Landscape and Myth: Definite Nominals and the Construal of Nature

Foster, John (Kagoshima University)

Cultural Linguistics views language and conceptualization as deeply entrenched in the modes of thought, frames and schemas of a community of speakers. An underlying kinship is assumed between language and certain fundamental properties and design architecture of the human mind. The goal of the current paper is to explore the degree to which specific linguistic constructions are tied to a culture’s nature myths. The utterances of several well-respected commentators on nature are analyzed for their use of designation, framing, reference point and grounding patterns. The discussion will begin with a detailed description for the source of the mode of thought, here a nature myth, and end with possible applications to such models of SLA as Task Based Learning and English for Specific Purposes.

Writing Development in G1-9 Bilingual Students: Academic Vocabulary Interdependency between English and Japanese

Sano, Aiko (Hokkaido University)
Thomson, Haidee (Victoria University of Wellington)

Writing proficiently in an academic register is important for academic achievement for all students, and it is no less so for second language (L2) learners. However, while abundant studies have revealed the interdependent nature of bilingual students’ linguistic abilities in reading, little research have been put forward in the area of writing to inform teaching practice for the ever growing population of bilingual children. Our research in progress aims at filling this gap by describing ways in which lexical and grammatical features that are characteristics of academic register develop in the two languages, and how they are related to each other, especially with a set of languages that are as typologically distant as English and Japanese. This presentation serves as an interim report of the study, with a special focus on the lexical aspect of such development. 242 sets of compositions in English and Japanese under the same topic were collected from bilingual students (G1-9). The qualitative aspects of the compositions were examined using analytic rubrics developed for the study. The number of words that appear in the Academic Word List (Coxhead, 2000) in English writing samples and the number of Kanji in the Japanese writings were also counted and compared as indicators of academic vocabulary. The correlation between the academic vocabularies in the two languages was moderately high, indicating that such development was taking place in an interdependent manner even though the two languages share no cognate relationship. Furthermore, such correlations proved to be higher for those students with high scores in both languages while not significant for students scoring low in both languages, indicating that while successful bilingual students are transferring the writing abilities in one language to the other, unsuccessful students are not. The pedagogical implications of these findings and topics for further research will be discussed.

Contrastive Rhetoric in the Writing Class: A Look at How Students’ L1 Background Affects their L2 Writing Proficiency

Brooks, Gavin (Kwansei Gakuin School of Policy Studies)

Although academic writing has long been a central component of English language courses in Japan many Japanese students still