

ITBE Newsletter

Comparing NES and NNES Written Speech Acts

Darcy Christianson

Studies suggest that teacher comments, over or along with corrections on student essays, are important in helping to guide and direct students toward effective writing (Johnson, 1992; Johnson and Roen, 1992; Mathison Fife and O'Neill, 2001; Reesor, 2002; Semke, 1982; Sirc, 1991; Soles, 2001). In addition, many agree that research on and analysis of written teacher feedback is important and has been mostly understudied (Hodges, 1997; Mathison Fife and O'Neill, 2001; Perpignan, 2003). Likewise, studies of speech act functions for written texts are rare and have been difficult (Johnson, 1992). Some attempts have compared compliments and politeness with peer-review texts between non-native

English speakers (Johnson, 1992) and analyzed compliments in peer reviews between non-native English speakers with variations in gender (Johnson and Roen, 1992; Sirc, 1991). These studies demonstrated that the compliment speech act is frequently used in peer reviews between non-native English speakers and more so with females than males. The females are more self-conscious and self-correcting, providing greater use of compliment intensifiers and personal references than males.

Studies have also shown that English as a second language (ESL) students are attentive to and appreciative of teacher comments on essays and journal writing (Brice, 1995; Chapin and Terdal, 1990; Radecki and Swales; 1988; Saito, 1994; Semke, 1982). Darling (1992) analyzed the use of Austin's speech-act theory in a native English speaking composition classroom, suggesting that peer review and teacher comments help students grow more sensitive to the needs of an audience and to anticipate audience responses. These studies suggest that students appreciate natural communicative situations and helpful comments in order to learn and make changes in language.

In this paper, I analyze the speech act functions of a native English-speaking (NES) teacher's comments written on essay drafts in a college composition course and of four non-native English-speaking (NNES) teachers' comments written on an essay for the Test of Written English (TWE). The comments include five speech act categories (Compliments, Suggestions, Directives, Criticisms, and Ideational). The analysis focuses and reflects on the frequency of lexical and modal

words which represent the speech acts. The results show that differences in NES teacher-student and NNES teacher-student relationships occur between the level of directives, compliments, and ideational. This difference could involve issues of politeness, power, culture, and gender.

Method

My data consisted of two sets of teacher comments on written essays. Sentence-level corrections/suggestions and spelling changes were not examined. The first data set consisted of an NES teacher's comments in response to twelve essays written as a requirement in a first year college composition class. The teacher was a graduate student (and teaching assistant) in a Master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MA-TESOL) program. The essays were written for an argumentation assignment; subjects were native English-speaking students, six males and six females.

The second set consisted of comments written in response to one level-3 Test of Written English (TWE) essay written by an NNES (Chinese) writer. Of the four teachers commenting, three were Japanese and one was from Hong Kong; all were graduate students in an MA-TESOL program. They were asked to play the "role of teacher" and to comment on the TWE in order to help the student revise the paper and gain written English skills. The writing topic was to argue for or against, with support, the statement: "Teachers should make learning enjoyable and fun for their student." To analyze the forms and the func-

(cont. on page 6)

<u>In This Issue</u>	
1, 6-7	- NES and NNES Speech Acts
3	- Your Board at Work - Message from the President
4	- Reflections on the 2004 Convention
5	- Election Results - Mark Your Calendar - Spring Workshop
8	- Member Snapshop
9-10	- The Ticker
11-12	- News Bites
13-14	- 2005 Writing Contest Rules & Form
15	- Membership Application - Call for Papers
16	- Professional Planner

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Membership in Illinois TESOL•BE is open to all interested individuals. To join, please use the form in this issue of the *Newsletter*; for further information about membership, call **(312) 409-4770** or visit our web site at www.itbe.org.

Submission Information

Illinois TESOL•BE welcomes letters and contributions to the *Newsletter*. The *Newsletter* is published four times per year with the following copy deadlines:

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Your Board At Work

Madonna Carr

University of Illinois at Chicago

Highlights from the April and May Board Meetings

● At the May meeting, Alan Seaman presented his final report with the figures on attendance, revenues, and expenses for the ITBE 2004 Annual Convention, held at Navy Pier on February 27-28th. The Convention Evaluations were compiled and presented to the Board by next year's 2nd VP, Paul Angelis. Marsha Santelli, the Chair of the Exhibits and Advertising Committee, presented income figures from the publishers' sessions and program advertisements. The Board thanks Alan and his Committee for a suc-

cessful Convention.

- The ITBE Spring Workshop was held at Moraine Valley Community College. Though attendance was low, Laurie Martin, Professional Developments Chair, reports that the Workshop evaluations were very positive. Laurie thanks all the presenters who made the Workshop a success.
- SIG Chairs were elected at the Spring Workshop. Barb Linek is the new Chair of the Adult Ed SIG. Maritza Perez and Margaret Gigous will serve as co-Chairs of the Elementary Ed SIG. The Secondary and Higher Ed SIG will be elected at the Fall Workshop in September '04.
- The dates for the ITBE Annual Convention have been confirmed for February 18-19, 2005. Second VP, Paul Angelis, has chosen "Our

Evolving Challenges" as the theme for the Convention. October 15, 2004, is the deadline for proposal submission.

