

Still another confusion arises from disputes among scholars. In recent years there has been a great deal of debate about what is called the "product/process" dichotomy. Product advocates are alleged to stress the finished composition and to be disinterested in how it got composed; process advocates are described as being solely concerned with the way in which texts get composed and to be disinterested in the output. It is, of
course, possible that such people exist, but the debate has been extravagantly exaggerated. Indeed, every product is the outcome of a process, and every process results in some sort of product. In fact, there probably is no "ultimate" product; every piece of work goes on being revised as long as the writer remains interested in the topic. Let me suggest to you that this text is only the latest version of the paper I first wrote in 1966; lest you find that hard to believe, I urge you to look at the variorum editions of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* which clearly show that he continued to tinker with every poem he had ever written right up to within days of his death. A product looks finished when it appears in some "printed format," whether that format is a typescript page or a formal printed page, but the fact is that even the finality of print may not be the end of the process. My point is that the process/product dichotomy has been exaggerated out of all proportion; every writing teacher needs to be concerned both with the stages the student goes through in trying to compose a text and with the outcome of that process in whatever form it may exist for the moment.

All of these matters frame research in writing. It is now pretty well recognized that literate speakers of other languages when they write in English create texts that are significantly different from the kinds of texts native English speakers produce. Some of the causes of those differences have been discovered. For example, John Hinds has proposed a typology of languages based on relative reader/writer responsibility. Hinds suggests that, in certain languages, the writer is fairly free to assume an extensive shared world-knowledge and consequently to leave it to readers to work out his meaning; in such circumstances, readers expect to be left with work to do and are annoyed and disappointed when they are told too much. On the other hand, certain languages require the writer to assume very little and to supply a great deal. Japanese is an example of a reader-responsible language, while English is an example of a writer-responsible language. It is easy to illustrate a writer-responsible language to English speakers. When my wife and I were living in Hong Kong, we did not bother to acquire a television set because there is very limited television access in Hong Kong; as a consequence, we were dependent on radio for our daily increment of news. The most readily available radio news was the BBC world news, and I would argue that it is a perfect example of writer-responsible text; for example, the news begins, after identification as BBC world news, with the following:

3a. And now, the news. First, the main points: 1...
3b. Those were the main points; and now the details: 1...
3c. That is the news at this hour. And now a summary of the main points:
1....Virtually nothing is left to the imagination; it is the writer's responsibility to supply as much as possible so that there can be no misunderstanding. (The example is a bit unfair, since news broadcasting requires minimal ambiguity, but it is a clear example of writer-responsible text.) There are many examples of Japanese text, even from newspapers, for example, which is very different, and in which the writer feels obliged to leave a great deal unsaid so that the reader can participate actively in the creation of the meaning of the text. Perhaps the most obvious example is the Japanese poetic form known as *Haiku*, but there are many less specialized examples as well.

If Japanese is an example of reader-responsible text and English is an example of writer-responsible text, some languages, like Chinese, seem to be in transition from reader-responsibility to writer-responsibility. Again, while I was living in Hong Kong, my students contributed to my education by requiring me to read prize-winning short-stories from the PRC written immediately after the end of the cultural revolution; these stories are startling in their differences from more traditional Chinese stories because these new stories are extremely explicit, leaving little to the reader's imagination.
But relative reader/writer responsibility is only one example of the kinds of
differences which have been identified in text. Differences have been found in the
relative amount of tangential information that can be introduced into a text. For
example, English appears to tolerate relatively little tangential material—English
writers are expected to "stick to the point"; on the other hand, Spanish writers feel
free to bring in large quantities of less directly related information. It seems to be
the case that the Spanish writer feels obliged to qualify him/herself as an expert and
therefore needs to demonstrate the range of his/her erudition. Please understand that
no value judgment is involved here. It is not a question of whether writer-responsible
text is better than reader-responsible text or whether lean text is better that more
leisurely text. The point is merely that users of different languages expect different
things from their texts. Furthermore, it is not the case that lean texts cannot be
written in Spanish or that writer-responsible texts cannot be written in Japanese;
rather, it is the case that writing lean texts in Spanish would violate certain norms
and would cause readers to respond to the text in unexpected ways.

Another difference relates to the way topic is identified in text. Consider the
following example:

4. Once upon a time there was a lovely young princess who lived in a castle in a
far away kingdom. The castle was built by her Uncle Hernando who was an
architect in a nearby city. He was also a good family man and a fine swimmer
and competed many times against Johnny Weismuller during the 1920s.