- At the May meeting, the Board voted unanimously to raise the ITBE membership dues. The following increased dues will go into effect on July 1, 2004: \$35 for one-year membership, \$60 for two-year membership, and \$20 for student membership.
- The annual election for ITBE Executive Board was conducted in early May. The following members were elected: Yasmin Ranney- 1st VP; Margene Petersen-2nd VP and Co-Chair for the Convention with Ruth Lambach; Jennifer Eick-Magan, Antonio Lollino, and Maja Teref - Members-at-Large.

Message From The President

Madonna Carr

What do hip-hop, the cell phone, the Endangered Species Act, Roe v. Wade and ITBE have in common. They are all turning 30 years old in 2004!!!! I am honored to serve as this year's President of ITBE.

Yes, ITBE is celebrating its 30th year as a professional organization representing and serving the ESL and BE community. 1974, the year ITBE began, was a time of turbulence and change. Activism and optimism were in the air. Educators and those serving the immigrant and refugee population in the United States realized there was a need for unity and advocacy. The organization started small, but has grown steadily. We now have close to 900 members!!! The times have changed and so has ITBE. However, the organization is as vital and necessary today as it has ever been.

The challenges that ITBE educators and learners face are constantly changing. Geopolitical issues, budget decisions, demographics, popular culture, economics, politics, and public perception all affect our students, institutions, and the instructors that serve them. That is where ITBE comes in. This organization is your voice and your muscle. That's why

your participation in what we do and what we say is so important.

ITBE is a completely volunteer organization. We need volunteers for all our events. We need people to contribute articles to this Newsletter. We need presenters at our Workshops and Convention. We need representatives from the many different areas of ESL and BE to serve on the Board. We need current members to recruit new members. We need members to inform the general public who we are, who our students are, and how essential the work we do is.

ITBE is a very transparent, accessible organization, and getting involved in the organization is very easy. I hope that all of you will join me in moving ITBE forward to meet new challenges. Find out how to get involved simply by reading the Newsletter or visiting our amazing website (www.itbe.org). In 1974 and in 2004, you are ITBE.

Sincerely,

Madonna Carr
ITBE President



Reflections on the 2004 Illinois TESOL-BE Convention

Reflections on the 2004 Illinois TESOL-BE Convention

Alan Seaman

2nd Vice President and Convention Chair

"The weekend was fascinating," wrote an ITBE member in an e-mail message soon after the 2004 Convention. "I learned a great deal that I've already taken back to my classroom."

This sentiment was echoed by a number of ESL and bilingual education teachers after the February 27-28 ITBE Convention at Navy Pier. The numbers were healthy, with nearly 900 teachers, administrators, and teacher educators attending and a total of 86 presentations. These presentations explored topics ranging from the political (Elliot Judd's update on TESOL legislation coming out of Washington, D.C.) to the practical (sessions on language testing and citizenship education) to the creative (sessions on using haiku, readers' theater, and Vincent Van Gogh in ESL instruction).

The convention theme, "Transformative Teaching," was addressed directly in the plenary sessions by Deborah Short and Rebecca Oxford. Dr. Short's computer-enhanced presentation in the Navy Pier Grand Ballroom on Friday included a film segment she entitled "A Teacher Transformed." This video focused on a public school teacher who had been very reluctant to teach ESL students but later changed her views as a result of her training in the SIOP model, developed by Dr. Short and the Center for Applied Linguistics.

In the Saturday plenary, Rebecca Oxford continued the convention theme with an address that focused on the transformative power of language learning styles and strategies. Using a relaxed lecture style with delightful touches of humor, Dr. Oxford surveyed the research in learning styles and strategies. Her plenary also had an edge to it as she discussed the political and philosophical concerns that arise, she said, "when I talk to myself about second language teaching."

This year the Saturday afternoon closing session was enlivened by two powerful presentations on "Immigration and Film" by Robert Keser and Vanessa Nava. Keser, an ESL teacher and film critic at National-Louis University, commented on a film segment depicting the struggles of an undocumented father and daughter in New York City. He was followed by Nava, a young Loyola University student, who showed her own documentary, "Uncertain Paths," about the issues surrounding Mexican-American high-school students in Chicago.

Vanessa Nava's obvious filmmaking talents and her background in the immigrant community made her presentation

especially compelling. "I was raised in Mexico for six years and arrived in the United States in 1991, meeting my parents for the first time," she explained. "My path does not end here; my desire is to record more unheard experiences using a powerful tool, a video camera, to reach young audiences in order to encourage them to continue their education." Her film brought tears to the eyes of many in the audience.

In addition to featuring luminaries such as Short and Oxford, the convention program included presenters who came from as far away as Florida, California, Japan and Turkey. Seniz Bilgi, who teaches English at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, flew in to deliver a Saturday workshop on collocations and to spend several days in Chicago. She had never traveled in the U.S. before and described the convention as "a very fruitful experience."