The first sentence of this little text begins with the opener "Once upon a time," a text
structure that, in English, suggests that start of a fairy tale. The remainder of the
sentence, in which the "lovely young princess" is the real grammatical subject, is
entirely acceptable in the context of the fairy tale. One is led to expect that the rest
of the text will have something to do with the princess. But the second sentence is
about the castle. Now that the word castle in the first sentence is the object of a
preposition in a relative clause; that is not, under the best of circumstances, a focal
position, and it is entirely unexpected for the topic to be picked up out of such a
position. (The introduction of Uncle Hernando—not a name commonly invoked in
English fairy tales—and his identification as an architect—not a profession commonly
invoked in fairy tales—suggest that there may be some other problems with the text.)
The next sentence shifts topic yet again—now the topic is Uncle Hernando and his
achievements as a family man and as a swimmer. We can now be fairly certain that
the text is not a fairy tale (in part at least because a recent historical time frame is
introduced versus the timeless past implicit in the once upon a time opener of the
typical fairy tale); more importantly, we can see that the text does not follow the
normal rules of topic structure in English. The text has a certain coherence, but it is
a slightly manicar coherence.

The point, however, is that there obviously are topicalization rules in English. If
there were not, the example I have just given you would not seem odd. In some other
languages—Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, for example—topic is marked by the
introduction of a grammatical particle. It is easy to define the limits of a topic under
these circumstances—the topic runs from the introduction of one topic-marking particle
to the introduction of the next. Further, since it is apparent what the topic is, it
should not be necessary to refer to it constantly; as a matter of fact, Japanese is what
is called a "pro-drop" language—that is, it is possible to delete pronoun reference, and
indeed the kind of pronoun reference required in English would be redundant. (I'm
not suggesting that this explanation accounts for all pro-drop phenomena; Spanish is
also a pro-drop language, but it does not use a grammatical particle to identify topic.)
English does not use grammatical marking to identify topic either; on the contrary,
one kind of English topic marking rule is oddly exemplified in the text about the
princess, but another kind of topic identification also occurs—a type based on the
movement of elements. In the following example:

5a. On the platform, the two men were talking.
5b. The two men were talking on the platform.

It is likely that the text following sentence 5a would concern itself with what is happening on the platform while the text following sentence 5b would concern itself with what the two men were talking about. The only difference between the two texts is the difference in placement of the locative prepositional phrase. This exemplifies another type of difference that occurs between languages.

Still another kind of difference lied in the preference in a particular language for the types of relationships among proposition that can exist. Commonly, propositional relationships reflect coordination, subordination, or superordination. Some languages, like English, appear to prefer to relate ideas in a large number of cases through subordination; indeed, one finds in conventional grammar texts statements to the effect that extensive coordination is a mark of immature style and that mature writers subordinate some very large proportion of their statements. Arabic, on the other hand, seems to evince a clear preference for coordination and a dispreference for subordinaton. In part this phenomenon has to do with available syntactic alternatives; English has a large inventory of items to mark subordinate relationships and a rather small inventory of items to mark coordinate relationships, while Arabic extensively uses the conjunct wa which literally means and. It would be inappropriate to attribute a causal relationship to that simple observation; the point is merely that written Arabic seems to use a great deal more coordination while written English uses a great deal more subordination. Again, the point is not that one type is preferable to another in some universal sense, or that one type is impossible in some particular language; subordination is possible in Arabic, and elaborate coordination is possible in English and was indeed, at the end of the 16th century, in high vogue (cf., John Lyly [1554?-1604], Euphuies, or the Anatomy of Wit, and Euphuies and his England, the titles giving rise to the lexical items euphuism/euphuistic.)

So far, the discussion has concerned what are normally identified as clearly different languages, and it is true that much of the research described grew out of a need to teach legally defined "foreign students" (those holding "F" or "J" visas) and much of that research was supported by the funds provided for teaching those students. It is, however, also true that there are populations residing in the U. S. who practice some of the writing patterns described and who turn up in bilingual programs in various parts of the country. In Los Angeles, where I practice, for example, there are high populations of speakers of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Spanish and Tagalog, as well as substantial numbers of speakers of Arabic. Thus, what has been learned about writing from studies of differences between clearly identified "languages" is of use in the bilingual classroom. Studies have now been conducted in a relatively large number of "languages": for example, in Arabic, Farsi, French, German, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Marathi, Russian, Spanish (Peninsular, Puerto Rican, Mexican, and Argentinian), and Tagalog. In addition to the published work, I am aware of other studies in progress, for example, in Mandarin where there now appears to be a great deal of interest. I myself have been trying to look at the way counter-factual statements work in Chinese and English as constituents of text—not as isolated syntactic structures. (Counter-factual statements are of the type

6. If Cleopatra's nose had been longer, the history of the world would have been different.)

Such statements occur in English with reasonable frequency, in such genre as sports writing; they are relatively rarer in Chinese, though certainly various sorts of conditional structures exist: e.g.,

7. If there were no Communist Party, there would be no new China.)
Very preliminary conclusions seem to suggest that the ways in which these structures function in the two languages are vastly different both in terms of the rhetorical purposes served and in terms of the relative frequency and distribution of the structures in text.