This year's convention heralded several innovations. Submitting a proposal for a presentation became easier due to an on-line proposal form developed by board member Darcy Christianson for the ITBE website. Darcy also developed the clever PowerPoint slide show which was projected in a continuous loop during Friday's luncheon. For a second year, the convention program included poster sessions - a popular feature in the afternoons. Descriptions of the poster sessions were provided in the program book for the first time.

Over 40 publishers displayed their wares in the Lakeview Terrace exhibit hall. Saturday's lunchtime was enlivened by a drawing in the hall which included freebies from a number of the publishers and a \$1,200 laptop computer donated by Santillana. The winner of the laptop computer was an ESL teacher at the Scattergood School in Iowa, Meisha Kun, who was attending her first ITBE convention.

"I returned home yesterday to type up a report [about the convention]," wrote Meisha, "and was gratified to again see how much information I can share with the other teachers at Scattergood because the concepts I gathered this weekend can be expanded to benefit other non-ESL classes . . . The computer was an added bonus which made it simply amazing."

As I look back at this year's convention, I am gratified by responses of teachers like Meisha who found the weekend invigorating and educational. These responses validate the hundreds of hours of volunteer work by over 30 ITBE members who staffed the committees that made the convention run. I cannot express enough gratitude to them, and to the 117 TESOL professionals who were presenters at the convention. For many of us, the 2004 convention was truly transformative, injecting inspiration and new ideas into our professional lives during another chilly Illinois winter.



Congratulations to Our New Board Members

We are pleased to announce the results of the 2004 election for Illinois TESOL/BE Executive Board Members. The results are as follows:

First Vice President

Yasmin Ranney , Northeastern Illinois University

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

31st Annual Convention

Navy Pier - Chicago
February 18 and 19, 2005

Plenary speakers:

Jodi Crandall and Carol Chapelle

Panels - Papers - Demonstrations - Exhibits
and much more

Watch for details soon!!!

Spring Workshop: A TechnoSuccess!!!

Teachers from the city, suburbs, and downstate gathered for a half day of professional development and networking at ITBE's annual Spring Workshop on April 17th. The event was held for the first time at Moraine Valley Community College.

In keeping with the theme of "**Technology/Techniques**," the event featured two rounds of concurrent sessions on topics such as how to integrate technology into the classroom, using Blackboard for class management and course delivery, Internet for beginning ESL students, brain-compatible activities for teaching writing and language, reading strategies for ESL or bilingual classes, and more.

Between sessions, attendees enjoyed perusing the new materials on display at the booths of twelve exhibitors (as well as munching yummy refreshments provided by Moraine Valley).

ITBE is now planning its **Fall Workshop**, to be held the morning of **Saturday, September 18, 2004**, at Roosevelt High School in Chicago's Albany Park neighborhood. If you are interested in presenting a session or helping with planning the event, please contact ITBE at membership@itbe.org or (312) 409-4770.

Submitted by: Laurie Martin

(continued from page 1)

tions of teacher comments as speech acts, I draw on the ideational functions defined by Halliday (1978, 1985) and the speech function schema developed by Eggins (1994 and 1997). According to Halliday (1985), language has a reflective and ideational function that serves to express logical and experiential meaning. Through this function, writers use language not only to convey information but also to set up relationships between themselves and their audiences. Eggins (1994) defines speech functions by first identifying a conversational structure, which describes how interactants negotiate the exchange of meanings in dialogue. This consists of the choice of a speech function within a type of exchange structure.

Results

All of the comments were categorized as either a Compliment such as "good," Suggestion such as "can be deleted," Criticism such as "not related," Directive such as "elaborate more," or Ideational such as "why?" The total comments were 181, with 19 from NNES and 162 from NES (Table 1).

	Compliments	Suggestions	Criticism	Directive	Ideational	Total
NES	58	20	9	42	33	162
Percentage	36%	12%	6%	26%	20%	100%
NNES	3	4	4	8	0	19
Percentage	16%	21%	21%	42%	0	100%

Table 1. Speech Act Comments

For the NNES, Directives occurred most frequently, 42%, and Compliments occurred least frequently, 16%. Conversely, for the NES, Compliments occurred most frequently, 36% and Criticisms occurred least frequently, 6%. This suggests a higher level of directiveness in communication from the NNES teacher to the NNES student, and a higher level of compliments from the NES teacher to the NES student. In addition, Directives occurred at a similar level of frequency in comparison to NES Compliments for the NES, while NNES Compliments, in comparison to Directives, occurred least. Interesting as well is that NNES teachers used no ideational comments, while they were frequently used by the NES teacher.

Discussion

The occurrence of a high level of Directives for NNES in comparison to NES was the opposite of my prediction. However, the results are interesting and important. The following discussion will analyze these results.