There has in addition been an increasing interest in what happens in so-called non-standard varieties of English and in different varieties of other languages (e.g., are Puerto Rican Spanish and Mexican Spanish identical in discourse structure, and is each more or less similar to Peninsular Spanish?) As a result of this growing interest, there are now in existence a number of studies that may seem more directly relevant to the work of bilingual teachers and to the work of teachers of basic literacy. One of the earliest studies is the well known comparison between Puerto Rican Spanish and English undertaken by Ramon Santiago as a Columbia Teachers College dissertation in the late 1960s: that was followed in rapid success by another comparative study of Puerto Rican Spanish and English by Sister Olga Santana Seda in an NYU dissertation and by still a third study of the same language pair by G. J. Strei (1971) presented at the TESOL Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico in the early 1970s. At the TESOL Conference in San Antonio in 1989, William Eggington reported on the writing of Australian Aboriginal people in English, and Maria Montaño-Harmon reported on her seminal study of the writing of Mexican-American children (that study available in full as a USC dissertation). Ms. Montaño-Harmon studied four groups of students drawn from 9th grade classes in 8 schools in this country and 2 in Mexico; specifically, she collected a corpus of texts from Mexican students in Mexico (monolingual Spanish speakers), Mexican students studying English as a second language in the U.S. (speakers of Mexican Spanish learning English), Mexican-American/Chicano students (dominate English speakers but who possess some relative degree of bilingualism in Spanish), and Anglo students (Monolingual English-speakers). She also devised and administered a lengthy language-use questionnaire to the total population. Her findings were extremely interesting; while it is impossible to do them justice in this brief discussion, I want to call particular attention to this important study. The whole study needs to be read in all fairness to the importance of her work, but the following is a brief summary of her conclusions:

A. Mexican students wrote significantly longer texts than any of the other groups, but the Anglo texts contained the largest number of sentences, while the sentences written by the Mexican students contained the greatest number of words.

B. Mexican students wrote the greatest number of "run-on" sentences, while Anglo students wrote both the greatest number of simple sentences and the greatest number of complex sentences.

C. With respect to lexical cohesion, Mexican students used significantly more synonyms than any of the other groups, but the Mexican-American group used by far (more than twice as often as any other group) the largest number of conversational markers.

D. Mexican students use significantly more markers of syntactic cohesion indicating additive and causal relationships.

E. Mexican students use significantly more enumerative, additive, and explicative relationships logically than any of the other groups.

While the Mexican group was significantly different from all the others (to be expected, since it was the only monolingual Spanish-speaking group), all of the groups differed from each other in important ways. While the Mexican-American/Chicano group was unlike the English-speaking group, it was also unlike the Spanish-speaking group. Montano-Harmon makes the following observations:
The results of this ... study ... show four linguistic groups in terms of language use; (1) Mexican students function in Spanish; (2) ESL students using both languages, with a dependence on Spanish for informal social interaction and a shift to English for formal academic needs; (3) Mexican-American/Chicano students relying mostly on English for both formal and informal social interaction and formal academic use, and (4) Anglo students functioning in English (1988:192).

The compositions written by Mexican-American/Chicano students differ from those of the other three groups. Their texts differ significantly from those of ESL students who function in Spanish and who are in the process of learning English as their second language, as well as from the compositions written by Anglo students whose texts most approximate the ... discourse pattern of American English. The most striking characteristic of the texts written by the Mexican-American/Chicano group is their oral tone. The use of a large number of conversational markers, run-on sentences, fragments, and digressions contributes to the conversational tone of the texts. These compositions also exhibit many instances of rhetorical questions answered by the writer, slang expressions, and unmarked direct discourse embedded in the indirect discourse of the text ... [Mexican-American/Chicano] compositions appear to be expressions in writing of the oral form of Chicano English used for social interaction, conversational in tone and casual in style (1988:193-194).

Montaño-Harmon offers the following text example as illustrative:

8. I did not think we should have to do all of those worksheets and so I asked the teacher why, she just said because I'm the teacher that's why. I don't think this is fair and so I go it's not fair and she says to me go to the office you have detention. Now I ask you, is this good teaching (1988:156)?

A similar orality, though rather differently structured, was reported by Egginton in his TESOL paper, noted above. Let me recall for you the discussion, somewhat earlier in these remarks, of Richard Rodriguez' notion of private language versus public language. It is possible to claim that what both Egginton and Montaño-Harmon found is extensive use of private language and little or no awareness of the need for, or the uses of, public language. Indeed, in some discussions of the uses of written English among Aboriginal people, written English is referred to as a "secret language" whose use English speakers guard against the intrusion of Aboriginal people.

I have now gone on at some length, and I have tried to cover a lot of ground. The points I have been trying to make are: (1) that there is a great deal of research on writing; (2) that a great deal of that research is pertinent to the bilingual and basic-literacy classroom, as well as to the ESL/EFL classroom, and (3) that a great deal of what is being done in the name of composition really has very little to do with teaching anybody now to manipulate extended text and remains much more embedded in the study of clause structures than in the study of discourse structures. I trust you have found these observations of some use. Thank you for your patience and interest. I can only hope that I have not too seriously violated your discourse expectations.
Bibliography