Compliments

The Compliment comments from both NES and NNES used a notion of positiveness and politeness such as "agree," "good," and "good paper." (See Appendix A). Additional compliment comments from the NES included such words as "nice," "great," "like," and "wow."

Suggestions

The Suggestion comments included modal words and equivalents such as "should," "can," "maybe," as well as words that imply encouragement, such as "let's work" and "think about . . . more." (See Appendix A). The comments with modals directly demonstrate a sense of suggestion, while the use of "let's work on" and "think about . . . more" indirectly imply a suggestion. In particular, the NNES comment using "let's work on" suggests an invitation, and the NES comment using "thinking" emphasizes an option rather than a suggestion for doing or changing something.

Criticism

All of the NNES Criticism comments directly used negation such as "not clear," "not related," "aren't related," while only one of the NES Criticism comments used negation "not needed". (See Appendix A). This again suggests a stronger authoritative tone from the NNES teachers. The NES Criticism comments commonly used the adjective "too," which has a milder, more polite authoritative tone. However, one of the NES comments "but the organization is awkward," implies a judgment on the text rather than a demand for a change.

Directives

The NNES Directive comments used words such as "elaborate," "make," and "careful." (See Appendix B). The Directive comments used words indicating a forceful command and had arrows attached for redirecting the focus of the text. The NES Directive comments used the same words as the NNES but also used words such as "move," "add," and "connect" to redirect the focus of the text. Of the Directive comments, the words "be careful" frequently occurred for NES. Again, this suggests a mild degree of obligation, in comparison to the other words such as "need" or "don't," which imply more criticism and very little politeness.

Ideational

According to Eggins (1997, pg. 48), Halliday defines ideational functions as related to meanings about the world and describes their use as a focus on the when, who, why, how, where. The use of these comments focused on some meaning about the paper or, more specifically, on what the paper content represented. Because the information wasn't provided in the paper, the comments not only request clarification, but give a directive for the student to include appropriate information to the audience (teacher). For example, the NES comment "why?" is asking the student writer to think more about and clarify a point that is being made. (See Appendix B). Interestingly, Ideational comments did not occur at all for NNES. Though the NNES teachers' not using any Ideational comments doesn't necessarily suggest that they weren't trying to help the student, it does suggest that, perhaps, the NNES teachers lacked a sense of opening up

to and communicating with the student via written comments.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to demonstrate the functions of speech acts as communicative interactions between an NES teacher and students and NNES teachers and students. Although the sample is very small, particularly comments from the only NES teacher, the results of this study show that the NNES teachers use more of an authoritative tone and the NES teacher uses a more encouraging tone. These results also suggest the role and importance of the socio-cultural context in conveying the meaning and use of speech acts. The speech acts used by NNES teachers aren't grammatically incorrect, but contextually may perhaps be too directive and critical for western, English-speaking student expectations. Reesor (2002) notes that directive and critical written teacher feedback for ESL learners hinders the language learning process.

Limitations in this study include a small sample size of only one NNES student writing and a limited representation of NNES, as both NNES teachers and students were from an Asian country. Also, a comparable number of NES teachers would also provide more support to the findings. In addition, a possible reason for the higher level of Directive comments given by the non-native speakers is that two of the subjects had had teaching experience outside of a composition classroom, perhaps reflecting the teacher's power and perceptions about authority in the native culture.

Suggestions for future studies in this area would be to have a larger sample of teachers and student writing and to analyze the genders of teachers and essay writers as well as the culture background. Also, comparing NNES teacher comments on NES writers and NES teacher comments on NNES writers could provide interesting results for comparison to this study. This study does, however, suggest that speech acts do play an important role in the classroom and that they should be explicitly taught in teacher training programs. ♦

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Appendix A

NES Compliments

good (37); nice (6); Nice arguments! (4); Nice arguments. (4); wow; Nice arguments and interesting organization.; Great argument points; Great arguments!; Great arguments.; Nice follow up with viewpoints and examples.; I like your connection with a professional business person and/or teacher!

NNES Compliments: Basically I agree with you; Good; Content is good.

NES Suggestions: The example on the side may help you.; Moreover, they are a benefit (helpful idea); and numbers should be written the same throughout; The TV program should be cited.; However you could source more information.; However, you should cite/use resources.; Some of the information that is related can be moved together (and vice versa); You could add the information from your last paper. If you'd like.; cite? (6); But you should use sources for information.; connect?; but maybe this sounds better?; You should use resources for information, though.; Example Outline; But you should use sources of information to cite in the paper and a work-cited page.

NNES Suggestions: A topic sentence should be related with the whole paragraph; can be deleted; let's work on how to organize an essay; Maybe write about teacher and give support.

NES Criticismsims: off topic/too subjective; too subjective; off topic; too subjective (4); not needed; but the organization is awkward.

NNES Criticis: There is not clear thesis statement; not relate; skill how to organize is not proficient; paragraphs aren't related.

Appendix B

NES Directives

paragraph (2); connect (2); connect these paragraphs; move (3); use quotes; move to beginning (of paper); move to beginning of paragraph; move to conclusion; move to middle (of paper); Be careful of your citations- ; Be careful.; cites; (Be careful with organizing paragraphs and work cited page.); Make paragraph and move; Be careful with organization. (2); (Be careful of faulty assumptions too.); However, you must cite the quotes though...and statements that were used by others; However, you need some type of source for this paper, and work-cited page too.; If it is just a counter-argument suggestion, don't use quotes.; move to intro; if they are quotes from someone, you must cite the name!; you need to answer this; But be careful of your resource information.; move up 2 paragraphs; cite (9); You also need to cite your information with a work-cited page and with examples; You must cite your references on the paper and on a work-cited page taken from resources ; However, you must cite your sources of information on the paper, and on a work-cited page.

NNES Directives

elaborate more; think about thesis statement; think about organization a little more; make this point clearer; careful about spelling mistakes; 1st reason; 2nd reason; conclusion.

NES Ideational

where?; who said this? (3); currently? (clarification); into a cell? (clarification); I know I told you differently last time.; unfortunately (clarification); when?; What does this mean for you?; What is this? (definition of word); Year? (clarification); What if he/she won a lifetime support of money and lived with a brother?; confusing (2); because of the name?; Do you know this?; Is this right or wrong?; why; What do you mean here?; what do you think?; why is this in quotes?; too; why? (2); (I didn't change them all.); Otherwise it is plagiarism.; otherwise you're plagiarizing.; (do you recall the program?); If it isn't cited, it is plagiarism -; Otherwise, it is plagiarism!; otherwise, you are plagiarizing!; otherwise, you are plagiarizing.; why would they (people who couldn't afford Jordan shoes) really want it (expensive Jordan shoes at a lower cost).

Darcy Christianson has an MA in TESOL and has taught ESL for over nine years. She has ESL teaching and tutoring experiences in private, public and volunteer programs in universities and public schools in both the United States, South Korea, and Poland.



Member Snapshot

Name: Alan Seaman

Place of birth & current residence:

Birth: McLean, Virginia (near Washington, D.C.). Current Residence: Wheaton, Illinois

Currently working as:

Associate Professor of Intercultural Studies/TESOL and TESOL Program Coordinator, Wheaton College. I teach applied linguistics and TESOL methodology courses in the MA program. My students are preparing to work as ESL or EFL teachers.

Years in education: 23

Years as an ITBE member: 11

A memorable experience or two:

I was the administrator of an intensive English program at a university in Wuhan, China, in 1989 during the spring protest movement and the Tiananmen Square Massacre. This was an exciting but tragic time to be working as a teacher in China. Although as a foreigner I was politically neutral, many of my students were deeply involved in the protest movement. Ultimately, the city erupted in riots in mid-June, and my wife and I were evacuated to the Wuhan airport on a troop transport vehicle. I have always loved China and have returned to teach there several times in the past decade. I also loved working as the director of an ESL program for a public



school system in Virginia. My students at the high school came from a variety of cultures and included a mixture of refugees, economic immigrants, and children of visiting scholars. The classes were multi-level--a real challenge for an ESL teacher--and I did quite a bit of advocacy and social work for my students in addition to teaching them English. For two years I taught TESOL courses in the teacher education program in the evenings at the University of Virginia and invited my graduate students to observe my high-school ESL classes in the mornings. Being observed 120 days a year really kept me on my toes as a teacher.

A regrettable professional experience: During my first overseas teaching experience many years ago in Egypt, I tried to correct the speech of my Egyptian students to make them speak more like Americans. I didn't realize that they were speaking an Egyptian form of English that was a legitimate "World English." I was young and my students were

incredibly patient with me.

Professional passions: As a teacher educator, I'm always looking for ways to create partnerships between teacher-education programs and various ESL/BE teaching programs. Over the years, my MA students have provided research for local school systems and have learned a great deal from intensive observation in classrooms. I am currently conducting a four-year longitudinal study of children in a bilingual education program at a school in the western suburbs of Chicago. I regularly travel abroad to conduct ESL training for teachers in international schools. Teachers of ELLs in English-medium international schools face issues that are similar to those encountered by teachers in the U.S. During the past year I presented an ESL training program to teachers at conferences in Europe and Africa. I also recently served on the National Council for a new five-level comprehensive adult ESL textbook series, *English--No Problem!* This has been recently published by New Readers Press. As a National Council member, I helped conceptualize the series, did quite a bit of editing, and developed the assessment program.

Future plans: In addition to teaching at Wheaton College, I will continue to return to China in the summers to conduct short-term training programs.

Beyond work: My wife, Kim, has taught in the public schools for many years in Virginia and Illinois. We've also traveled and taught overseas together. I have two sons, 11 and 9, who share our interest in travel, culture, and learning languages. I also enjoy studying art, folk music, and religion.

The TICKER

....The Latest Texts.....Videos.....Web Sites..

Terrie Byrne

Columbia College

Katerina Vallianatos

University of Illinois at Chicago

ESL Web Sites

If you are looking for quick ways to find public domain reading selections and online reading/vocabulary exercises, there are several excellent websites you can surf to. Reading exercises on these sites can be used to supplement lessons or can form complete lessons on their own. If you have access to a lab, you can guide students to the site and let the reading begin. If not, many of these reading selections and exercises can be easily printed out for use in a traditional classroom. Two sites that are particularly useful for ESL reading teachers are The English Club and One Stop English.

The English Club

(<http://reading.englishclub.com/>) This site describes itself as a club for people who want to learn English or teach English. It has sections designed for ESL instructors, and sections geared for students. Access to the site is free (and relatively free of pop-up ads and other commercial annoyances), and does not require any type of registration for public use. The design is clean and fairly easy to navigate. Along the left side of their homepage is a "Hot List for ESL Learners" menu that includes, among many other selections, a link that takes visitors to a "Reading" page with a collection of well-organized links to intermediate and advanced reading selections and exercises.

For example, The English Club "Reading" page includes a "Classic English Reading" section with short selections from famous texts such as the Bible or Shakespeare, complete with definitions and explanations. The section titled "English Short Stories" links to a selection of public domain short stories ranging in length from 1,500 to 7,000 words. Additional selections on the "Reading" page include an online "Reading Test," "English Proverbs" and links to online "English Language Newspapers and Magazines."

One Stop English

(<http://www.onestopenglish.com/News/Magazine/News/news.htm>)

This site is specifically designed to assist ESL instructors in lesson planning. It is free and does not require any form of registration for use. Among many other offerings, it has a "One Stop Magazine" called The Guardian Weekly, an online magazine that offers topical news articles edited to elementary, intermediate and advanced reader levels.

Each reading level of each article includes a reading comprehension and vocabulary worksheet with an answer key. This "One Stop Magazine" web page organizes the articles according to topic and lists a brief discussion question and a grammar focus for each one. At the top of the web page is a link to a news feature of the month and access to an archive of past news articles. Overall, this online magazine is an excellent resource for relevant, real-world weekly reading assignments

geared directly to ESL students.

Book Reviews

Inspired to Write: Readings and Tasks to Develop Writing Skills by Jean Withrow, Gary Brookes, and Martha Clark Cummings is a writing text with 28 readings which are designed to prompt students to write. Published in 2004 by Cambridge University Press, this text is aimed at young adults and adults of high-intermediate to advanced level and is equally suited for native speakers.

Its original, unadapted readings are varied and include stories, poems, essays, letters, and excerpts from books and textbooks. Authors are from various disciplines and countries. Just as varied are the genre, voice, and purpose of the readings. The text uses a collaborative, student-centered approach to learning.

Pre-reading activities such as word association, asking questions about the text, and predicting the text activate students' schemata. Post-reading activities allow students to respond personally to the readings. Again, a variety of activities not only builds skills, but reduces boredom: answering questions, annotating the reading, retelling it, finding the main idea, and vocabulary acquisition are just a few.

An important feature of the text is the How It's Written section that accompanies each reading. It helps students improve their writing by paying attention to what good writers do.



(*The Ticker*, continued from page 9)

In addition, reading/writing logs, peer feedback (feedback form included), and revision are central to the text's process approach. Finally, the text has Toolboxes (helpful how-tos) and Writer's Tips (quotes from accomplished writers), which imply students are worthy of professional advice. This is what sets *Inspired to Write* from other humdrum writing textbooks: it views writing as a very personal expression, and it assumes students of writing need to find their voice. For a course on grammar, proper sentence construction, and editing of grammatical errors, consult another book. *Inspired to Write* is about the writing process.

What motivates second language learners? How do we keep them motivated? *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*, published in 2001 by Cambridge University Press, aims to answer these questions so that the second language teacher can create a more effective classroom environment. The author, Zoltan Dornyei, discusses in detail 35 motivational strategies to keep students working to improve their language ability. Teachers should try them out one by one to see how they work, and a checklist of each strategy is included at the end of the book to make doing so easier. Group dynamics, grading, motivational feedback, curriculum relevance, learner anxiety, breaking monotony, and many other issues are addressed. Building from theory and research in educational psychology, *Motivational Strategies* helps the language teacher to explore an important but elusive variable in the language acquisition process--motivation--and provides practical solutions to most motivation problems.

Setting It Right

The two people identified as "Graduate & Undergraduate Scholarship Winners" on p. 17 in the spring issue were not Barb Linek, the Graduate Scholarship winner, and Vanessa Andrade, the Undergraduate Scholarship winner. We apologize sincerely for the error in the spring issue.

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NEWS BITES

Elizabeth Minicz
Harper College

A Novel Idea

In the United States, commuters can pick up a cup of coffee or a sandwich to eat while they are riding on a train, but in Mexico, they can pick up a free book. According to the February 22, 2004, edition of *The Chicago Tribune*, a fare on the subway in Mexico earns riders a book. The goal of the program to distribute free books is threefold: improve the atmosphere in the subway system, reduce crime, and promote reading. Of course the books aren't really free; reading riders are expected to return them, and over 60 percent have actually done that. Hugh Dellios, the *Tribune's* foreign correspondent in Mexico, writes that Mayor Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador is the author of the idea. Although the literacy rate in Mexico City is high (over 90 percent), books are very expensive and will probably cost even more than they do now since the government contemplated a new book tax last year. Dellios quotes Claudia Calderon, "I spend a lot of time on the Metro. I do hope this opens the door to spreading the culture of reading." Are you listening Mayor Daley?

Are We There Yet?

How long does it take to learn English? The answer is frustratingly complex because of the numerous factors that must be taken into account. Still, parents, employers, funders, and legislators persistently demand an answer. In an article by Maria Sacchetti and Sarah Tully that appeared in *The Orange County Register* on February 13, 2004, the state of California is once again posing the question--but this time there may be an effort to explore answers. The Legislative Analyst's Office estimates that 50 percent of Mandarin speakers develop English fluency in less than four years, but Spanish speakers would need more than six years of study. A number of questions come to mind. How old are the speakers? At what age did they start studying English? What is their previous educational experience? What support have they been given? What is fluency? Who determined this and by what means? Paul Warren, a senior analyst and author of the Legislative Analyst's report, says, "Six years is too long." What is known is that the Legislature in California will be monitoring test data and accountability measures to determine how long it takes to learn English and why some students learn faster than others. I wish I felt that such efforts were prompted by genuine concern and academic curiosity rather than a desire to rationalize spending less money on education. When my adult students ask, "How long will it take to learn English?" I will respond, "I'm waiting for California to tell me."

Meanwhile, How Long Will It take to Become a U.S. Citizen?

A little over a year ago, oversight for immigration became part of the responsibilities of the Department of Homeland Security. Security has been accomplished, in part, by limiting the number of people who can navigate the backlogged system for processing naturalization. In its infinite wisdom, the federal government has now decided that one way to fix the problem is to charge higher fees for naturalization applications, so reports *Chicago Tribune* staff reporter, Oscar Avila, on March 1, 2004. U.S. representative Luis Gutierrez (D-IL) says, "It's like someone selling a defective car that is being recalled and then increasing the price. I don't know if you're going to sell a lot of cars that way." Tell that to the Bush administration whose personnel think higher application fees will make the naturalization process move more quickly. Fees for naturalization were \$260; the proposed increase is to \$320. Likewise the fee for green cards would jump from \$255 to \$315. So, how long does it take to become a citizen? Vezir and Hata Omerinovic have waited nearly 18 months for their green card application to be processed. Once that has been completed, they can expect to wait another ten months for their naturalization application process. According to the *Tribune* article, the Omerinovics may just go back to Bosnia. Oh, isn't that what Homeland Security wanted in the first place?

(continued on page 12)



Even Start--No Start

The U.S. Department of Education has proposed that Even Start funding be "redirected to provide increases for higher priority programs. . . ." according to an article in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* by Dan Hardy in the March 22, 2004 edition of the paper. The Bush administration believes, says Hardy, that Even Start has had " (positive) impact on the children and families served," and so it should be eliminated. Testimony from the myriad of families and children who have benefited are ignored because they don't support the Bush administration's stance. Could the money from the \$248 million program be redirected toward reducing the backlog at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services agency? Nah.

A New Meaning to "Green Card"

Even the Sierra Club has entered into the fray over immigration. The Sierra Club, which is 112 years old, is one of the U.S.'s most influential environmental groups. There are currently five positions open on its 15-member board, and a slate of candidates wants to push for immigration limits. For over four decades, conservationists have been concerned about global population control. The U.S. Census Bureau projects that in 50 years the U.S. population of 292.8 million will increase by 50 percent. Gregory Spencer, chief of the Bureau's population projection branch, says that 60 to 65 percent of the projected growth will be the result of immigration,

quoted by Miguel Bustillo and Kenneth R. Weiss in a *Los Angeles Times* story on March 24, 2004. Former U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson, a founder of Earth Day, and former Colorado Governor Richard Lamm believe that one way the U.S. can stabilize its population is by taking a stand against immigration. Sierra Club Executive Director, Carl Pope, and Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. worry that "taking a stand against immigration risks alienating Latino and Asian immigrants who may represent the future of conservation." Pope goes on to say that ". a national campaign against immigration will expose environmental groups to accusations of racism and xenophobia." Lamm counters, "Certainly, the ecosystem cannot stand half a billion consuming Americans." State Senator Martha Escutia says, "when all things go wrong in politics, there is always this human reaction to blame the immigrants. If the economy is bad, blame the immigrants. Terrorism, blame the immigrants. To me, it just seems to be part of a continuum of thought that blames immigrants for the problems of America." So in addition to over population and consumption of resources, we can blame immigrants for increased fees for citizenship, the elimination of Even Start, and no definitive answer to the question, How long does it take to learn English?"

So, Who Needs English Anyway?

Not the Koreans. Chae Chang Eun, a science teacher in Korea, has given up trying to learn English. She has switched to Chinese, reports Barbara Demick of the *Los Angeles Times*

Foreign desk on March 29, 2004. She quotes Chae, "When America was leader of the world, we all studied English. Now that China is rising to the top, the interest is swaying toward the Chinese language." Suh Jin Young, an international relations professor at Korea University in Seoul, says, "The interest in Chinese does reflect some antipathy to U.S. hegemony and arrogance." "People are sending their teenagers to China to learn Chinese. They are really crazy about Chinese," says Nam Young Sook, an economist with the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy, in the article. A report from the Rand Corporation warns that more favorable attitudes toward China in South Korea are possibly at the expense of the United States. Scott Snyder, a senior associate with the Asia foundation think tank in Washington, said, "The U.S.-declared war against terrorism has alienated Asian allies not because they necessarily oppose it, but because they believe it is not relevant to their concerns." So while the Chinese economy is growing, and the demand for Chinese speakers is increasing, the U.S. is scrambling to increase its pool of Arabic speakers. Are you listening there in Washington? Perhaps we should be teaching Chinese as a Second Language in our schools--that is, if enough Chinese speakers could get visas.

**ILLINOIS TESOL•BE ELEVENTH ANNUAL
ESL STUDENT WRITING CONTEST
RULES & REGULATIONS
2004-2005**

ELIGIBILITY- Contestant must be a student who is a full-time student enrolled in grades 6-12 in the state of Illinois, a non-native speaker of English, enrolled in a TBE/TPI program, and the sponsoring teacher must be a current member of Illinois TESOL/BE.

FORM- Essays are to be 500-1000 words (2 to 3 typed pages in English, Font: Times New Roman Size 12, double spaced and neat). Entries must be submitted with a complete cover sheet (enclosed). Cover sheet must include the student's name, home country, name of the sponsoring teacher, name of school, school address, and school phone number. There should be no identifying information on any pages of the essay. This includes any mention of the contestant's name or school.

CONDITIONS- Failure to abide by any of these rules and conditions will result in the disqualification of the student's essay from the competition.

- ◆ Each student may submit only one entry.
- ◆ All essays become the property of Illinois TESOL/BE.
- ◆ All essays must be the ORIGINAL MATERIAL OF THE AUTHOR.
- ◆ The essays must be based on prior knowledge, i.e. this is not a research essay.
- ◆ No teacher editing.
- ◆ No computer editing will be allowed except for spell check, i.e. no grammar check.

**IF A STUDENT HAS PLAGIARIZED ANY PART OF THE ESSAY, IT WILL RESULT
IN IMMEDIATE DISQUALIFICATION.**

TOPIC- Discuss aspects of your culture that you want to share with others, such as holidays, differences in customs, school, culture-shock experiences, other experiences, etc.

JUDGING- Entries will be judged based upon content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. Criteria for judging will be creativity, writing style, and adherence to form, rules, and conditions.

PRIZES- Monetary prizes (\$150 First Place, \$100 Second Place, \$75 Third Place), certificates of merit, and ITBE ESL Student Writing Contest T-shirts will be presented to first, second, and third place winners in each category (grades 6-8/ grades 9-12). Sponsoring teachers of the winners will receive a one-year complimentary membership to Illinois TESOL/BE added to their current membership and a letter of recognition will be sent to their principals. In addition, the winners will be invited to read their essays at the ESL Writing Contest Awards Ceremony at the Illinois TESOL/BE Annual State Convention. The winners and their sponsoring teachers will be invited as our guests for lunch also at the Illinois TESOL/BE Annual State Convention.

DEADLINE- ALL ENTRIES MUST BE POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 14, 2004.

MAIL ENTRIES TO:

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Pamela Forbes
Larkin High School
1475 Larkin Avenue
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ALL SPONSORING TEACHERS WILL BE NOTIFIED OF THE RESULTS OF THE ILLINOIS TESOL/BE WRITING CONTEST. ALL ENTRANTS WILL RECEIVE A CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION.



ILLINOIS TESOL•BE TENTH ANNUAL ESL STUDENT WRITING CONTEST 2004 - 2005

ESSAY COVER SHEET

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GENDER: MALE FEMALE

HOME COUNTRY

FIRST LANGUAGE

SPONSORING TEACHER _____
FIRST _____ LAST _____

NAME OF SCHOOL

SCHOOL ADDRESS _____

CITY STATE ZIP CODE

SPONSORING TEACHER'S EMAIL ADDRESS

TELEPHONE NUMBER _____
(BEST PLACE TO REACH SPONSORING TEACHER)

CHECK THE APPROPRIATE GRADE **6-8** **9-12**

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August 27	Illinois TESOL/BE Executive Board Meeting, University of Illinois-Chicago, Chicago, IL
September 18	Illinois TESOL/BE Fall Workshop and Executive Board Meeting, Roosevelt High School, Chicago, IL
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